



Date: 7 May 2012

5th SESSION OF THE MEETING OF THE PARTIES

14 – 18 May 2012, La Rochelle, France

“Migratory waterbirds and people - sharing wetlands”

REPORT OF THE SECRETARIAT

INTRODUCTION

The current report covers the work of the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat for the period between January 2009 and April 2012.

This report is divided into five sections:

1. General management, which includes recruitment of Parties and cooperation with other organisations. Issues relating to administration and finance are dealt with in document AEWA/MOP 5.40;
2. Information management;
3. Implementation and compliance;
4. Project development;
5. Other activities and outputs.

The day-to-day work of the Agreement Secretariat, which includes responding to incoming mails, maintaining the Secretariat's extensive network, internal meetings with CMS, UNEP and/or UN Head of Agencies etc. are not specifically mentioned in this report.

1. GENERAL MANAGEMENT

Recruitment of Parties

The Democratic Republic of Ethiopia joined AEWA as of February 2010. The Republic of Chad and Montenegro became Contracting Parties to AEWA as of 1 November 2011. Zimbabwe deposited its instruments of accession, and will become a Contracting Party as of 1 June 2012. For several other countries, notably Azerbaijan, Gabon, Kazakhstan, Mauritania, Swaziland and Zambia, the process of joining the Agreement is reported to be at an advanced stage. The Secretariat also received information that accession to the Agreement is currently under consideration in a few Range States, including Iceland and Poland. In line with the MOP4 recommendation to increase activities regarding the recruitment of Parties, the Secretariat has put a stronger focus on the membership development and, among other activities, organized a number of promotional workshops and meetings:

The Russian Federation

A promotional workshop for the Russian Federation was organised in Moscow from 30 to 31 March 2010 with the support of the Embassy of the Netherlands in Moscow and the Government of Switzerland. The workshop, chaired by the AEWA Honorary Patron Dr. Gerard C. Boere, was attended by national and international experts and representatives of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Ecology.

For more information please see:

http://www.unep-aewa.org/news/news_elements/2010/moscow_workshop.htm

As a follow up to the workshop in Moscow, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of the Russian Federation organized a one-day workshop aiming at identifying international cooperation mechanisms for the conservation of migratory waterbirds and also for hunting regulations. The workshop was held in the margins of the exhibition “Horse and Hunt” at the Exhibition Centre in Hannover, Germany on 2 December 2011. The workshop had a clear focus on the conservation of migratory waterbirds in the Eurasian part of the Russian Federation. In this context, participants reviewed the role of CMS and, in particular, of AEWA and its potential for the Russian Federation. In addition, the concrete terms under which the Russian Government could ratify AEWA were discussed. A set of recommendations summarizing the outcome of the workshop is available at

http://www.unep-aewa.org/news/news_elements/2011/resolution_workshop_Hannover.pdf

For more information please see:

http://www.unep-aewa.org/news/news_elements/2011/workshop-hannover.htm

Botswana, Comoros, Morocco, Seychelles, Swaziland

The Coordinator for the African Initiative conducted two workshops (English and French) for participants from non-Party Range States, during the 15th Anniversary Symposium for AEWA (13 and 14 June 2010), in The Hague, the Netherlands. The participation of the representatives from these countries was sponsored in the framework of the African Initiative. Government representatives from Ghana, Guinea- Bissau and Senegal also participated in the workshop, to share the experiences of Contracting Parties.

The benefits of accession to AEWA were outlined, challenges faced in the accession process were identified, the experiences of some Contracting Parties were shared and advice was provided on possible ways forward.

Burkina Faso

On 23 to 24 September 2010, an information and awareness-raising workshop on the accession of Burkina Faso to AEWA took place in Loumbila, Burkina Faso. The workshop was jointly organized by the Ministry of Environment and Livelihoods in Burkina Faso (MECV) and the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat, and its implementation was made possible thanks to a voluntary financial contribution from the Swiss Government. The workshop brought together 31 participants from the Burkina Faso public administration (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Cooperation - MAECR, Ministry of Economy and Finance and Ministry of Environment and Livelihoods), non-governmental organizations (International Union for the Conservation of Nature – IUCN and the Foundation of Friends of Nature – NATURAMA, the BirdLife Partner in Burkina Faso), and the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat. A final declaration was signed between the Ministry of Environment and Livelihoods and the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat outlining the road map towards the accession of Burkina Faso to AEWA.

For more information please see:

http://www.unep-aewa.org/news/news_elements/2010/workshop_burkina_faso.htm

Botswana, Rwanda, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe

In December 2010, the Executive Secretary of AEWA undertook a round trip to the countries of Botswana, Rwanda, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe and discussed the accession of these countries to AEWA and CMS with the officials from the respective Governments. Especially Zambia and Swaziland signalled that they would ratify AEWA soon.

