

## **The second AEWA Newsletter**

The Interim Secretariat had been the sole contributor to the first Newsletter, now more news has been received from others, for example on the Lesser White-fronted Goose expedition, the RECMAB project, the Barnacle Goose Flyway Management Plan, the CEFAS project and the Nemunas Delta project. Please keep sending us news on all aspects of AEWA (projects, conservation measures, habitat research, and so on) for publication in future Newsletters.

Send your news to:

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## **Secretariat News**

Since the establishment of the AEWA Interim Secretariat on January 8, 1996 by the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, Nature Management and Fisheries, a number of activities have been undertaken: the finalisation of the AEWA negotiation conference (1995), the forming of archives and databases, the translation of AEWA into Russian and Arabic, establishing relations with all the focal points of the Range States and publication of the Newsletter. Next to these administrative tasks, the Interim Secretariat was also able to attend the following meetings to acquaint delegates with AEWA: "From research to actions plans, organised by UNAVI ,Italy ( Mr Bert Lenten), 6<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties of the Ramsar Convention , Australia (Mr Gerard C. Boere), Meeting of the Nordic Hunters Association, Denmark( Mr Gerard C. Boere), European Conference of Birdlife International, Finland (Mr Gerard C. Boere/ Mr Bert Lenten), Meeting of the Working Group for the Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna, Finland( Mr Gerard C. Boere), International Symposium on the White Stork, Germany( Mr Bert Lenten) and the Ninth Pan African Ornithological Congress, Ghana (Mr Bert Lenten).

The Interim Secretariat is receiving more and more requests for information about AEWA, a clear sign of increased interest on the part of the various Parties.

## **Memorandum of Understanding Ramsar-Bonn Convention**

On February 18, 1997 the Ramsar Bureau and the Secretariat of the Bonn Convention signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). By signing this MoU, the Ramsar Bureau and the Secretariat of the Bonn Convention have agreed to intensify their co-operation in order to reinforce their position in the fields of implementation covered by both conventions as well as by Agreements concluded under CMS. This MoU is of great importance for AEWA because it is the formal basis for future co-operation and concerted actions to facilitate implementation of AEWA.

## **AEWA Logo**

This second Newsletter looks quite different from the first one. We have incorporated our new AEWA logo in the layout. This logo was designed in 1996 by a graphics company.

At an early stage, it was decided that a more abstract design would be preferable. By choosing a more symbolic design, we were able to avoid the problem of which bird should be represented in the logo. After all, none of the bird species covers the whole Western Palearctic Flyway. Our new logo is also clearly distinct from existing NGO logos.

The core of the logo is formed by a wing and a special typography. The designers have also added meaning with colour. In the English version the colour suggests water (blue) and in the French version green is used to suggest wetlands. The squares used around the text symbolise the flyway. The symbiosis of wing, colours, squares and typography shows that AEWA deals with migratory waterbirds and wetlands.

## **Ninth Pan African Ornithological Congress**

The Ninth Pan African Ornithological Congress (PAOC9) was held from December 1-8, 1996 at Accra (Ghana). The meeting was attended by NGOs, scientists, and policy officers representing most of the African countries. Participants from Europe, Canada and the USA were also present. The secretary participated in this meeting to establish contacts with the African Region.

The congress delegates showed great interest in AEWA. It was also noticed that some policy officers were acquainted with AEWA, but many others did not.

Most of the policy officers informed the secretary that their country is ready to sign AEWA, but that the internal procedures shall take some time.

### Roundtable discussion on White Storks

At the White Stork Symposium (September 26-29, 1996, Hamburg), the Interim Secretariat had emphasised the necessity of involving the African countries in the conservation of the White Stork (*Ciconia ciconia*). As a follow-up to that symposium, a roundtable discussion was organised by Dr Olivier Biber (Switzerland) during PAOC9. The discussion was a great success. The African countries are very interested in White Storks and in co-operating with European countries to draft a Species Action Plan.

The Interim Secretariat has asked Mr. Biber to make a proposal for the draft of such a Species Action Plan, as an AEWA project to be funded by one or more of the Range States.

