

THE AFRICAN-EURASIAN WATERBIRD AGREEMENT, AN AGREEMENT UND THE BONN CONVENTION
AIMS TO CREATE A LEGAL BASIS FOR A CONCERTED CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT POLICY BY THE
RANGE STATES FOR MIGRATORY WATERBIRDS SPECIES

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AFRICAN-EURASIAN MIGRATORY WATER BIRD AGREEMENT

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NEWSLETTER



CMS/AEWA JOINT OPENING CEREMONY

The seventh Conference of the Parties to the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS COP7) and the second Meeting of the Parties to the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds Agreement (AEWA MOP2) opened at a joint ceremony on 18 September 2002.

Mr. Jürgen Trittin, German Federal Minister for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety, welcomed delegates to Bonn for the opening of the CMS and AEWA meetings. He highlighted climate change as a major threat to migratory species, noting that the German Government has committed 500 million Euros for climate change reduction programmes, including increasing the market share of solar and wind power.

Ms. Bärbel Dieckmann, Mayor of Bonn, observed that CMS COP7 was the first UN conference after the recent World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) held in Johannesburg. She drew attention to Bonn's role as the host of various international conferences, as well as the home of many national and international governmental and non-governmental institutions. She highlighted the recent agreement between Germany and the UN to establish a UN campus in Bonn.

Mr. Demetrio Ignacio, Chair of the CMS Standing Committee, praised Germany's support of CMS since 1979. He stressed the growing number of Parties, as well as the expanding scope of the activities of CMS, and drew attention to the joint work programme between CMS and the Convention on Biological Diversity.

Mr. Yousoof Mungroo, Chair of the AEWA Technical Committee, highlighted that the number of Parties to AEWA has doubled to 34 since MOP1 in 1999, and called on other countries to join. He also expressed gratitude for the generous financial support of several countries.

AEWA OPENING CEREMONY

The Second Meeting of the Parties to AEWA began on 25 September 2002 with an opening address by Mr. Michael von Websky, Deputy Director-General of the German Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety. After welcoming all delegates to what he classed as "a most important meeting", he stressed Germany's commitment to international nature conservation efforts and highlighted the German

Government's decision to allocate one million Euros to the implementation of the African-Eurasian Flyway Global Environment Facility (GEF) project in the period 2004-2008.

Speaking on behalf of UNEP Executive Director Mr. Klaus Töpfer, Deputy Director Mr. Shafqat Kakakhel highlighted relevant targets adopted during the WSSD, including reducing the current rate of biodiversity loss. He praised the CMS for providing an international framework for specialised agreements on migratory species, and highlighted its focus on Africa.

On behalf of His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, CMS Executive Secretary Mr. Arnulf Müller-Helmbrecht praised the CMS as a "splendid champion" for protecting vulnerable species for over 20 years. While highlighting its successes to date, he noted that only a few hundred of the 5,000 known migratory species benefit from the CMS approach, and urged delegates to give full support to the Convention's ongoing work. He drew particular attention to the CMS Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels, noting that commercial fishing activities pose a serious threat to "these wonderful and charismatic birds".

Mr. Claude Martin, WWF International Director, on behalf of WWF, the IUCN, Birdlife International and Wetlands International, emphasised the importance of establishing partnerships between governments, the private sector and NGOs to address transboundary conservation issues.



*Mr Shafqat Kakakhel
Deputy Director UNEP*



Government's decision to allocate one million Euros to the implementation of the African-Eurasian Flyway Global Environment Facility (GEF) project in the period 2004-2008.

Mr. Yousoof Mungroo, Chair of the AEWA Technical Committee, thanked the German Government for its continued commitment to AEWA and stated that he was looking forward to "a fruitful and friendly meeting", which in retrospect, people said was a remarkably fitting description of MOP2.

The Executive Secretary of CMS, Mr. Arnulf Müller-Helmbrecht, underlined the position of AEWA as the largest agreement under CMS and highlighted several outcomes of CMS COP7 that are of direct importance to AEWA, including resolutions on oil pollution, electrocution of migrating birds, and wind turbines. Also, he noted that the CMS Information Management Plan and the proposed new database for global registration of migratory species are directly in line with AEWA's objectives.

Mr. Robert Hepworth, on behalf of UNEP Executive Director Klaus Töpfer, praised AEWA as "a living example of good cooperation between countries", and emphasised that this joint CMS/AEWA meeting, being the first intergovernmental meeting since the World Summit on Sustainable Development, played a responsible role in reducing biodiversity loss.

MR. MICHAEL VON WEBSKY, CHAIR OF AEWA MOP2, AND REPRESENTATIVE OF THE HOST COUNTRY, GERMANY:

“Germany regards AEWA, a major regional agreement under CMS, as an agreement of the utmost importance. AEWA greatly facilitates the protection of important migratory waterbird species and their habitats throughout the entire flyway. The development of AEWA has ensured considerable progress in international waterbird protection.

Germany is the host country of the Secretariats of CMS and AEWA. Germany believes that member countries participating in multilateral environmental agreements should not only rely on the agreement secretariats, but also acknowledge their political responsibility by supporting the agreement as much as possible. Germany has therefore been eager to invite the Secretariats to Bonn, and to host the CMS COP7 and AEWA MOP2.

One of the most important aspects of MOP2, and any other international meeting, is the process of creating mutual understanding. There is, for example, a constant need of scientific understanding of species' conservation status, and of concrete measures that member countries can take to protect waterbirds during migration, resting and feeding. In this respect, countries often face practical and administrative problems, and it is in cases such as this when an exchange of information and experiences is invaluable. Also, the development of Action Plans is important in this regard, as they provide countries with practical ideas and solutions.

In my opinion, one of the highlights of MOP2 was the plan to protect the entire African-Eurasian Flyway through a major GEF project, and the German Government's announcement to support this project with one million Euros during the period 2004-2008. Such initiatives are extremely important to ensure reliable long-term protection of waterbirds and their habitats.

It was truly a pleasure to chair this meeting. People were very cooperative and no significant difficulties were encountered. However, my impression was that the time allocated to the working groups was not sufficient. There should have been more opportunity for discussions and negotiations. That way the plenary sessions would have been more efficient time-wise. I would recommend that future MOPs be one day longer to allow more time to digest and discuss the proposals.

Regarding future developments, I am very much in favour of continuous development and strengthening of political linkages and synergies with other multilateral environmental agreements. Two very appropriate and efficient bodies to address waterbird protection are the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Ramsar Convention, for example. Together with AEWA and other regional agreements, these conventions can achieve significant results with regard to the protection of migratory waterbirds on flyway level. I think it is very important that all of these conventions and agreements look at each other's agendas and actively seek each other's input and support.

Another important focus for AEWA and other agreements should be to acquire sufficient access to PR and the media in order to avoid scientists only talking to each other behind closed doors. A constant effort is needed to involve the broader audience by, for example, inviting journalists to meetings, and mobilising Ministers for opening ceremonies. Public involvement is incredibly important.”



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ORGANISATIONAL MATTERS AND OPENING STATEMENTS

The Plenary appointed Mr. Michael von Websky (Germany) as Chair of the Meeting, and Mr. Mbareck Diop (Senegal) as Vice Chair. Mr. Alfousseyni Semega (Mali) was appointed Chair of the Credentials Committee, Mr. Yousoof Mungroo (Mauritius) as Chair of the Technical Working Group, and Mr. Mbareck Diop (Senegal) as Chair of the Administrative Working Groups. These groups met in separate, parallel sessions throughout MOP2.

In total, 33 Contracting Parties were represented, as well as 62 non-Contracting Parties and 26 inter-governmental and non-governmental organisations.