Angola, Botswana, Namibia, Rwanda, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe

In March 2011 the Technical Officer and the Coordinator for the African Initiative paid a visit to Botswana to attend and facilitate the stakeholder workshop for the development of an International Single Species Action Plan for the Slaty Egret. At the end of the workshop, the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat conducted a session aimed at promoting the accession to AEWA. Participants included Government representatives from Angola, Botswana, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Moreover, the Technical Officer and African Coordinator met with officials of the Government of Botswana and non-government institutions to discuss the accession of Botswana to AEWA.

Azerbaijan

The UNEP/AEWA Secretariat organized a meeting at the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of Azerbaijan in Baku on 26 May 2011 to follow up on accession discussions launched with the country several years ago. Ministry representatives confirmed that the accession process is ongoing and estimated that -

depending on when a final sign off by the Cabinet of Ministers is obtained, AEWA could be ratified by the Parliament and signed by the President within a year.

Kazakhstan

In connection with ongoing Lesser White-fronted Goose conservation work facilitated by the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat in Kazakhstan, the Secretariat has had several discussions with officials of the Government of Kazakhstan concerning the accession of Kazakhstan to AEWA. This was in particular the case during a national Lesser White-fronted Goose workshop organized by the Secretariat in Kazakhstan in October 2010 as well as at the 1st Meeting of the AEWA Lesser White-fronted Goose Working Group in Finland in November/December 2010. The Secretariat understands that the accession process in Kazakhstan is quite advanced, yet some outstanding issues still remain.

Strategic cooperation with other Organizations

Partnership for the Conservation of Migratory Waterbirds and their Habitats (Wings Over Wetlands - WOW)

On the occasion of the 15th Anniversary Symposium of AEWA, held in The Hague in June 2010, the WOW partner organizations Wetlands International, BirdLife International, the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands Secretariat and the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat, signed a Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) to continue the partnership that has been built up under the WOW project. The purpose of the MoC is to translate WOW's achievements into a long-term, collaborative, flyway-scale programme to achieve conservation of migratory waterbirds and improved management of wetlands that incorporate the needs of people, biodiversity and ecosystem values and services in a changing environment. To this end, the partners will work together to fulfill the vision outlined in the current AEWA and Ramsar Strategic Plans, and the BirdLife Strategy and Wetlands International Strategic Intent as these relate to migratory waterbird conservation, and especially to fulfill the aims of the WOW project and build on and consolidate its outputs. Since the first Partnership meeting in February 2011, the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat has taken on the role of Secretariat for the Flyway Partnership.

Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF)

The CAFF and the UNEP/AEWA Secretariats have elaborated a draft Resolution of Cooperation (ROC). The purpose of this ROC will be to provide a framework of cooperation and understanding and to facilitate collaboration between the Parties to further their shared goals and objectives with regard to the conservation of seabirds and arctic birds and their habitats. Particularly the work of the CBird working group (Circumpolar Seabird Group) is of interest for AEWA. The ROC is planned to be signed by the Secretariats at the occasion of the 11th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention, 6-13 July, Bucharest, Romania.

2. INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

From 2006 until the end of 2010 the Associate Information Officer allocated 50 per cent of his working time towards the *Wings over Wetlands (WOW) UNEP-GEF African-Eurasian Flyways Project* where he has been functioning as Communication Officer for WOW. Hence, the time he could actually spend on purely AEWA-related communication issues during the course of the WOW project has been limited. To compensate for this, it was decided to divide some of the tasks among other team members and the Information Management within the Secretariat has evolved into a team effort. Since 2011, the time of the Associate Information Officer is fully dedicated to the Information Management of AEWA. However, the annual World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD) campaign has developed significantly over the years, whereby the central coordination of the campaign has also been the task of the AEWA Information Officer over the past years. The WMBD campaign creates an additional workload to the regular tasks of the AEWA Information Unit, which can hardly be dealt with in the current team composition. The UNEP/AEWA Secretariat is therefore exploring different options with respect to the handling of WMBD, including more support from the UNEP/CMS Secretariat and key NGOs to assist with the organization of the campaign. The present report provides only a summary of the main information management-related activities since 2009. More detailed information on information activities and related strategic considerations can be found in several MOP5 meeting documents prepared by the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat.

E-Newsletter

The AEWA Electronic Newsletter, recommended in the Communication Strategy, has been sent out regularly, four to five times per year. The aim of the E-Newsletter is to inform the Agreement's network about recent AEWA activities and related news. Currently the E-Newsletter is sent out to over 3,500 people and new subscribers are joining via an online registration system on a regular basis. The E-Newsletter has evolved into one of the main communication tools available to the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat and its production involves the entire Secretariat team.

http://www.unep-aewa.org/news/e_newsletter_archive.htm

Finalization of the Online National Reporting System

In the framework of a UNEP project, launched in 2006 and funded by the Government of Norway, to work on strengthening the implementation of the biodiversity-related conventions through the strategic use of information/knowledge management among UNEP-administered MEAs, an online national reporting system has been developed for the national reports of the Contracting Parties to AEWA and CMS. The UNEP/AEWA Secretariat, which has taken the lead in this project on behalf of AEWA and CMS, has been working very closely with UNEP-WCMC over the past years. The newly developed online reporting format was presented to MOP4 and adopted, and the Online National Reporting Tool, which was developed as a CMS Family tool and could be expanded to other instruments under CMS, was finalised in 2010/2011 in close collaboration between the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat and UNEP-WCMC. Following up a request from the Parties to pre-populate the online format where data are readily available, the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat contracted a consultant tasked with inserting all available information into the system in order to reduce the workload for Parties who will have to use the system for the first time prior to MOP5.