## **Lesser White-fronted Goose expedition to the Kanin Peninsula**

WWF Finland launched an expedition to the Kanin Peninsula (Russia) from August 26 to September 12, 1996. This expedition was part of the international Action Plan of Wetland International and European Council for the Conservation of the Lesser White-fronted Goose (*Anser erythropus*) which was on the urgent action list of 1996.

The purpose of the expedition was to survey the satellite transmitter locations of the Finnish and Norwegian Lesser White-fronted Geese determined in September 1995, to gain insight into the importance of the delta of the rivers Mesna and Torna as an autumn staging area for Fennoscandian L. W-f Geese and other wildfowl and to evaluate the hunting pressure and other possible threats to geese in the area.

During the expedition it was noticed that the most important staging site for L W-f Geese was exactly the same site that was the most accurate of the satellite transmitter locations in September 1995.

In total, about 100 individuals were observed. The number of staging L W-f Geese began to increase rapidly on September 7-8 and the greatest number (about 80 individuals) was counted on the morning of departure of the expedition.

Hunting pressure and human activities against L W-f Geese seemed to be quite low, at least at the moment, due to the huge scale of the area and the small number of people/hunters.

A conclusion of the expedition is that, in autumn, the Mesna-Tornea area appears to harbour nearly 100 percent of the Fennoscandian (Nordic-Kola Peninsula) population of the L W-f Goose. In the Spring of 1995, up to 1000 birds, 10 percent of the estimated world population, were observed by expedition members Vinogradov and Krivenko

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## **RECMAB project**

RECMAB, Research, Conservation and Monitoring Project of Migratory Arctic Birds on the Baltic Sea and the White Sea, is an international research project of ornithologists from Finland, Russia, Estonia, the Netherlands and other countries, to be implemented on a large scale from 1998 onwards in consultation with Wetland International.

A draft project plan was received by the Interim Secretariat for RECMAB. The main purpose of this project is:

1. to identify the most important staging areas of arctic bird populations on the Baltic Sea and the White Sea.
2. to develop a managing and conservation strategy.
3. to ensure a favourable conservation status in each area.

Another important target of RECMAB is to develop a scientifically reliable and economically relevant monitoring system to monitor environmental changes in arctic nature and fluctuations in populations of arctic bird species breeding in northern Russia.

The Interim Secretariat's response to the draft project plan was sent to the promoter of this project, the Finnish Environmental Institute. A RECMAB workshop will be organised in November 1997.

For more information, contact:

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## **EUCC Nemunas Delta Project (Lithuania)**

The Nemunas Delta is located on the eastern side of the joint Russian and Lithuanian Curonian Spit and includes river arms, lakes, wet woodlands, fish ponds, marshes, reed beds, meadows and shallow waters. The Lithuanian part of this delta covers an area of 23,950 ha. This area is of great value for migratory (water)birds as a major stop-over on the Western Palearctic Flyway.

Some bird species in the area are: White-fronted Goose (*Anser albifrons*), Slavonian Grebe (*Podiceps auritus*), Bewick's Swan (*Cygnus columbianus bewickii*), Shelduck (*Tadorna tadorna*), Crane (*Grus grus*), Golden Plover (*Pluvialis apricaria*), Dunlin (*Calidris alpina*), Bittern (*Botaurus stellaris*), Redshank (*Tringa totanus*), Ruff (*Philomachus pugnax*), Snipe (*Gallinago gallinago*), Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*), Arctic Tern (*Sterna paradisaea*) and Black Tern (*Chlidonias niger*).

The natural values of the Nemunas delta are currently threatened by uncontrolled or strongly declining land use, development of infrastructure and water pollution from the Nemunas river. It is expected that in future the number of conflicts between agricultural and ecological interests will increase, parallel to the increasing economic development.

In the Baltic in general and the Nemunas delta in particular, the EUCC aims to contribute to the integrity and ecological coherence of the South East Baltic, which forms one of the major migratory corridors in Europe.