During an exhaustive series of positive and stimulating opening statements, it became clear that a large number of non-contracting Parties recognise the importance of AEWA, and many of those have the intention of ratifying the Agreement in the near future. Ukraine, Lebanon, Syria and Hungary noted their recent ratifications, while Chad and Ghana expressed hope to ratify by December 2002, Norway and Uzbekistan by 2003, and Gabon and Estonia by MOP3. The following countries noted ongoing work toward accession: Kazakhstan, Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire, Ireland, Zimbabwe, Rwanda, Nigeria, Ethiopia and Comoros. Nepal, Togo, Algeria, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Sierra Leone expressed their recognition of AEWA's objectives and their intention to participate in Agreement activities. Some problems were mentioned in relation to the accession process; these included bureaucracy, administrative issues, lack of finances and the fact that nature conservation is not a country's main priority.

REPORT OF THE SECRETARIAT

In a short presentation, Mr. Bert Lenten, Executive Secretary of AEWA, outlined the activities of the Secretariat since 2000. Most of the daily work of the Secretariat consists of maintaining the network, i.e. communicating with Contracting Parties and encouraging other countries to become a Party. Secondly, as the Secretariat is responsible for all administrative and financial matters of AEWA, it regularly produces financial reports and reviews of the budget.

In 1999, it was decided to form an Agreement's Unit within CMS, and to co-locate the European-based and UNEP administrated Agreements: EUROBATS, ASCOBANS and AEWA. This requires synchronisation of the activities of these Agreements with CMS and vice versa.

The Secretariat recruited Ms. Mirna Maya as an Assistant, starting in 2001. Furthermore, the Secretariat contracted consultants on a temporary basis, and received support from interns. The persistently high workload of the Secretariat, however, indicates a need for recruitment of additional staff members.

During the last year, the Secretariat put a lot of effort into preparing for MOP2. The main activities included making logistical arrangements and composing the necessary documents, both in English and in French. In preparation for MOP2, the Secretariat organised and supervised three Technical Committee meetings.

In accordance with the decision taken by the Technical Committee at its first meeting, the Secretariat started in 2001 with the preparations for the establishment of a working group to implement the Dark-bellied Brent Goose Management Plan. The third draft of the Management Plan was distributed to the Range States, and a first meeting of the Working Group was held in Denmark, in October 2001.

The Secretariat regularly publishes a newsletter to keep the Range States updated on the latest developments in the Agreement area and to provide stakeholders with ideas about conservation, communication and coordination issues. In 2002, the Secretariat started to publish, in addition to this regular newsletter, a series of special editions of this newsletter. The first issue, on the use of non-toxic shot for hunting in wetlands, was published just prior to MOP2, and an issue on the GEF Flyway project has been scheduled as well.

An important part of the Secretariat's activities is made up of the coordination of international conservation projects. These can be divided into four focus points: Species Conservation (e.g. development of new International Single Species Action Plans); Management of Human Activities (e.g. review of the use of non-toxic shot for waterbird hunting); Research and Monitoring (e.g. report on the status and trends of populations for MOP2); and Education and Information (e.g. development of the Agreement's website).

Other activities that the Secretariat is involved in, include a joint work plan with the Ramsar Bureau, and the African-Eurasian Flyway GEF project.

REPORT OF THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

The Chair of the Technical Committee, Mr. Youssoof Mungroo, outlined the activities of the Technical Committee since its establishment at MOP1 in 1999. Special attention was drawn to the following areas of interest: the format of national reports; the implementation of the International Implementation Priorities 2000-2004; amendments to the Action Plan; the Conservation Guidelines; development of a format for Species Action Plans; developments on the Global Register of Migratory Species; development of an Action Plan for the Central Asian-South Asian Flyway; phasing out the use of lead shot for hunting in wetlands; and the establishment of the Dark-bellied Brent Goose Working Group. Most of the developments in these areas resulted in Resolution Drafts for MOP2.



MR. ARNULF MÜLLER-HELMBRECHT,
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF THE CONVENTION
ON THE CONSERVATION OF MIGRATORY
SPECIES OF WILD ANIMALS (CMS):

"AEWA is the flagship agreement under CMS. In terms of both the number of species and the geographical area covered, AEWA is the largest of the agreements. It covers the group of wild animals that are hunted the most by sports hunters and subsistence hunters. In addition, birds are animals that appeal to a broad range of audiences.

During the three years of its existence, AEWA has proved to be very valuable in providing a good balance in international coordination and concerted action involving all stakeholders. By promoting development and communication, AEWA is an excellent example of cooperation between enthusiastic people. It emphasises the importance of nature conservation through international coordination.

Since its coming into force in 1999, CMS has been very pleased with the development of AEWA. It was a pleasant surprise that so many species were already included in the Action Plan at the First Meeting of the Parties. This development has continued at MOP2, which is extremely positive. Now we need to focus on convincing as many parties as possible to sign the AEWA. Promoting its implementation is also an absolute priority.

Meetings like this are necessary in order to make international treaties come alive and make a difference. International cooperation needs international communication. The atmosphere, during both CMS COP7 and AEWA MOP2, was excellent. The participants all had a common goal. Many of them knew each other from previous meetings, and some of them were not just colleagues but also friends. This is a great advantage: a good atmosphere makes cooperation much easier. Also, many good ideas are developed during informal brainstorming in the corridors. This shows the importance of international meetings."

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SYNTHESIS OF PARTY REPORTS

Executive Secretary, Mr. Bert Lenten noted that only ten countries had submitted national reports, of which two were Non-Parties. He added that due to time constraints, the Secretariat would synthesise the reports after the meeting. He urged all Parties to submit their national reports as soon as possible, noting that review, development and implementation of the Agreement are impossible without regular and accurate updates on the conservation situation in the Range States.

PHASING OUT LEAD SHOT FOR HUNTING IN WETLANDS

Ms. Nienke Beintema, on behalf of the AEWA Secretariat, presented the draft resolution on phasing out the use of lead shot for hunting in wetlands. Thousands of tonnes of lead ammunition, accumulating in wetland bottoms per country, per year, form a serious threat to wetland habitats and waterbird species. Waterbirds ingest the highly poisonous lead pellets, mistaking them for food items or grit. For several decades this has been leading to large-scale deaths. Through the food chain, lead also causes mortality in other animals, including raptors. Some countries have already successfully switched to the use of non-toxic alternatives, but practical, financial and awareness issues obstruct developments in many countries.

The newly adopted Resolution 2.2 ('Phasing out lead shot for hunting in wetlands') calls upon Contracting Parties to enhance their efforts in phasing out the use of lead shot. The main recommendations issued by the Technical Committee in its lead poisoning review are quoted in Resolution 2.2 as important means of achieving this goal. These are, namely, to promote communication and awareness (concerning both authorities and the hunting community); to allocate resources for the enforcement of relevant laws; and to stimulate and facilitate the production and availability of non-toxic shot.

Very importantly, the Resolution calls upon Parties to report at each MOP on their progress regarding legislation and other relevant aspects, in accordance with self-imposed and published timetables. Also, Parties are to specify how they plan to overcome any problems encountered.

Communication and coordination are the other main focus points of this Resolution, in addition to the stimulation of the use of non-toxic shot, the allocation financing for research, and the development of awareness-raising campaigns and training programmes for hunters.

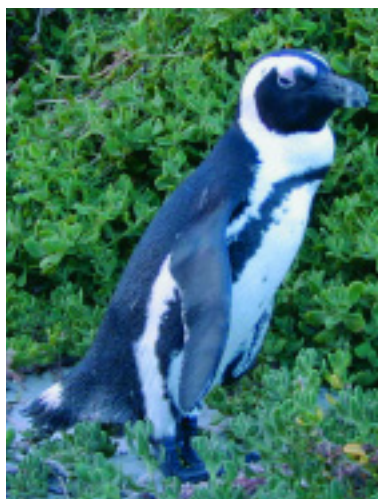


AMENDMENTS TO THE ACTION PLAN

First Amendments to the initial Action Plan were made as a result of Resolution 1.9, adopted at the first Meeting of the Parties in Cape Town, South Africa in November 1999. Among other things, this resolution requested the Secretariat and/or the Technical Committee to review current data on population status, to stimulate the preparation of Single Species Action Plans, and to consider changes in the contents of Annex 2 of the Agreement and Table 1 of the Action Plan. Such changes would be discussed at Meetings of the Parties, and specified in Resolutions.