The new format is expected to facilitate the collection, analysis and use of the information contained in Parties' national reports. However, the project urgently needs a follow-up project aiming at developing an analytical tool linked to the online reporting system. Unfortunately, the funding for this potentially important tool has not been secured so far. Further information on the Online Reporting System (ORS) can be found in document AEWA/MOP 5.13.

WEBSITES

AEWA website (www.unep-aewa.org)

The AEWA website has continuously developed over the last years. Besides the *News* section, which is updated at least once per week, a number of new pages have been created providing in depth and up-to-date information on ongoing activities, e.g. for the conservation of the Lesser White-fronted Goose and the activities in the framework of the African Initiative. A press and media resources page provides audio-visual materials and links to different AEWA resources that can be used for media purposes. The AEWA website in its current form was developed in 2003/2004 and although it continues to fulfil its basic function, it is starting to become technologically out-dated.

CMS Family Website Concept

At the special session of the CMS Management Meeting (MM) which took place during an internal CMS Family Retreat in March 2011, it was decided to create a "Website Working Group", initially consisting of staff from the UNEP/CMS Secretariat and all Bonn-based CMS Agreements including AEWA, to develop a project concept/proposal for a future CMS Family Website. After its creation, the Website WG agreed to follow a full participatory and transparent process in the development of this proposal, i.e. one which would gain from input from all CMS Family staff and also incorporate feedback from the Parties.

The original project proposal (see AEWA/MOP Inf. 5.10) was jointly prepared by the Secretariats of CMS, AEWA, ASCOBANS, EUROBATS and the Gorillas Agreement and presented to CMS COP10 in November 2011 in Bergen, Norway. Further information on the AEWA Website and the CMS Family Website Project can be found in document AEWA/MOP 5.18.

TC Workspace (<http://tcworkspace.aewa.info/>)

The AEWA TC Workspace has become a primary online collaboration tool for the AEWA Technical Committee and is being actively used by TC Members and Observers and the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat to support the ongoing work of the TC, especially between face-to-face meetings. However, the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat needs to highlight that with the increasing use of and dependency on the TC Workspace, the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat will need additional funding to be able to ensure its reliability through necessary system upgrades and to be able to make requested improvements to it in the coming years. Further information on the TC Workspace can be found in documents AEWA/MOP 5.7, AEWA/MOP 5.9 and AEWA/MOP 5.18.

World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD) website (www.worldmigratorybirdday.org)

The centre of the annual WMBD campaign is the WMBD website. Since its development in 2006, the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat has taken the lead in managing and updating this online resource. Each year a small team of interns, working under the supervision of the Associate Information Officer, helped to develop and customize the WMBD website to fit the annually selected theme. A special WMBD Trailer was also produced and featured on the WMBD 2011 website and a new Interactive Events Map was created and made accessible from the WMBD 2011 website to showcase all registered WMBD events around the world. Further information on World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD) can be found in document AEWA/MOP 5.18.

AEWA International SSAP Working Group Websites Within the framework of the implementation of the Single Species Action Plan for the Lesser White-fronted Goose and the Black-tailed Godwit, special websites which include an internal workspace, have been developed by the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat with the assistance of an external technical expert. The publicly-accessible websites will function as a platform to showcase the international conservation work being coordinated by these AEWA SSAP Working Groups, whilst the internal workspaces will be used for communication between Working Group Members and Observers in the inter-sessional periods between Working Group meetings. Although the Content Management System template being used is a new one, the workspace has been modelled after the TC Workspace in terms of the collaboration features it offers. Further information on the AEWA SSAP Working Group Workspaces can be found in documents AEWA/MOP 5.10 and AEWA/MOP 5.18.

Wings Over Wetlands (WOW) website (www.wingsoverwetlands.org)

In his capacity as Communication Officer for the Wings over Wetlands Project, the AEWA Information Officer developed and maintained the WOW project website for the duration of the project implementation (2006 – 2010). In early 2011, the WOW website was transformed into an “archive” and is being kept accessible for the public as a testimony to the projects implementation. The website is being physically hosted by Wetlands International and the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat has agreed to cover the small cost associated with the renewal of the website address.

AFRING website (www.afring.org)

The AEWA Associate Information Officer developed a designated website for the African Waterbird Ringing Scheme (AFRING). The website has been handed over to Mr Doug Harebottle at the Avian Demography Unit (ADU) of the University of Cape Town, South Africa, who has agreed to maintain it.