Several EUCC projects are being executed in the Nemunas delta. Local inhabitants and authorities play an active role in the projects, creating a broad social basis for nature

conservation in the delta. EUCC activities are focused on Rusne Island, situated in the western part of the delta. The current projects include the following activities:

1. Setting up an eco-agricultural management plan.
2. Establishing an information office for the local population, farmers and (eco) tourists.
3. Monitoring natural values, including migratory birds and vegetation.
4. Feasibility study on eco-tourism.
5. Stimulating the agrarian production within the conditions of ecological management
6. Providing farmers on Rusne Island with equipment and training

EUCC activities started in Spring 1994. The Rusne Fund for Nature was established following an EUCC workshop in December 1995. By Summer 1996 the management plan was almost finalised and the first steps for implementation were being taken.

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### **Workshop on the International Flyway Management Plan for the Dark-bellied Brent Goose**

A workshop on the International Flyway Management Plan for the Dark-bellied Brent Goose (*Branta b. bernicla*) was held on January 23-27, 1997 on the Dutch island of Texel. This workshop was attended by 50 participants representing different organisations (farmers, conservationists, scientists, policy-makers and hunters) from Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, United Kingdom, Belgium, France and Russia.

Since the first realistic estimate of the population in 1955-1957, which yielded 16,500 birds, the geese have made a remarkable comeback. In the 1994-1995 season, the population was estimated at 250,000. Because their traditional habitats are under pressure, the population increase frequently causes conflicts with agriculture.

At the 7<sup>th</sup> Trilateral Governmental Wadden Sea Conference (1994), the secretariat of the Bonn Convention was asked to develop an international conservation plan for this species within the framework of AEWA. The Netherlands was prepared to act as a forerunner to assist the Bonn Convention.

During the workshop, the following items were discussed in detail:

- Conservation and management of natural habitats;
- Possibilities for reducing conflicts with agricultural practice on international and local level.
- Possibilities for re-opening the hunt;
- Monitoring and research.

The most important recommendations made during the workshop were:

- To realise a close integration between environmental aspects of the European Union's Common Agricultural Policy where it relates to solving conflicts between geese and farmers.
- To hold a technical meeting of experts in 1999 to test a simulation model of the population dynamics of the Dark-bellied Brent Goose. The results provide a technical scientific basis for discussion on re-opening the hunt of these geese.

The final version of the international management plan is expected to be ready at the end of 1998.

For more information, contact:

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### **Atlas of Anatidae Populations in Africa and Western Eurasia**

On November 28, 1996 the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, Nature Management and Fisheries organised a reception to welcome Wetland International after their relocation to the Netherlands from the United Kingdom. During the reception, Minister van Aartsen received the first copy of the Atlas of Anatidae Populations.

Wetland International produced this Atlas as part of an AEWA project. The book, counting 336 pages and 61 colour maps, gives a wealth of information about conservation status, network of key sites, population sizes, habitat/ecology and so on for the whole flyway. This source of integrated knowledge is expected to be used by policy officers as a basis for their decisions regarding the conservation of migratory waterfowl.

Publication of this Atlas was financed by the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, Nature Management and Fisheries in co-operation with the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC, United Kingdom).

The focal points for AEWA in all countries received a free copy of the Atlas. Other interested parties can order the Atlas at the address below. The paperback edition costs UK £ 15.00 and the hardback edition is UK £ 20.00 per copy, this does not include costs for postage and packing.

Comments on the text of the Atlas, additions and errors can be reported to Paul Rose, Wetland International. For more information or to order a copy, contact:

**Natural History Book Service Ltd  
2-3 Wills Road, Totnes, Devon, TQ9 5XN,  
United Kingdom  
Fax: (+44) 1803 865 280**

### **Assessment of the problem of fish-eating birds in inland fisheries in England and Wales**

In 1995, in response to growing concern about the perceived impact of fish-eating birds (cormorants <*Phalacrocorax carbo*>, goosanders <*Mergus merganser*> and red-breasted mergansers <*Mergus serrator*>) on inland fisheries in England and Wales, the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAFF), the Department of the Environment and the National Rivers Authority sponsored a research programme on fish-eating birds. One of the projects of the programme comprised a full scientific review of the problem of fish-eating birds in inland fisheries. This review was undertaken by a consortium of research organisations led by the Directorate of Fisheries Research, Lowestoft.