Resolution 2.1 ('Amendments to the Annexes of the Agreement'), adopted at MOP2, is a result of that. It states, among other things, that Parties agreed to include an additional 65 species in annex 2 of the Agreement, in accordance with documentation provided by Wetlands International and discussed and amended by the Meeting. The revised version of Table 1 of the Action Plan was subsequently adopted.

There was much discussion about the conservation status of four populations of waterbirds - the North-west European and Northern European/West Mediterranean populations of Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*), the North-west European population of Pintail (*Anas acuta*), and the Baltic, Denmark and Netherlands population of Common Eider (*Somateria mollissima*). Noting apparent declines - and observing the precaution principle - it was decided to retain the current categorisations of those populations. However, the Technical Committee was called upon to urgently review these listings in cooperation with Wetlands International and other experts. It was decided to discuss the matter further at MOP3.



Furthermore, Resolution 2.1 requests the Secretariat to monitor the implementation of the amendments and to stimulate the preparation of Single and Multi-species Action Plans for those species identified as having an unfavourable conservation status. Parties are encouraged to consider, when necessary, the development and implementation of international Multi-species Action Plans.

Questions were asked about the interpretation of the term 'significant long-term decline' in the context of Table 1 of the Action Plan, and the Technical Committee was called upon to specify this through guidelines. The Technical

Committee was also asked to assess the issues arising when 'bio-geographical populations' are used as practical units for conservation management.

Currently, population estimates and 'one percent thresholds' are reviewed and regularly updated by Wetlands International in conjunction with the triennial Conferences of the Parties to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance. However, when AEWA MOPs precede Ramsar COPs, and thereby precede the publication and endorsement of these population estimates, practical difficulties arise. The newly adopted Resolution 2.1 therefore requests the Secretariat to coordinate this timing with the Ramsar Bureau. Also, it was mentioned that the usability of reports on the conservation status of waterbirds would be significantly improved if they included not only population estimates, but also analytical content reviewing for example patterns of changing conservation status.

The Resolution also requests the Technical Committee to review further development of the Agreement by including additional species of wetland birds and species that are not wetland species *sensu stricto*, for example species traditionally considered as seabirds.

Finally, with the aim of enhancing the population assessment procedure, the Resolution urges countries to regularly supply monitoring data to the International Waterbird Census.



IMPLEMENTATION OF AWEA PRIORITIES

Mr. Ward Hagemeijer (Wetlands International) reported on the performance of the AWEA International Implementation Priorities (IIP) 2000-2004. He presented a project overview showing that funds have been secured for the execution of 12 of the proposed 33 IIP projects so far. In addition, another 11 projects have been included in the African-Eurasian Flyway GEF Project. These projects include for example, the identification of all sites of international importance for AWEA species, and of priority areas for further survey work and better protection. Assuming that this full-size GEF project will be approved by the middle of 2003, approximately 50% of the funds to carry out these projects will be covered by GEF. Only 10 projects remain for which no funds have been found yet. Examples of these projects are the implementation of existing international single species action plans (although one voluntary contribution has been received for the Dark-bellied Brent Goose Action Plan), the evaluation of bird harvests in the Agreement Area, and the development and implementation of a Communications Strategy for the Agreement. Following this outline, Mr. Hagemeijer introduced a proposal for International Implementation Priorities 2003-2007. The list of proposed activities was based on an extensive consultation with the Range States and a large network of experts, including research institutes, conservation NGOs, Specialist Groups and others. This consultation resulted in proposals to change existing priorities, and to add new priorities. New priorities include the publication of flyway atlases for Gulls, Terns, Herons, Ibises, Storks and Rallidae; the development of an interactive tool that presents information on important sites for migratory waterbirds; the improvement of survey and monitoring capacity for migratory waterbirds; and an orientation on the use of telemetry for researching migratory waterbirds. The amended list of priorities was adopted through Resolution 2.4 ('International Implementation Priorities for 2003-2007'). The resolution requests the support of GEF to approve the full African-Eurasian Flyways project, indicating that this could substantially assist eligible countries with the joint implementation of priority actions of AWEA and the Ramsar Convention. The resolution urges Contracting Parties to ensure the implementation of the priorities and to develop new international cooperation projects. Finally, the resolution requests bilateral and multilateral donors to provide financial assistance to the IIP projects, and particularly through supporting the International Waterbird Census.

“MEETINGS LIKE THIS ARE NECESSARY IN ORDER TO MAKE INTERNATIONAL TREATIES COME ALIVE AND MAKE A DIFFERENCE.”

ARNULF MÜLLER-HELMBRECHT

CONSERVATION GUIDELINES

At MOP1, initial conservation guidelines were accepted to assist the Contracting Parties with the implementation of the Agreement and the Action Plan. The Technical Committee reviewed these guidelines, taking into consideration input from experts and comments received from participants at MOP1. The International Implementation Priorities 2000-2004 created a possibility to supplement the initial guidelines with additional ones. Ms. Tomme Young (IUCN Environmental Law Center) presented the draft conservation guideline on national legislation for migratory waterbirds, and Mr. Myrfyn Owen (Just Ecology Environmental Consultancy) introduced the draft guideline on avoidance of introduction of non-native species of waterbirds. He reviewed the risks that non-native species pose to natural populations, citing the North-American Ruddy Duck (*Oxyura jamaicensis*), Canada Goose (*Branta canadensis*) and Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*) as examples. Noting that 113 non-native species exist in the wild in the AWEA area, of which five are high or medium risk to native wildlife, he outlined necessary measures to combat the problem.

Resolution 2.3 ('Conservation Guidelines'), accepted at MOP2, states that these draft guidelines were accepted as interim guidelines. They will be reviewed and open for acceptance at MOP3. The Secretariat was requested to regularly review the already existing conservation guidelines, to disseminate the new interim guidelines, and to monitor their use in the implementation of the Agreement.

In addition, Resolution 2.3 calls for cooperation between AWEA and, inter alia, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the Ramsar Convention, especially regarding guidelines related to the control of non-native waterbird species at the global level. At the latest CBD COP, the issue was already discussed, resulting in CBD-COP6-Decision VI/23 on alien species that threaten ecosystems, habitats and species, including Guiding Principles on Invasive Alien Species.



INTERNATIONAL SINGLE SPECIES ACTION PLANS

Dr. Umberto Gallo-Orsi (Birdlife International) introduced International Single Species Action Plans for the Sociable Plover (*Vanellus gregarius*), the Black-winged Pratincole (*Glareola nordmanni*) and the Great Snipe (*Gallinago media*).

These three species are extremely vulnerable internationally and are therefore a top priority in the relevant Conventions. For example, the world breeding population of the Sociable Plover, a colonial steppe-breeder, consists of only 200-600 breeding pairs. Their species is endangered due to intensified land use, land abandonment and lack of grazers, and predation by corvids. For this species, and also for the Black-winged Pratincole and the Sociable Plover, there is a lack of knowledge on the ecology, distribution and population size of the species. In the breeding ranges, there is a clear need of surveys and monitoring schemes, and the identification and implementation of adequate management techniques. Public awareness is also an issue. The Great Snipe Action Plan aims particularly at keeping the species out of the IUCN Red List through actions such as the establishment of protected areas and the regulation of hunting. All three international Single Species Action Plans were later adopted by the Meeting as Resolution 2.13.

Dr. Umberto Gallo-Orsi also introduced a document on a Format for AEWA Species Action Plans, recommending the use of internationally agreed standards and outlining proposed chapters on biological assessment, threats, and the implementation of legislation.