Posters, Banners, Stickers

Customized World Migratory Bird Day posters were designed, printed and distributed by the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat in 2010, 2011 and 2012. In addition, a poster for the Lesser White-fronted Goose has been designed in-house in several relevant languages. Several new species stickers were printed in 2011 and 2012, depicting the following AEWA species: Lesser Flamingo (*Phoeniconaias minor*), White Stork (*Ciconia ciconia*), White-winged Flufftail (*Sarothrura ayresi*), Red-breasted Goose (*Branta ruficollis*), Slaty Egret (*Egretta vinaceigula*), White-headed Duck (*Oxyura leucocephala*), Northern Bald Ibis (*Geronticus eremita*), Sociable Lapwing (*Vanellus gregarius*), Madagascar Pond-heron (*Ardeola ideia*) and Lesser White-fronted Goose (*Anser erythropus*), Blue Crane (*Grus paradisea*), Cape Gannet (*Morus capensis*), Shoebill (*Balaeniceps rex*), Black-tailed Godwit (*Limosa limosa*), Wattled Crane (*Grus carunculatus*), Grey Crowned Crane (*Balearica regulorum*), African Penguin (*Spheniscus demersus*), Bank Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax neglectus*). Species banners for all AEWA International SSAP Working Groups have also been produced in the run-up to AEWA MOP5. These can also be used for SSAP Working Group meetings in future.

AEWA Exhibition Stand

The UNEP/AEWA Secretariat has developed a new 80 cm x 2m display for use at public events and presentations.

PRINT PUBLICATIONS

Technical Series

All the seven International Single Species Action Plans (SSAP) adopted by MOP4 (see the list below) were printed by the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat and also published on the AEWA website:

- Maccoa Duck *Oxyura maccoa* (Technical Series No. 14)
- Lesser Flamingo *Phoeniconaias minor* (Technical Series No. 34)
- Eurasian Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia* (Technical Series No. 35)
- Lesser White-fronted Goose *Anser erythropus* (Technical Series No. 36)
- Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa* (Technical Series No. 37)
- White-winged Flufftail *Sarothrura ayresi* (Technical Series No. 38)
- Madagascar Pond-Heron *Ardeola idae* (Technical Series No. 39)

<http://www.unep-aewa.org/publications/ssap/index.htm>

Moreover, a few guidelines and reports have been published on the AEWA website as electronic versions, including:

- Guidelines on how to avoid, minimize or mitigate impact of infrastructural developments and related disturbance affecting waterbirds (Technical Series No. 26/ Conservation Guidelines No. 11); and
- Guidelines on measures needed to help waterbirds to adapt to climate change (Technical Series No. 27/ AEWA Conservation Guidelines No. 12).

http://www.unep-aewa.org/publications/conservation_guidelines.htm

Other publications

New General Leaflet on AEWA: Tool for International Cooperation

A new general leaflet on AEWA available in English, French and German has been developed in 2012. The publication gives a concise, easy-to-read introduction to the Agreement. Effort was made to make the publication as timeless and attractive as it can be. It includes a map showing a number of flyways of AEWA species projected on the official AEWA Agreement area and a selection of high-quality AEWA species photos.

AEWA History book

To mark the 15th Anniversary of AEWA, the AEWA Secretariat, in close cooperation with the AEWA Honorary Patron Dr. Gerard C. Boere, prepared a publication describing the early development history of the Agreement. This publication covers the period 1985-2000 and looks at the development and implementation of AEWA in the broader context of waterbird and wetland conservation over the last 40-50 years. The publication contains hundreds of historic photos, documents and references which, together with the text, illustrate the evolution of AEWA into the international treaty it is today. It is a testimony to the collective international efforts and all the processes and different people which played a role in paving the way for the conclusion of the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement during its final Negotiation Meeting on 14 - 16 June 1995 at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands in The Hague. This publication is available in hardcopy and electronic versions.

http://www.unep-aewa.org/publications/books/aewa_history_book_sm.pdf

Phasing out the use of lead shot for hunting in wetlands: Experiences made and lessons learned by AEWA Range States

This publication is based on a survey, undertaken by the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat in 2007/2008, among governmental focal points and national hunting organisations in AEWA Range States which have phased out the use of lead shot for hunting in wetlands. The findings of this survey have been summarized in order to guide governments through the process of implementing Paragraph 4.1.4 of the AEWA Action Plan by providing a roadmap built on experiences made and lessons learned by other countries. This publication is part of the AEWA popular series and available as hardcopy and electronically in English and French.

http://www.unep-aewa.org/publications/popular_series/lead-shot-en.pdf

Introduced Non-Native Waterbirds: Status Within the African-Eurasian Flyways

This publication is a summary and popular version of the full report on the status of introduced non-native waterbird species in the area of the Agreement (update 2007) prepared by the British Trust for Ornithology and submitted to the 4th Session of the Meeting of the Parties (September 2008).

http://www.unep-aewa.org/publications/popular_series.htm/non_native_species.pdf

http://www.unep-aewa.org/publications/popular_series.htm/non_native_species_fr.pdf

Black-tailed Godwit – the journey of a bird under threat

In cooperation with the Belgian wildlife painter Yves Fagniart, the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat has created a book on the Black-tailed Godwit (*Limosa limosa*). This publication was presented at the AEWA 15th Anniversary Symposium which took place in The Hague, the Netherlands, on 14 to 15 June 2010. It is available in English and French as hardcopy and electronic version.

http://www.unep-aewa.org/publications/books/btg_engl_sm.pdf

African Initiative leaflet and brochure

The UNEP/AEWA Secretariat has developed an informative leaflet and brochure on the African Initiative, which is available as hardcopy and electronically in English and French.