The results of this research are presented in the report "Assessment of the problem of fish-eating birds in inland fisheries in England and Wales (by I.C. Russell, P.J. Dare, D.R. Eaton and J.D. Armstrong, 1996). This report assesses the impact of the above-mentioned birds on fish farms, stillwater fisheries and riverine fisheries. The final conclusion of this research is that the interaction between fish and fish-eating birds is one of the factors which influence the size and structure of fish populations in freshwater habitats. Ideally, losses to predators

should be viewed in the context of other environmental and anthropogenic factors which might affect fish stock size.

If you are interested, the report or a the summary of the report may be purchased from the CEFAS Library. The price of the full report is UK£ 10 and UK£ 7.50 for the summary. Both prices exclude postage and packing.

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### **World Wide Web site**

Information about AEWA is available via the Bonn Secretariat on the World Wide Web Site. If you have access to the Internet, have a look at: <http://www.wcmc.org.uk/cms>. This site, the product of a fruitful collaboration between the (CMS) Secretariat of the Bonn Convention and the World Conservation Monitoring Centre (Cambridge, UK), offers a wide range of information on CMS in English, French and Spanish, including information about Agreements like AEWA under CMS.

### **Workshop on the Great Cormorant**

A workshop "Towards an International Conservation and Management Plan for the Great Cormorant" was held October 3-4, 1996 in Lelystad, the Netherlands.

The European population of the Great cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*) has a favourable conservation status, its numbers have increased to such an extent that there have been complaints about damage to fish ponds, fish stocks and the environment.

57 experts from Canada, Belgium, Denmark, Germany, France, Italy, Luxemburg, the Netherlands, Ukraine, Austria, Poland, Portugal Slovakia, Slovenia, the Czech Republic, UK, Sweden and Switzerland discussed the problems. For this discussion, the second draft of the report "Cormorants *Phalacrocorax* in Europe-a first step towards a European management plan" was used.

During this workshop six different scenarios were discussed to reduce the damage. All these scenarios seem to have pros and cons.

At the end of the workshop the following proposal was accepted:

1. A Danish/ Dutch project team shall draft an action plan.
2. The project team shall explore the possibility of introducing the species action plan as a Recommendation for the Conference of the Parties of the Bonn Convention.
3. Each country could use the draft plan to take national measures. The AEWA secretariat could act as a co-ordinating body.

The draft action plan is expected to be ready in 1997.

For more information, contact:

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### **Publication of *Globally threatened birds in Europe, action plans***

This book focuses on 23 of Europe's most endangered species. It was written by Birdlife International in co-operation with other NGOs. The European Union's LIFE programme

provided the necessary funds for the three-year operation. Almost 370 experts from most European countries were involved.

Of the 23 species, ten belong to the group of migratory waterbirds included in Annex 2 of AEW. These are:

- \* Dalmatian Pelican (*Pelecanus crispus*)
- \* Lesser White-fronted Goose (*Anser erythropus*)
- \* Red-breasted Goose (*Branta ruficollis*)
- \* Marbled Teal (*Marmoreta angustirostris*)
- \* Ferruginous Duck (*Aythya nyroca*)
- \* Steller's Eider (*Polysticta stelleri*)
- \* White-headed Duck (*Oxyura leucocephala*)
- \* Sociable Plover (*Chettusia gregaria*)
- \* Slender-billed Curlew (*Numenius tenuirostris*)
- \* Andouin's Gull (*Larus audouinii*)

Each action plan consists of three main sections:

1. Basic information about status, ecology, threats and current conservation status.
2. The aims and generic objectives of the plan.
3. Recommended conservation actions per country.

In January 1996 the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention adopted Recommendation No. 48 on the conservation of European globally threatened birds based on the action plans for the 23 species. In December 1996 the Standing Committee decided to form a panel of experts to implement the action plans. This panel should meet every two years. The first meeting will be in Izmir (Turkey) on May 5-8, 1997.