Mr. Bart Ebginge (Chairman of the Dark-bellied Brent Goose Working Group) introduced the Action Plan for the Dark-bellied Brent Goose (*Branta bernicla bernicla*). He highlighted measures that were proposed at the second meeting of the Dark-bellied Brent Goose Working Group, for example the identification of sources of funding. The Working Group composed a draft International Action Plan, which it will finalise in the near future. The Draft Action Plan was adopted by the Meeting as Recommendation 2.1. It calls upon Contracting Parties to regard this recommendation as interim guidance for the implementation of the action plan. Also, it requests the Contracting Parties, Range States and organisations to provide financial assistance for the development of a population model for the species. A final plan will be brought to MOP3 for formal adoption.

ACTION PLAN FOR THE CENTRAL ASIAN – SOUTH ASIAN FLYWAY

Mr. Ward Hagemeijer (Wetlands International) presented the background and progress of the development of an Action Plan for the Central Asian – South Asian Flyway (CASAF; formerly Central Asian – Indian Flyway; this name was amended at CMS COP7).

In bio-geographical terms, this flyway is a fairly closed migration system for a large number of waterbird species, which are breeding in the Arctic region and/or south of it, and annually migrate southwards to countries such as Pakistan, India and Sri Lanka, and even the Maldives. A coordinated and concerted action would be very beneficial for this flyway and its management, including systematic research and monitoring of species.

During a special workshop in Uzbekistan in August 2001, three different options were put forward to coordinate such concerted conservation actions in the future: (1) to develop a new CMS Agreement for CASAF; (2) to develop an Action Plan under the Asia-Pacific Migratory Waterbird Conservation Strategy; and (3) to extend the AEWA Agreement area to include CASAF.

The first option has the advantage that a CASAF Agreement would be specifically designed to address the regional situation. Also, this Agreement would be legally binding and easily recognisable to the rest of the world. However, this solution would be extremely time-consuming and costly. Moreover, there would be a large overlap between the AEWA region and the CASAF region. The second option, having the character of a Memorandum of Understanding, would not be legally binding. This could encourage countries to sign it, imposing no financial and logistical consequences. However, financing for coordination activities by Wetlands International would be insecure.

The third option would be relatively easy in terms of organisation. Also, the fact that Europe is included in the AEWA region could mean that implementation of the Agreement in the CASAF region is more easily supported. AEWA, being an international treaty, is legally binding, which would facilitate the implementation of CASAF-specific parts of the extended Agreement.

Mr. Bert Lenten, Executive Secretary of AEWA, advocated the expansion of the AEWA region rather than creating a new Agreement, if a legally binding instrument is opted for. However, one participant drew attention to AEWA's large workload, and cautioned against expanding the region of AEWA at present. Other delegates cautioned against forcing the flyway project on Central and South Asian States. Several participants requested information on the financial implications for AEWA and opposed using AEWA funds for projects beyond the AEWA area. Considering all this, it was agreed to defer the discussion on the matter until 2003, when a meeting will be held in the CASAF region to review these three options.

GEF FLYWAY PROJECT

CHRIS BAKER, COORDINATOR OF
THE GEF PROJECT 'AFRICAN-EURASIAN
MIGRATORY WATERBIRD FLYWAYS',
WETLANDS INTERNATIONAL:

"The GEF project is currently in the development stage and the main objectives and activities are now established. The goal of the project is to enhance the conservation status of migratory waterbirds in the African-Eurasian flyway. There are three ways in which we want to achieve this.

The first objective is to develop a tool to identify the network of sites that are of critical importance to waterbirds. This network will use data that are already available through Wetlands International's International Waterbird Census (IWC), Birdlife International's Important Bird Areas (IBA), and the site database of the Ramsar Convention. Alongside activities developing this, the data gathering capacity in the African-Eurasian region will be enhanced, and the current IWC and IBA data gathering networks will be harmonised. The tool will then be available for use in the region to assist in flyway conservation related planning and management.

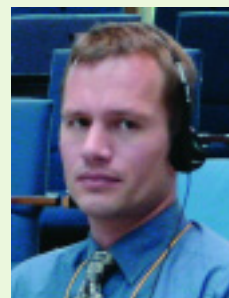
The second objective is to develop and implement a training and awareness- raising programme. A model programme containing a series of specialised courses will be developed, targeting a wide variety of groups, ranging from policy-makers and research officers to wetland managers and administrators. These programmes will be tailored to the stakeholder defined needs of four different sub-regions in the AEWA area. They will build upon already existing training courses and programmes and fill gaps in provision where they exist and are considered a priority by stakeholders.

Thirdly, the project will aim to improve communications and coordination. The project will facilitate contact between specific target groups, establish project centres at both flyway and sub-regional scale and will provide better access to existing information on best practices and resources for monitoring and surveying. The centres will be responsible for coordinating project activities and developing capacity to ensure this continues for key activities beyond the end of the project.

The support and involvement of multilateral environmental agreements such as AEWA, and the Ramsar Convention is crucial. The GEF project will strongly support elements of their respective Action Plans and so their endorsement is an important step in reinforcing the importance of the project to the donors for the actions we are proposing. For instance, in AEWA's Implementation Priorities a number of actions under the subheadings 'Habitat Conservation', 'Research and Monitoring' and 'Education and Information' are perfectly in line with the GEF objectives and activities. The benefit is of course mutual, with the project also benefiting from greater governmental support when these relationships are clear.

During this meeting my own objective was to raise awareness of the GEF project, its progress and how it can help government and NGO activities aimed at complying with and assisting the AEWA. I think this was rather successful; overall, reactions were extremely positive. For me the high point of the meeting was the approval of the Implementation Priorities, which show an important overlap of AEWA priorities and the GEF project activities. Not only was there a paragraph specifically mentioning the project, but also it was moved to a position of higher prominence in the resolution to reflect its importance. Still, there is a lot that needs to be done before the project begins. We need to raise more co-financing to ensure that all the planned activities can be carried out and of course to gain approval from GEF for the project to start!"

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AFRICAN-EURASIAN FLYWAY GEF PROJECT

Mr. Chris Baker (Wetlands International) introduced the African-Eurasian Flyway GEF project, noting the project's aim to improve the conservation status of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds. He listed Wetlands International and Birdlife International as the project's main executing agencies, and AEWA and the Ramsar Convention as supporters (see text box).

If this full-size project is approved by GEF, a large number of projects listed in the AEWA International Implementation Priorities 2003-2007 would receive approximately 50% funding. Matching funds would still have to be secured, but GEF funding would mean a substantial step forward. IIP projects benefiting from GEF funding include: the identification of all sites of international importance for AEWA species; the development of an interactive tool that presents information on important sites; the improvement of survey and monitoring capacity, e.g. by filling in gaps in the International Waterbird Census and by publishing monitoring manuals; an analysis of training needs for conservation; and the organisation of regional workshops to promote the Agreement.

The full project proposal will be submitted to the GEF Secretariat by the end of 2002.

INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS: THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

The Technical Committee is composed of nine regional representatives, one representative from the World Conservation Union, one from Wetlands International, one from the International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation and one expert from each of the following fields: rural economics, game management, and environmental law. Contracting Parties to AEWA are entitled to attend the meetings of the Technical Committee as observers. Since the number of Contracting Parties is growing steadily, the number of participants at meetings has been increasing over the past few years. This leads to logistical and financial difficulties. Therefore, Resolution 2.5 ('Institutional arrangements: Technical Committee') was drafted and adopted. It confines the number of observers per Contracting Party to one, and states that attendance is at a Party's own expense.

Resolution 1.8, accepted at MOP1, requested each Contracting Party to appoint a suitably qualified expert by the end of April 2000 to act as a focal point for Technical Committee matters. However, so far only a few focal points have been appointed. Therefore, Resolution 2.5 requests each Party once more to appoint a technical expert to provide input into work of the Technical Committee, and to disseminate the work of the Committee in the country in question.