<http://www.unep-aewa.org/activities/africaninitiative/publication/index.htm>

How you can support the implementation of the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement!

The UNEP/AEWA Secretariat has published a revised version of its fundraising kit “How you can support the implementation of the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement”. This bilingual publication (English and French) consists of a kit of 29 leaflets, each presenting a project which was given priority by the 4th Meeting of the Parties to AEWA (MOP4, Madagascar, 2008), but for which funds are lacking. The publication is available as hardcopy and electronically.

http://www.unep-aewa.org/publications/iip_brochure/iip_brochure2011.pdf

Flyway Conservation at Work

This publication, which is also available for download from the WOW website, gives an overview of the WOW project and the main achievements of this unique flyway initiative carried out in the African-Eurasian region, showcasing the important flyway-scale conservation work and materials developed under the project.

<http://wow.wetlands.org/ABOUTWOW/LATESTNEWS/tabid/125/articleType/ArticleView/articleId/2164/Default.aspx>

Official AEWA documents

The AEWA Agreement Text as well as the Strategic Plan 2009-2017 have been layouted in line with the AEWA corporate house style design and are available in hardcopy and electronically in English and French.

http://www.unep-aewa.org/documents/agreement_text/agree_main.htm

http://www.unep-aewa.org/documents/agreement_text/strategic_plan.htm

World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD) 2010, 2011 and 2012

WMBD is a common CMS-AEWA activity; however the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat has the lead in the overall coordination of WMBD outreach activities. In 2012 WMBD will coincide with MOP5, and preparing for the latter will require most of the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat's attention and effort. The AEWA and CMS Secretariats have therefore decided that the CMS Secretariat will take a stronger role in organizing the seventh WMBD campaign. Moreover, the Secretariats are currently considering different options on how to

deal with the WMBD preparation in the long term. Further information on WMBD can be found in meeting document AEWA/MOP 5.18.

WMBD 2012

World Migratory Bird Day 2012 will take place on 12-13 May 2012 and will be celebrating the connections and relationships between migratory birds and people. The theme for 2012 is "Migratory birds and people - together through time" highlighting the cultural, social, historic, economic and spiritual connections we have with birds. The 2012 theme is deliberately very similar to the central theme of the 5th Session of the Meeting of the Parties to the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement (AEWA MOP5) which is taking place in the week directly following World Migratory Bird Day from 14 to 18 May 2012 in the French port city of La Rochelle.

WMBD 2011

WMBD 2011 was celebrated on 14 - 15 May 2011. The theme was: '*Land use changes from a bird's-eye view*' and it highlighted the negative effects human activities are having on migratory birds, their habitats and the planet's natural environment. With 205 events registered in 64 countries worldwide WMBD 2011 broke all records in comparison with previous years and has evidently developed into a highly recognized and popular global campaign.

WMBD 2010

The fifth World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD) took place on 8 - 9 May 2010. The central theme "*Save migratory birds in crisis - every species counts!*" aimed to raise awareness about globally threatened migratory birds, with a particular focus on those birds on the very edge of extinction - the Critically Endangered. The WMBD 2010 theme was closely linked to the International Year of Biodiversity (IYB), which was declared by the UN General Assembly for the year 2010 to bring greater international attention to the continued loss of biodiversity worldwide. Over 90 different WMBD events in over 40 countries were registered on the WMBD website in 2010. More than 100 articles referring to WMBD 2010 from media and website sources from around the world were featured right before and over the WMBD weekend. Moreover, since 2010 World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD) is also engaging social media with dedicated WMBD Facebook and Twitter pages to share latest news and to link people around the world who celebrate WMBD.

3. IMPLEMENTATION AND COMPLIANCE

Contracting Parties are responsible and involved in the implementation of and compliance with the provisions laid down in the Agreement. Their National Reports provide the necessary information to enable an assessment on progress made in this respect. However, the Agreement Secretariat is partly responsible and also involved in the implementation and/ or compliance of the Agreement. Hereafter you will find information on the role of the Secretariat in this respect.

International Implementation Tasks (IIT)

The IIT 2009-2016 include 31 projects, of which 13 have - at least partly - been implemented since 2009 (most of them in the framework of the WOW project), including following projects:

SPECIES CONSERVATION

- Implement existing international single species action plans
- Develop new international single species action plans

HABITAT CONSERVATION

- Identify all sites of international importance for AEWA species
- Create an interactive tool that presents information on important sites for migratory waterbirds
- Publish priority areas for better protection

RESEARCH AND MONITORING

- Survey work in poorly-known areas

- International Waterbird Census – special gap-filling surveys

EDUCATION AND INFORMATION

- Improving survey and monitoring capacity for migratory waterbirds
- Regional training programmes in Africa for implementation of the Agreement
- Regional workshops for the promotion of the Agreement
- Communicating the importance of a network of critical sites for migratory waterbirds

For a more detailed overview please see document AEWA/MOP 5.17 Corr.1.