The book is published by:

**Council of Europe Publishing**  
**F-67075 Strasbourg-Cedex.**  
**(ISBN 92-871-3066-3)**  
**Council of Europe 1996.**

#### **Conferences- Meetings of Interest**

- **March 14-18:** 44<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation (C.I.C.), Buenos Aires, Argentina. Info: C.I.C., 85 bis, avenue de Wagram, F-75017 Paris, tel: (+33 1) 47660609, fax: (+33 1) 47664761.
- **April 10-16:** Conference of the Parties of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), Geneva, Switzerland. Info: UNEP/CMS Secretariat, UN Premises in Bonn, Martin-Luther King sStr. 8, D-53175 Bonn, Germany, tel: (+49 228) 815 2401/2, fax: (+49 228) 815 2449, E-mail: cms@unep.de.
- **May 5-8:** Meeting of the Panel of Experts on the Conservation of Birds, Izmir, Turkey. Info: Council of Europe, Environment and Management Division, Tel: (+33) 3 88 412259, Fax: (+33) 3 88 413751.
- **May 21-25:** The Pripyat and Yaselda Wetlands-Natural Heritage of Polesia, Minsk, Belorussia. Info: Dr. M. Flade, Landesanstalt for grossschutzgebiete Brandenburg, Stadtsee 1-4, D-16225 Eberswalde, Germany.
- **June 6-7:** "Coastlines '97", 6<sup>th</sup> European Union for Coastal Conservation (EUCC), Naples, Italy. Info: Titta Vadalà, President EUCC-Italy, tel: (+39) 6 8079435, fax: (+39) 6 8078839.
- **August 19-22:** Seminar on Dune Management in Denmark around Skagen, North Jutland. Info: National Forest and Nature Agency, 8. kt., 53 Haralsgade, DK-2100 Copenhagen O, Denmark. fax: (+45) 39279899.

#### **Barnacle Goose Flyway Management Plan**

The interim Secretariat received an update concerning the Svalbard Barnacle Geese (*Branta leucopsis*) population in connection with the Barnacle Goose Flyway Plan.

The Svalbard Barnacle Goose is listed under the Bonn Convention and AEWA. In the AEWA Action Plan the following status of the population is given: the population of the Svalbard Barnacle Goose numbers 10,000 - 25,000 birds (Table 1, Column A, Category 2). According to the Action Plan, parties shall prepare and implement national single species action plans for populations listed in Column A of Table 1.

The Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust (WWT) has taken the lead in proposals for a Flyway Management Plan for the Svalbard Barnacle Goose. A first draft was made by contract of the Scottish Natural Heritage. This was completed for a meeting held in Dumfries, Scotland on November 22-23, 1995 where the plan was discussed. WWT completed the second draft (160 pages), under contract by the Norwegian Directorate for Nature Management, in July 1996.

The structure of the Plan is adapted from the Greenland White-fronted Goose Plan (David A. Stroud, JNCC, 1992). It improves on that plan by including results from population model estimates to assess the likelihood of further change in the population size.

The Plan will be completed in the next 12 months and will be published in Scotland and Norway.

For further information, contact:

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### **Agreement update**

Since August 15, 1996 the African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement (AEWA) has been open for signing at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in The Hague (the Netherlands). Since then, Ireland, the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland, Germany, Sudan and Jordan have signed the Agreement with reservations in respect to ratification. Guinea, Switzerland and the Netherlands signed without needing ratification.

Between August 15 and November 15, the Secretariat contacted all 120 Range States to monitor the present situation concerning the signing and ratifying of AEWA. The Agricultural Attachés of the Kingdom of the Netherlands also played an important role in stressing the importance of this Agreement for Range States. It became clear that many countries are preparing to sign and ratify AEWA. More Range States are expected to sign AEWA in the first half of 1997.