Furthermore, the Resolution instructs the Secretariat to provide the necessary support and provisions in the budget to cover the activities of the Technical Committee. Rules of procedure for the meetings of the Technical Committee are appended. They include instructions on general functions, representation and attendance, the election of officers, and the procedure with regard to meetings, working groups, and communication. Also, the list of Technical Committee members and their alternates is appended.



FINANCIAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

AEWA Executive Secretary, Mr. Bert Lenten, introduced the documents on financial matters, pointing out that the 2000-2002 budget was modest and called for a realistic 2003-2005 budget to recruit staff, fund regional awareness-raising campaigns and species action plan implementation, support the AEWA GEF projects, and establish a Standing Committee.

After further deliberation of the budget in a separate working group, Resolution 2.7 ('Financial and administrative matters') was adopted. It confirms the fact that Parties shall contribute to the budget of the Agreement according to the United Nations scale of assessment. The revised budget for 2003-2005 is included as an appendix. It urges Contracting Parties to pay their contribution promptly, and to make voluntary contributions in order to support developing countries and countries with economies in transition in implementing the Agreement and participating in Agreement activities.

Annex 1 of the Resolution details the estimated US \$1,790,937 budget for 2003-2005, of which US \$200,000 should be withdrawn from the Trust Fund to reduce Parties' contributions. Annex 2 lists the scale of contributions for 2003-2005, and annex 3 contains terms of reference for the administration of AEWA's Trust Fund.

INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS: THE STANDING COMMITTEE

Since AEWA's coming into force, the tasks of the Technical Committee included dealing with policy, financial and administrative matters raised between sessions of the Meeting of the Parties. However, the feeling arose that the Technical Committee, consisting of technical experts, is not the appropriate subsidiary body to deal with such issues. More importantly, those issues distracted the Committee from what it was originally appointed to do, namely to decide on technical and scientific matters.

According to the text of the Agreement, the Meeting of the Parties may, if necessary, establish subsidiary bodies to assist in the implementation of the Agreement. The current situation of the Technical Committee is an example of a need for such a subsidiary body. Therefore, Resolution 2.6 ('Institutional arrangements: Standing Committee') was drafted to address this problem, and it was adopted during the meeting. It states that the Meeting of the Parties decides to establish a Standing Committee, which will carry out interim activities on behalf of the Meeting in between sessions of the Meeting of the Parties. The main tasks will be to oversee the Secretariat's budget and fundraising activities and the implementation of its policy; to provide guidance and advice to the Secretariat on matters such as the implementation of the Agreement and the preparation of meetings; and to represent the Meeting of the Parties when interacting with institutions such as the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and other international organisations.

The Standing Committee will consist of two representatives from Europe and the Central Asia region, one representative from the Middle East and Northern Africa region, one from the Western and Central Africa region, one from the Eastern and southern Africa region, one from the host country for the next session of the Meeting of the Parties, and one from the Depositary. Contracting Parties that are not members of the Standing Committee will be entitled to be represented at meetings of the Committee by an observer who will have the right to participate at their own expense but not to vote. The Committee will meet at least once between the Meetings of the Parties. Very importantly, Resolution 2.6 requests Contracting Parties to provide financial assistance to developing countries and countries with economies in transition that are Parties to the Agreement and that are to be represented by an observer at meetings of the Standing Committee.

CONTRIBUTIONS IN KIND IN LIEU OF CASH

Mr. Bert Lenten introduced the document on accepting contributions in kind in lieu of cash, explaining that is intended to help Parties that have difficulties fulfilling their financial obligations. This method is unprecedented. It was suggested to establish a maximum cash value beyond which in kind contributions could not be accepted. Regarding this issue, the delegates adopted the Resolution 2.8.

The Resolution states that contributions to the AEWA budget may be accepted in kind in lieu of cash when a Party is a country with an economy in transition or a developing country. Exceptional circumstances need to be demonstrated, and the nature of the contribution in kind needs to be consistent with the needs and objectives of the Agreement. Requests regarding this will be forwarded for approval to the Standing Committee.

SMALL CONSERVATION GRANTS FUND

The text of the Agreement encourages Parties to provide financial support to other Parties on a multilateral and bilateral basis to assist them in implementing the Agreement. Since AEWA came into force, the establishment of a Small Conservation Grants Fund has been suggested and ideas have been developed between sessions. The issue was also on the agenda of MOP2, leading to Resolution 2.9, addressing the future development of such a fund.

Since MOP1, Contracting Parties made no voluntary contributions for assisting eligible countries in the implementation of the Agreement. Therefore, Resolution 2.9 urges Parties and other donors to make voluntary contributions to the Agreement budget. To be awarded a grant, the recipient must be a developing country or a country with an economy in transition; the proposed activity must contribute to the implementation of the Agreement; the proposed activities are a response to emergencies affecting waterbird species and their habitat; and the award for any single project will not exceed US \$15,000. In order to avoid duplication of efforts, the Resolution instructs the AEWA Secretariat to work closely together with the Ramsar Bureau when developing a procedure for consideration of Small Grants Fund applications.

ARRANGEMENTS FOR MOP3

Resolution 2.10 addresses date, venue and funding of the third session of the Meeting of the Parties. The resolution states that MOP3 will take place before the end of 2005 or early 2006 at the latest, ideally after COP9 of the Ramsar Convention. Unfortunately no offer has been received for hosting the next MOP.

HEADQUARTERS AGREEMENT

At MOP1 it was decided to establish a permanent Secretariat for the Agreement co-located with the Secretariat of CMS and under the administration of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). Resolution 2.11 ('Headquarters Agreement for and juridical personality of the Agreement Secretariat'), adopted at MOP2, welcomes and endorses the Headquarters Agreement between the German Government, the UN and the CMS Secretariat, endorses that the Agreement shall apply *mutatis mutandis* to the AEWA Secretariat, and expresses the Parties' gratitude to the German Government for its financial and other support.

“THIS IS THE PERFECT OPPORTUNITY TO PUSH CONSERVATION EFFORTS AT INTERNATIONAL LEVEL.” DAVID STROUD

TRIBUTE TO THE ORGANIZERS

The final Resolution that was adopted at MOP2, Resolution 2.12, is a tribute to the organizers. The German Government spent considerable effort hosting the Meeting in its former parliament building, the Bundeshaus in Bonn. The German Government showed high quality organisation that greatly facilitated this session of the Meeting of the Parties. The Resolution also congratulates the Secretariat on the excellent preparation of MOP2, and thanks the CMS Secretariat for the support provided to the AEWA Secretariat. Finally, it expresses appreciation to the governments of Germany and the United Kingdom for their financial support, thus facilitating the participation of many Range States.

CLOSING PLENARY

On the last day of MOP2, Chair von Websky introduced the draft report of the meeting. The closing Plenary adopted the report with minor amendments. Credentials Committee Chair Semega (Mali) reported on Parties' credentials status, noting that 21 of the 32 Parties' credentials were accepted. Vice Chair Diop expressed gratitude to the German Government for hosting and supporting the meeting. Chair von Websky then thanked delegates for a productive meeting, and encouraged them to continue their good work. He also thanked the AEWA and CMS Secretariats, Wetlands International and the Credential Committee's and Working Groups' Chairs. AEWA Executive Secretary Lenten thanked the participants for their input, and the German Government for all the effort it put in towards making the meeting a success.



**NON-CONTRACTING PARTY:
YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC**

MS. DALIBORKA BARJAKRAROV,
ORNITHOLOGIST AT THE NATURAL HISTORY
MUSEUM IN BELGRADE, AND DELEGATE FOR
THE YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC:

"The Republic of Yugoslavia has many wetlands that are important for large populations of waterbirds, especially in the north of the Republic. Unfortunately, birds face many threats in this area. Firstly, throughout the year water levels are raised artificially to allow boat traffic through which threatens the natural habitat. This area is important for tourism, and therefore many decisions have an economic nature. There are hardly any laws restricting this kind of activities. Secondly, there is a lot of uncontrolled hunting. Last winter, for example, many swans came down from the Danube Delta to avoid the harsh winter temperatures up north. The hunters certainly took advantage of that, and their activities are not monitored at all.