Wings Over Wetlands (WOW) UNEP-GEF African-Eurasian Flyways Project

After four years of successful implementation the WOW Project has come to close at the end of 2010. It has delivered several very valuable outcomes which will support the implementation of AEWA in the years to come, such as the Critical Site Network (CSN) Tool and the Flyway Training Kit (FTK).

The CSN Tool is an open-access online information and mapping resource (www.wingsoverwetlands.org/csntool) customized to support waterbird conservation in the AEWA region. It is designed to help a range of different users, from site managers to national authorities and international organizations, access information on waterbirds and the sites they depend on in Africa and western Eurasia. It is important to note that the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat has agreed to cover the basic maintenance cost for the CSN Tool (€5,000 annually) in order to keep the system operational. The CSN Tool maintenance work is being coordinated by Wetlands International and BirdLife International in cooperation with UNEP-WCMC.

The CSN Tool was recently recognized as one of the best web-based conservation mapping tools. The tool won the first prize of the ESRI/SCGIS International Conservation Mapping Competition in the category “Best Interactive Web Map” on 21 June 2011. ESRI is a major software development and services company providing Geographic Information Software (GIS) and the latest geodatabase management applications which are also being used in the Critical Site Network (CSN) Tool.

The WOW Flyway Training Kit (FTK) was released in 2010 and is available in four languages (English, French, Arabic and Russian). The Flyway Training Kit is a unique resource in flyway-scale conservation and represents an important step towards meeting core strategic objectives of both AEWA and the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands. The training package includes three modules with comprehensive text, case studies and exercises supported by ready-to-use presentations, as well as accompanying CDs with a range of additional material. The kit is designed to assist in targeted trainings that can be customized by topic as they relate to flyway conservation, wetland management and migratory waterbird conservation. Funding permitting, the FTK can be used for trainings conducted in the context of the AEWA African Initiative and should be seen as a unique CEPA tool on the general topic of flyway conservation and AEWA.

Another major outcome of the project was the successful implementation of ten of the eleven demonstration projects.

Last but not least, the project has strengthened the alliance between the four main partner organizations – BirdLife International, Wetlands International, the Ramsar Convention Secretariat and the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat, which signed a Memorandum of Cooperation in June 2010 in order to continue the partnership that has been built up during the design and implementation of the WOW project.

Further information on the WOW project is provided in document AEWA/MOP Inf. 5.9.

The African Initiative to strengthen the conservation of waterbirds and their habitats

The African Initiative was adopted at MOP4 (Resolution 4.9) and MOP4 agreed to allocate an amount of € 172,500 towards the development of a Plan of Action and other activities until 2012. The Meeting of Parties requested the Secretariat to submit a draft Plan of Action to MOP5 in 2012. In addition some countries promised to look into providing additional support to this initiative and particularly to the recruitment of an African Officer. Meanwhile the Government of France has provided substantial support enabling the Secretariat to recruit Ms. Evelyn Moloko as Coordinator for the African Initiative as of 1 August 2009. Her tasks under this position include the drafting of a Plan of Action for the conservation of migratory waterbirds and their habitats in Africa, fundraising and awareness raising activities, membership development and advisory services to the Parties from the region.

As part of the implementation of the African Initiative, the Secretariat launched the first cycle of the AEWA Small Grant Fund, approved through Resolution 1.7. Funds available in the first cycle came from the core budget and from voluntary contributions from France and Switzerland). Advisory services were provided to project proponents and submitted proposals were evaluated, with guidance from the AEWA TC. Projects selected for funding were further endorsed by the AEWA Standing Committee (StC). The second cycle of the AEWA SGF was launched in May 2011 and the third cycle in April 2012.

For the 2010 SGF cycle, a total of five projects were funded from five African countries (Egypt, Ethiopia, Gambia, Kenya and Madagascar) for a total amount of 93,071 Euros. For the 2011 cycle, two projects have been funded from two African countries (Tanzania and Ghana), for a total amount of 43,400 Euros. The sum of 20,000 Euros is currently available in the core budget for the 2012 cycle and the Secretariat hopes to secure additional funds for this cycle and future SGF cycles.

A detailed report of activities undertaken with the support of the Secretariat within the African Initiative is provided in document AEWA/MOP 5.32.

Strengthening waterbird and wetland capacities in North Africa (WetCap)

The WetCap project was launched on 1 March 2009 with the main partners being BirdLife International, SEO (Spanish BirdLife partner), Wetlands International, the Ramsar Convention and AEWA. Its focus was on capacity building for waterbird and wetland conservation in North Africa. In 2008, the main donor, the Spanish Development Cooperation Agency (AECID), had approved our proposal and promised to contribute up to €1.6 million to this 3-year project. The project was implemented for one year. Unfortunately, due to a change of priorities within AECID, the funding for the second and third year of implementation was suspended and the continuation of the project is therefore unlikely. Activities successfully implemented under this project during its first year include a Regional workshop on the Critical Sites Network (CSN) tool, which was held in Mehdia, Morocco on 3-5 December 2009.