### **African Waterfowl Census 1996**

The results of the African Waterfowl Census 1996 (AfWC) were published in late 1996 by Wetlands International. This census will play a major supporting role for the Ramsar Convention and AEWA. In total, 25 countries participated in this census, including Benin, Mozambique and Togo who participated for the first time. During a review and development meeting devoted to AfWC, held in Senegal in February 1996, one important recommendation was the formation of a co-ordinating committee for the census. Wetlands International hopes to launch this committee in 1997. Within the framework of the new West-Africa project supported by the Dutch Government, the committee will be responsible for guiding the future

direction of the census, increasing co-operation and defining priorities, amongst other activities.

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#### **Film on "Our Brent Goose in Siberia"**

The film "Our Brent Goose in Siberia" shows how the Dutch Institute for Forestry and Nature Research (IBN-DLO), in co-operation with the Russian Academy of Sciences, do research in the Taymir region of the Siberian Arctic. The aim of this research is to find out what factors are of importance in the breeding grounds for the population dynamics and the number of wintering geese in Western Europe. For the first time, it was possible to do research in this area and to film the wilderness of North Siberia. The film, made by Musch & Tinbergen Production, lasts nearly fifty minutes and gives a good insight in the management problems of a species over its total flyway.

For more information, contact

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#### **INITIATIVES FOR WETLANDS AND WATERBIRDS IN WEST AFRICA**

Significant developments are underway to launch a series of new projects as part of the Programme of International Nature Management (PIN) of the Netherlands. This programme aims to support innovative wetland projects linked closely to international wetland policies, especially the Ramsar Convention and AEWA, focusing on West Africa. The programme includes two major projects which will be co-ordinated by Wetlands International from a regional base in Senegal, with the first 3.5 year phase scheduled to commence in mid 1997.

The first project will comprise regional training courses and workshops, the development of national survey teams and a large number of field activities. The main objective will be to develop regional capacity for managing wetland monitoring activities and to use the results in the most practical ways possible for site and species management and wetland awareness. The main framework for project development is the African Waterfowl Census. This international survey programme, launched in 1991, has secured a wide network of participants across Africa. In turn, this network has actively requested support, especially in training to enable the development of national and regional survey programmes, and the integration of these into existing structures. Throughout the region, key national collaborating agencies have been carefully identified during meetings and discussions in ten West African states in 1996.

The second project will focus specifically on one of the region's largest and most important wetlands - the Inner Niger Delta in Mali. Further details will be provided in a future newsletter.

PIN is a Dutch multi-ministerial programme co-ordinated by the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature Management and Fisheries. The Ministry has also appointed a special Agricultural Councillor for West Africa, Dr R. Bosch, to promote these and other initiatives which build the influence of international conventions relating to wetlands in the region.

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#### **Numbers and distribution of Red-crested Pochard in South-Western/ Central Europe.**

In the last few years, wintering numbers of Red-crested Pochard (*Netta rufina*) in Switzerland have risen dramatically, while they seem to have declined in the south-western Mediterranean. However, it is not clear whether the population has simply shifted its wintering range or has augmented at the same time.

The south-western European population of *Netta rufina* is one of the species for which AEWA requires an action plan.

The Swiss Federal Department of the Environment is funding a study by the Swiss Ornithological Institute to compile existing data on numbers and distribution of *Netta rufina* outside the breeding season and to identify gaps in our knowledge.

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#### **Working Group of the Arctic Countries on the Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF)**

During the last meeting of CAFF, September 1996 in Rovaniemi/ Finland, it was decided that the Russian Federation, in close co-operation with the Netherlands, would prepare a report on the conservation of arctic breeding birds during migration. During a recent meeting in Moscow, the Russian Federation and the Netherlands, represented by their CAFF delegates Dr. Pishleov and Dr. Boere, agreed that Wetlands International will be given a contract to draft such a report to be ready for discussions during the next CAFF meeting in September 1997 in Greenland. This study will certainly, among many other treaties and agreements, pay attention to the way AEWA may be used by Arctic countries to protect their migratory arctic breeding birds.

Within the same contract with Wetlands International, extra funds are available to prepare a specific study on the consequences for the Russian Federation as a whole if steps are taken to sign AEWA. Both studies will be funded by the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, Nature Management and Fisheries.

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