Nature conservation issues are not really on a priority list in Yugoslavia. We have an economy in transition, and admission into the European Union is our first priority at the moment. I would like to see nature conservation on the political agenda as well, but this appears to be really difficult. You run into many obstacles when you want to change things, and the people don't seem to have the energy to work on these issues. I work with many conservationists who are very sceptical: they don't believe their efforts will make any difference.

We are now in the process of joining AEWA. The idea is to ratify as soon as possible, preferably early 2003. We have some wetlands designated as Ramsar sites already, but I think that ratifying AEWA would be an important step forward. The problem is that we lack the expertise to carry out projects effectively. This conference is therefore very useful: it will give my government insight into how things are organised internationally. We could certainly benefit from international coordination. There isn't much national research carried out by government institutions, for example, and that in turn is due to a lack of finances. However, among the general public there seems to be a lot of enthusiasm: many volunteers participate in conservation projects, and a many people enjoy activities such as bird watching and bird banding. So I am positive that the situation will change. It simply has to change. You should come and see our beautiful wetlands: they are worth it!"



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NON-CONTRACTING PARTY: LIBYA

MR. ABDELKADER ALMAHAISHI,
LIBYAN ENVIRONMENT GENERAL AUTHORITY:

"Libya has an incredibly long shoreline of about two thousand kilometres long. Inland we have a lot of marshes, which are mostly brackish. These wetland areas are important for birds migrating from Europe to Africa. The biodiversity is very large. However there are some specific environmental problems that threaten these ecosystems. The most important one is desertification. And then there is of course the large-scale pollution associated with our oil industry.

The awareness of this kind of problems is rising, not just among environmentalists but also among government agencies. The environment is becoming more and more of an issue, so I am positive that matters are moving in the right direction. Many of our wetlands are in the process of becoming Ramsar sites, for example. Libya has already signed the Bonn Convention, and before the end of the year we will sign the AEWA as well. I hope that being a Contracting Party to AEWA will speed things up. Not just financially, but especially in becoming part of an information network and gaining expertise. We still have a long way to go, but I am very optimistic."

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A CONSERVATION STRATEGY EXAMPLE: GOLDEN PLOVERS IN NORTHWEST GERMANY

As a side event during MOP2, Mr. Peter Südbeck of the Niedersachsen State Department of Ecology, Germany, gave a presentation on the conservation strategy for the critically endangered breeding population of Golden Plovers (*Pluvialis apricaria*) in Niedersachsen, Northwest Germany.

This breeding population is geographically completely isolated: the next nearest breeding populations, in the United Kingdom and Scandinavia, are at least 600 kilometres away. Since 1980, the Niedersachsen population has shown a gradual decline. This was mostly due to nest losses: the birds were breeding in habitats where large machines were used for the production of peat. In addition, the loss and fragmentation of Golden Plover breeding habitat – raised bogs and peat lands – seemed to be an important factor. In 1994 an extensive action plan was launched, consisting of three components: (1) regulating the timing of this land use and safeguarding the nests from machines; (2) reducing attacks by hunting foxes; and (3) restoring habitats and managing present sites to maintain wet grasslands as feeding habitats. During the last six to seven years, the population has been fairly stable but is still showing a slight decrease. An average of 0.3 young per pair per year is not enough to sustain the population. In other words, the conservation efforts in the breeding area have yielded disappointing results.

The hypothesis was raised that in addition to habitat loss, significant mortality during migration could be the cause of the decline. A bird-banding programme was set up to find out details about this, and about the relationships with other populations. A total of more than one million Euros was spent on the programme, but significant information about the migration of this population is still lacking. Exact details about the wintering areas, for example, are still unknown. It is a possibility that the Niedersachsen population shares the wintering grounds with populations from Siberia and Northern Scandinavia, from Western Europe and Iberia. In any case it is sure that there is no exchange of birds between populations.

Which factors, then, would cause mortality during migration? Hunting has been named in this context, but it is unknown whether there is enough hunting done to affect population levels. Every shot bird would mean a significant loss to the Niedersachsen population of Golden Plovers, but if the wintering areas are shared between populations, there is no way of distinguishing between them. Hunters will not be easily convinced to refrain from hunting an entire wintering population if only one sub-population has a threatened status. However, paragraph 7.2 of the AEWA Action Plan specifically states that conservation measures of a species are adjusted to the population with the poorest conservation status.

The next step in this conservation strategy will consist of radio tracking and genetic studies to determine migration patterns and population dynamics. Also, feeding ecology studies might determine whether food availability is a limiting factor. The disadvantage of these projects is the fact that they are very time-consuming. By the time the results will have been analysed, the Niedersachsen population of Golden Plovers might have become extinct. Fortunately, long-term banding data is already available in some countries along the migration route. It would merely be a question of coordination in order to analyse this data.



A LONG-TERM, LARGE-SCALE MONITORING SCHEME: THE INTERNATIONAL WATERBIRD CENSUS

Mr. Niels Gilissen (Wetlands International) presented as a side event during MOP2, the report 'Numbers and distribution of wintering waterbirds in the Western Palearctic and Southwest Asia in 1997, 1998 and 1999'. This report is the result of the International Waterbird Census (IWC), a long-term monitoring scheme set up initially in Europe but currently also being carried out in many other parts of the world. This census is conducted annually in mid-January and has been organised by Wetlands International since 1967. Thereby, the IWC is one of the longest running and most extensive harmonised biodiversity monitoring programmes in the world. The information obtained from the IWC has considerable conservation value and a growing scientific impact.

The goal of the IWC is to contribute to international efforts to conserve waterbirds and their wetlands habitats. To achieve this, it uses information collected over the long term to estimate population sizes, to describe changes in numbers and distribution, and to assess the importance of individual sites for waterbirds during the non-breeding season.

The new report summarises the results of counts in 47 countries. Totals of 22 to 23.5 million waterbirds of more than 230 species were counted. The report presents species' totals per country, per geographical area and for the whole region. For several species, distribution maps are presented, summarising the average distribution over the three census years.

**“NATURE CONSERVATION ISSUES ARE NOT REALLY ON
THE PRIORITY LIST IN MY COUNTRY. ALSO, MANY PEOPLE
DON'T THINK THEIR EFFORTS WILL MAKE ANY DIFFERENCE.”**

DALIBORKA BARJAKTAROV

CONTRACTING PARTY: UNITED KINGDOM

DAVID STROUD, JOINT NATURE
CONSERVATION COMMITTEE, AND
DELEGATE FOR THE UNITED KINGDOM:

"I am very supportive of initiatives like AEWA. The AEWA Action Plan is incredibly helpful at the national level, helping us to develop implementation plans and laying out priorities within the United Kingdom. Of course internationally it helps us to communicate and exchange ideas.

AEWA is well known within the waterbird conservation community in the United Kingdom, fortunately also at government level. There is a large network of people who are involved with waterbird conservation in that field. Our extensive waterbird surveys are an example of that: we have 2000 people who count the waterbird populations in 3000 wetlands every month. The results of this appear twice a year in a newsletter distributed directly to all the people involved, and also in national shooting magazines.

I really hope that MOP2 will help to better integrate this kind of waterbird population estimates into projects run by, for example, Wetlands International, and Ramsar projects. Status reports should be condensed into summaries that are better accessible to busy decision makers. Also they should have a more analytical content, like comparisons of trends in different geographical regions, and possible explanations for that. Why do some coastal wetlands do a lot better than inland wetlands, for example? Maybe this is something for AEWA's Technical Committee to work on in cooperation with Wetlands International.