Coordination and implementation of Single Species Action Plans

A number of new partnerships have been established in 2010 and 2011 with respect to the coordination of Single Species Action Plans:

Northern Bald Ibis (*Geronticus eremita*)

An MoC has been signed between BirdLife International and the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat in March 2010 for the conservation of the Northern Bald Ibis (*Geronticus eremita*). BirdLife International provided a part-time Coordinator for the AEWA Northern Bald Ibis International Working Group, who organizes and services its meetings and also leads on the update and revision of the International Northern Bald Ibis SSAP. The Working Group has been convened and its 1st meeting is scheduled for the second half of 2012.

Lesser Flamingo (*Phoeniconaias minor*), White-winged Flufftail (*Sarothrura ayresi*) and Madagascar Pond-heron (*Ardeola idae*)

BirdLife Africa and the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat have signed an MoC on the conservation of the Lesser Flamingo (*Phoeniconaias minor*), the White-winged Flufftail (*Sarothrura ayresi*) and the Madagascar Pond-heron (*Ardeola idae*) in April 2010. BirdLife Africa provided a part-time Coordinator for the AEWA International Working Groups for these species under a contract with the Secretariat who convened the

Working Groups for the three species. Funding has been exhausted and in order to continue this coordination resources will have to be raised.

White-headed Duck (*Oxyura leucocephala*) and Red-breasted Goose (*Branta ruficollis*)

The Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust (WWT) and the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat have signed two Memoranda of Cooperation (MoC) for the conservation of the White-headed Duck (*Oxyura leucocephala*) and the Red-breasted Goose (*Branta ruficollis*) in August 2010. The aim of these MoCs is to ensure complete and effective implementation of the SSAPs for both species. The UNEP/AEWA Secretariat and WWT intend to build on their good collaboration in the past to achieve an improved conservation status for both species. The Working Group for the Red-breasted Goose has already been convened and a part-time coordinator has been provided through an arrangement with BSPB/BirdLife Bulgaria.

Sociable Lapwing (*Vanellus gregarius*)

The coordination of the AEWA Sociable Lapwing International Working Group was handed over to the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) in April 2011. The RSPB is servicing and coordinating the Working Group through a part-time coordinator, who is also facilitating the implementation of the Single Species Action Plan (SSAP) for the Sociable Lapwing. Moreover, RSPB has also been leading on the revision of the current SSAP. The revised plan was extended to cover the species' eastern flyway to the Indian subcontinent (outside of the AEWA area) and will therefore be implemented in the framework of both AEWA and CMS. The first meeting of the Working Group took place in March 2011 in Syria.

Black-tailed Godwit (*Limosa limosa*)

An MoC with the Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs, Agriculture and Innovation on the coordination of the Single Species Action Plan for the conservation of the Black-tailed Godwit has been signed in August 2011. A part-time coordinator has been provided and the Working Group has been convened.

For a complete overview on the progress of the production and coordination of Single Species Action Plans please see document AEWA/MOP 5.24. A more detailed account of the work done by the Secretariat on the Lesser White-fronted Goose SSAP is provided below:

Lesser White-fronted Goose (*Anser erythropus*)

The overall coordination for the implementation of the SSAP for the Western Palearctic population of the Lesser White-fronted Goose (LWfG) has since May 2009, been facilitated by the Coordinator for the LWfG Ms. Nina Mikander. This post is currently sponsored by the Norwegian Directorate for Nature Management.

The overall implementation approach has been to encourage and assist all key range states to establish national working groups and national action plans for the species. To this aim, the Secretariat convened the AEWA LWfG Working Group as foreseen in the Single Species Action Plan (SSAP) in 2009. The first meeting of the group was held in Helsinki on the 30 November and 1 December 2010 and was attended by representatives from 16 of 22 range states as well as four observer organizations (BirdLife International, FACE, Wetlands International and WWT). Meeting participants agreed on Terms of Reference for the Working Group, the procedure and template for national reporting on SSAP implementation and prioritized key conservation activities to be implemented by the end of 2012. The second Working Group Meeting is set to take place within the framework of the EU LIFE+ project "Safeguarding the LWfG" on the 7.-9. November 2012 at Lake Kerkini in Greece.

Additional activities undertaken within the framework of the Working Group in 2011 include the development of a website and internal workspace as well as the launch of a new report series for the LWfG highlighting in particular projects implemented under the SSAP. In 2012 the Secretariat developed a general awareness-raising poster together with key stakeholders, which was funded by the German Government. The poster is currently available in English, Russian, Kazakh and Arabic. In addition, the Secretariat has worked closely with WWF Finland and the Norwegian Ornithological Society to produce a LWfG field guide focusing on the basics of LWfG identification and monitoring. The field guide will also be made available in several languages.