Meetings like this one are extremely motivational. The possibility of networking is very valuable. This is the perfect opportunity to push conservation efforts at the international level."

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NON-CONTRACTING PARTY: ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN

MR. SADEGH SADEGHI-ZADEGAN, DELEGATE FOR THE
ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN:

"Hopefully the Islamic Republic of Iran will ratify the Convention on Migratory Species in 2003. Ratifying AEWA will be the next step. Being a Contracting Party to AEWA could have a positive influence on the process of waterbird conservation. After all, our region is important for large populations of waterbirds. Two species are critically endangered (the Siberian Crane and the Slender-billed Curlew), and ten are threatened: the Dalmatian Pelican, Lesser White-fronted Goose, Marbled Teal, Ferruginous Duck, White-headed Duck, Red-breasted Goose, Sociable Plover, Aquatic Warbler, Greater Spotted Eagle, and Corncrake. Hopefully committing to AEWA and benefiting from its information networks, can help monitoring and conservation of our waterbirds.

By this time, the system of protected areas in Iran includes 16 National Parks, 31 Wildlife Refuges, 89 Protected Areas, 13 National Nature Monuments and five Protected Rivers, totalling almost twelve million hectares and covering over 6.8% of the country. In addition, until now there are 88 Non-Hunting areas under management of the Department of Environment, with a total area of more than five million hectares. Also there are 21 Ramsar Sites, and around 105 Important Bird Areas. Iran participates in the UNESCO Man and the Biosphere Programme, and in 1976 designated nine Biosphere Reserves covering a total of almost three million hectares. Four of these Biosphere Reserves (Arjan, Hara, Uromiyeh and Miankaleh) contain internationally important wetlands. Monitoring and conservation are carried out by scientists and guard personnel on behalf of our Department. Unfortunately this is the only executing and research institute specially involved in these actions. Therefore I think we could benefit considerably from signing the AEWA, increasing international cooperation and the exchange of expertise.

Some conservation projects have already been set up, and the Memoranda of Understanding has been signed to protect the Siberian Crane and Slender-billed Curlew. There are indeed positive developments. Public awareness is definitely increasing. The Department of Environment is contributing to that by organising education campaigns and publishing information material. Also now, I can see a positive trend to more and better enforcement of our hunting laws combined with an increase in awareness among the general public and among hunters. Additional finances for these projects could make a difference. And then of course there is a need for regional coordination, for example to fight our largest problem, drought. Agricultural development activities could be coupled with nature conservation projects."

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NON-CONTRACTING PARTY: NORWAY

MR. ØYSTEIN STØRKERSEN, NORWEGIAN DIRECTORATE FOR NATURE MANAGEMENT,
AND DELEGATE FOR NORWAY:

"Norway declared at the first MOP that it wanted to be a Contracting Party by MOP2, but unfortunately this hasn't happened yet. Apparently some administrative problems have come up. But especially after this MOP, I expect that ratification will take place next year. However, I think that AEWA's objectives are being implemented quite well already in Norway. We have for example detailed Action Plans for the White-fronted Goose, the Great Snipe and some other important waterbird species. Many of the important habitats are Ramsar sites. These matters are not a problem in Norway. Now we need to shift our focus to international conservation efforts, because otherwise we will just keep concentrating on nationally important species.

One problem that Norway has, is capacity. We have relatively few people and a large surface area. Management authorities simply lack the human resources to carry out action plans. It is important to coordinate with similar conventions and agreements, like the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the Convention on the International Trade of Endangered Species (CITES), especially now that expertise has proved to be so important.

I am very impressed with the ability of Wetlands International and other NGOs to provide the necessary background data. Those, combined with expertise, are extremely important. They draw the attention to what is really important, and involve governments directly. Still there is a lot of work to be done in that area. These results, for example the International Waterbird Census, should be published more widely and in a more accessible way.

NGO: CONSERVATION ORGANISATION

DR. STEFAN BRÄGER, INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR ANIMAL WELFARE:

"It is very important for an organisation such as the International Fund for Animal Welfare to attend large conferences like this one. Many issues that are discussed here are also a main focus in our own programmes. Last week at the CMS meeting, for example, a Resolution was adopted on oil pollution, which is currently one of our most important topics in Germany. Resolutions adopted at conferences like this, will definitely help to alleviate major environmental problems such as oil spills. Concerning waterbirds, there appears to be an overlap with the Ramsar Convention, but it is important that through AEWA, a second international agreement will be made to preserve these habitats. Still, I think AEWA should have more powers. For example, AEWA was not able to prevent the development of an airport in an important protected wetland in Hamburg.

I think this meeting has been very productive. Things have been going exceptionally smoothly, and I am very happy with the open dialogue with the hunters' organisations, for example. This is very important - in my opinion, the most pressing agenda point of this meeting was probably the phasing-out of lead shot. African countries particularly that are looking for support in addressing this issue should be supported. AEWA could contribute to that by disseminating information, for example by helping to organise meetings at national level.

In the future I hope that AEWA's focus will concentrate on creating networks of knowledge and expertise. This is the most effective way in which we can address issues such as pollution

and habitat destruction. In that respect I think this meeting was very successful. Do I think the decisions taken at the meeting went far enough? Concerning the lead shot issue it would have been better to have clear deadlines, for example, but that is unlikely to happen soon. Processes at international level are by nature very slow. Just look at the discussion about Eider populations. There is clear evidence that populations have been declining over the past few years. Still the only action that was decided upon, was to look at the issue again in three years. That is symptomatic for the speed with which things are moving. But at least this conference makes countries think about their problems once again, and it enables governments to talk to each other. This conference helps them to develop an opinion about the issues concerned. Furthermore, people have the chance to discuss the relevant issues informally in the corridors. That is often a good way to talk about funding for workshops and meetings, for example. So yes, actually I am quite satisfied with the way these meetings have been going."

I was hoping that more NGOs would participate actively in this meeting. They can have a strong influence in the eventual outcome. But generally, I am very satisfied with the decisions taken here in Bonn. They could have been more far-reaching, but that's how it works... at least I was happy that we had so many different stakeholders around the table."



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and habitat destruction. In that respect I think this meeting was very successful. Do I think the decisions taken at the meeting went far enough? Concerning the lead shot issue it would have been better to have clear deadlines, for example, but that is unlikely to happen soon. Processes at international level are by nature very slow. Just look at the discussion about Eider populations. There is clear evidence that populations have been declining over the past few years. Still the only action that was decided upon, was to look at the issue again in three years. That is symptomatic for the speed with which things are moving. But at least this conference makes countries think about their problems once again, and it enables governments to talk to each other. This conference helps them to develop an opinion about the issues concerned. Furthermore, people have the chance to discuss the relevant issues informally in the corridors. That is often a good way to talk about funding for workshops and meetings, for example. So yes, actually I am quite satisfied with the way these meetings have been going."



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NGO: HUNTING AND CONSERVATION

MR. JOHN SWIFT, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF THE BRITISH ASSOCIATION FOR SHOOTING AND CONSERVATION:

"I think this conference was very successful. The conduct of the meeting was very relaxed and sensible. Several sensitive but important issues that concern us all have been moved forward successfully. We were mostly dealing with the interpretation of the latest information on population numbers, but I think we need to focus not only on science but on the hearts and minds of all those affected, including the birds. Sometimes small steps mean faster and more effective progress in the long run.

BASC has input through the UK delegation. Luckily we have a very good dialogue between the government and other stakeholders such as the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) and ourselves. This enables us to get our views reflected in decisions being taken. This dialogue has always been good, and I think that is a rather unique situation. This constructive relationship dates back to the 1950s and has improved ever since. We have common objectives and focus.

I have been involved with CMS, and the development of AEWA, since the 1970s. I've always believed that there needs to be a treaty at the flyway level. We've had the example of the North American way of addressing this: we've been able to learn from the mistakes that they made. AEWA caters for a much more diverse set of cultural backgrounds.

What we fight for is a more pragmatic approach in nature conservation. Using common sense and good personal relations is much more productive than building over-elaborate mathematical models. AEWA is obviously going down that track, being flexible and sensitive to different cultural needs and difficulties concerning finances. This is a huge achievement.

One topic we haven't started talking about, is climate change in the framework of AEWA. We need some serious discussions about that in the future. I am thinking about things like the availability of wetland habitat, the impact on breeding ranges and the viability of populations at the edges of their ranges. We don't know what is going to happen but we need a rational understanding of the implications, and there might be a need for radical changes.

The hunting community mainly hopes that we will have a better information base to bring to conventions in the future. Hunters need to do more, in addition to game management, for biodiversity targets agreed internationally, and we need a more widespread dialogue between hunters and conservationists. Conservationists need to focus more on good science allied to 'consensus common sense'. This is a tricky issue, because there are often value judgments involved. But I have confidence in that. Yes, it is frustrating from time to time but in general I have not been disappointed.

I'd like to see governments putting more environmental issues on the agenda, and a higher availability of resources and for example tax funds. Together with FACE and CIC, we will be arguing these kind of issues in the future. We need to cooperate, and organize ourselves together in a constructive way. But this is definitely going in the right direction already."

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"WE STILL HAVE A LONG WAY TO GO, BUT I AM VERY OPTIMISTIC."

ABDELKADER ALMAHAISHI



AEWA SECRETARIAT

**MR. BERT LENTEN,
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF AEWA:**

"Meetings like this one are incredibly stimulating for Contracting Parties. They give countries an opportunity to report on their activities, and to learn from the experiences of other countries. Also, they allow delegates to get together in an informal way. Networking is a very important aspect.

In addition, these meetings can motivate non-Contracting Parties to become a member. It shows them the possibilities of international cooperation. I was pleased that many countries expressed their interest in AEWA during the opening ceremony. A few countries, like Israel, Syria, Libya and Hungary, appear to have come a long way towards accession.

The preparation of this Meeting took considerable time and effort, but we received a lot of assistance from both CMS and Germany, the host country. The cooperation with the German Government was excellent, which facilitated the process enormously. Their logistical organisation was efficient and reliable.

A substantial part of the document preparation was already done at Technical Committee meetings. The documents were very well prepared and all that was left, was for them to be adopted by the Meeting of the Parties. I think that the thorough discussions within the Technical Committee definitely paid off.

Therefore, for me personally the financial and administrative matters were the highlight of this meeting. I was confident about the outcomes of the discussions, because we only asked for budget increases that were very reasonable. At the meeting we mostly discussed how to phrase the financial and administrative resolutions. I was very pleased with the approval of a Small Conservation Grants Fund and the acceptance of contributions in kind.

Concerning the technical matters, the expansion of the Action Plan was a special highlight for me. Also the green light for the Central Asian – South Asian Flyway was an important result. The gesture that Germany made by its considerable contribution to the GEF project was fantastic as well. In fact, none of the results at the meeting were disappointing.

Now we are moving towards MOP3 with renewed energy. Hopefully we will have some more staff at the Secretariat in the near future. Things were a bit too hectic this year, particularly during the Meeting.



Concerning the Agreement itself, during the forthcoming period we will work towards an expansion of the Agreement, both geographically and concerning the number of species covered in the Action Plan. This is a very important issue. Another future highlight is of course the start of the GEF project in 2004. This entails a lot of work, but will definitely bring a positive impulse in the different regions.

Then there is of course the Joint Work Programme with Ramsar, which we hope to finalise in the end of 2002. We are experiencing a closer cooperation already, and hopefully we will see even more concrete advantages in the future. Also, we are anticipating better cooperation with the European Union. The EU has already signed the Agreement, and will probably ratify soon. It strives to enlarge the scope of its actions to include regions outside Europe as well. AEWA offers good possibilities in that respect.

Another project is the analysis of the impact of AEWA; monitoring schemes will have to be enhanced, and the Action Plan will need to be amended continuously. Finally, we will keep working on awareness-raising projects at an international level. A good example is the second workshop on the use of non-toxic shot, which will probably be held in Italy in 2003. All in all, I can actually only see positive developments, and I am very optimistic about the future of international waterbird conservation, and AEWA in particular."



Mr. Bert Lenten
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“IN FACT, NONE OF THE RESULTS AT THE MEETING WERE DISAPPOINTING.”

BERT LENTEN

ON THE INTERNATIONAL AGENDA

CBD COP7:

The seventh Conference of the Parties (COP7) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) will meet in March 2004 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. It will be preceded by a series of regional preparatory meetings (Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia and the Pacific, Africa), all taking place from 10-12 February 2004 at venues to be determined. For further information, contact: Hamdallah Zedan, Executive Secretary, CBD Secretariat; tel: +1-514-288-2220; fax: +1-514-288-6588; e-mail: secretariat@biodiv.org; Internet: <http://www.biodiv.org>

WATERBIRDS CONFERENCE:

The International Conference on “Waterbirds Around the World” will take place from 3-8 April 2004, in Edinburgh, Scotland. For further information, contact: Gerard C. Boere, Wetlands International, Programme Coordinator; tel: +31-317-478887; fax +31-317-478850; e-mail: boere@wetlands.agro.nl; Internet: <http://www.wetlands.org>

CMS COP8:

The eighth Conference of the Parties (COP8) to the Convention on Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) is scheduled to take place in 2005. For further information, contact: CMS Secretariat; tel: +49-228-815-2402; fax: +49-228-815-2449; e-mail: cms@unep.de; Internet: <http://www.wcmc.org.uk/cms/>

AEWA MOP3:

The third Meeting of the Parties (MOP3) of the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (AEWA) is scheduled to take place before the end of 2005 or early 2006. For further information, contact: AEWA Secretariat; tel: +49-228-815-2413; fax: +49-228-815-2450; e-mail: aewa@unep.de; Internet: <http://www.unep-wcmc.org/AEWA/>

“I WAS HAPPY THAT WE HAD SO MANY DIFFERENT STAKEHOLDERS AROUND THE TABLE.”

ØYSTEIN STØRKERSEN



COLOFON

The African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement is an Agreement (AEWA) under the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals Commonly referred to as the Bonn Convention. AEWA aims to create a legal basis for a concerted conservation and management policy by Range States for migratory Waterbird Species. The UNEP/AEWA Secretariat tries to publish twice a year regular issues of the AEWA Newsletter, which provides the latest news on AEWA. This Newsletter is a special issue fully focussing on outcomes of the 2nd SESSION OF THE MEETING OF THE PARTIES which was held from 25-27 September 2002, Bonn, Germany.

This Newsletter is also available in French.

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page 6

UNEP/AEWA Secretariat

Earth Negotiation Bulletin

Ms Onnie Byers



THE AFRICAN-EURASIAN WATERBIRD AGREEMENT (AEWA) WAS OPEN FOR SIGNING AT THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS IN THE HAGUE (THE NETHERLANDS) FROM 15 AUGUST 1996 TO 30 SEPTEMBER 1999. BY 31 AUGUST 1999 THE REQUIREMENTS HAD BEEN MET FOR THE AGREEMENT'S ENTRY INTO FORCE. IN ACCORDANCE WITH ARTICLE XIV, PARAGRAPH 1, THE AGREEMENT ENTERED INTO FORCE ON 1 NOVEMBER 1999. THE AFRICAN-EURASIAN WATERBIRD AGREEMENT, THE LARGEST AGREEMENT DEVELOPED SO FAR UNDER THE CONVENTION OF MIGRATORY SPECIES (CMS), CAME INTO FORCE AN 1 NOVEMBER 1999. SINCE THEN THE NUMBER OF CONTRACTING PARTIES IS GROWING STEADILY.