Efforts to institutionalize LWfG conservation in all the key Range States is a lengthy process, which makes it crucial to simultaneously back this work with concrete conservation measures targeting key threats to the species. Therefore the Secretariat is assisting in the planning of and fundraising for LWfG conservation projects in accordance with the priorities set out in the SSAP. The focus for these concentrate conservation efforts is currently on those range states outside of Europe where the threats to the species are thought to be most severe (i.e. Russian Federation, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan etc.).

Concrete conservation projects facilitated by the Secretariat since 2009 include; a LWfG monitoring mission to the Syrian Arab Republic in February 2010 to identify potential key LWfG wintering sites as well as train local conservationists in identifying LWfG, an ongoing project in the Kumo-Manych Depression in Kalmykia, Russian Federation for the regulation of spring and autumn hunting on waterbirds during spring and autumn migration which has been extended until the beginning of 2012 and an extensive monitoring mission in Kazakhstan in October 2010 followed by a workshop in Kostanay, Kazakhstan facilitated by the AEWA Secretariat with the aim to start the drafting of a national Action Plan for the species.

The UNEP/AEWA Secretariat is also involved in conservation measures along the LWfG European flyway: A new five-year EU LIFE+ project for the LWfG was approved by the EU Commission in September 2011. The Secretariat will participate in the project as a partner and beneficiary.

The UNEP/AEWA Secretariat also facilitates the work of the Committee for Captive Breeding, Reintroduction and Supplementation of Lesser White-fronted Geese in Fennoscandia (RECAP Committee). The fourth RECAP Committee meeting was held in June 2011 at the UN Campus in Bonn. For more information, please see:

http://www.unep-aewa.org/news/news_lwfg/lwfg_news.htm

Implementation Review Process (IRP)

MOP4 agreed to establish an implementation review process through Resolution 4.6. The main reason for the Meeting of the Parties to take this decision was the lack of implementation of the Agreement and the increasing number of cases of waterbirds or sites that might get affected by human activities. It was decided that the Standing Committee would undertake this process and the Secretariat will assist the Committee in its functions.

In late 2009, the first IRP case was launched dealing with the illegal hunting of the Sociable Lapwing in Syria. In the end of February 2010 an AEWA on-the-spot assessment mission took place. The mission report and recommendations were approved by the AEWA Standing Committee in June 2010 and were transmitted to the Syrian authorities for further implementation. The IRP report is available here:

<http://www.unep-aewa.org/activities/irp/index.htm>

The work on this first IRP case was sponsored through a voluntary contribution of the Government of Germany. A small grant was made available to BirdLife International in the autumn of 2010 to provide assistance to the Syrian government for the implementation of the IRP recommendations.

Two more IRP cases emerged in early 2012 on the drainage for tourism development in the salina of Ulcinj in Montenegro and on windfarm development near Lake Durankulak in Bulgaria.

A detailed report is available in document AEWA/MOP 5.16.

Joint advisory missions

In August 2009, a joint Ramsar Advisory Mission (RAM) including the UNEP/CMS and UNEP/AEWA Secretariats was undertaken to advise the Government of Mozambique on the conservation and wise use of the Marromeu Complex Ramsar Site. The RAM report is available here: http://www.ramsar.org/cda/en/ramsar-documents-rams-ram62/main/ramsar/1-31-112%5E24429_4000_0

In June 2010 the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat, also representing the CMS Secretariat, took part in a RAM to Congo on advising the Government of Congo on the conservation of the Cayo-Loufoualeba Ramsar Site. The RAM report was approved and is available here: http://www.ramsar.org/pdf/ra/ram_rpt_66e.pdf

In October 2010, the UNEP/AEWA and UNEP/CMS Secretariats were represented by Dr. Imad Cherkaoui in a RAM to the Embouchure de la Moulouya Ramsar Site in Morocco, which aimed at advising the Government as well as other stakeholders, on the conservation and wise use of the site. The report is available here: http://www.ramsar.org/pdf/ram/RAM71_fr_Maroc_Aug11.pdf.

International reviews

In accordance with paragraphs 7.4 and 7.5 of the AEWA Action Plan, the Agreement Secretariat, in coordination with the Technical Committee and the Parties, shall prepare in intervals of three to nine years a series of international reviews necessary for the implementation of the Action Plan including:

- a) reports on the status and trends of populations;
- b) gaps in information from surveys;
- c) the networks of sites used by each population, including reviews of the protection status of each site as well as the management measures taken in each case;
- d) pertinent hunting and trade legislation in each country relating to the species listed in Annex 2 to this Agreement;
- e) the stage of preparation and implementation of single species action plans;
- f) re-establishment projects; and
- g) the status of introduced non-native waterbird species and hybrids thereof.

From the above list a, d, e, f and g, as well as a report on the use of non-toxic shot for waterbird hunting were submitted to MOP4. The report under b was not commissioned due to lack of funding. The 5th edition of the Conservation Status Report (indicated above under item “a”) is presented in document AEWA/MOP 5.14. The 1st edition of the Site Network Report (item “c” above) is presented as a preliminary paper in document AEWA/MOP 5.15.

4. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

Project on “Enhancing the capacity for conservation planning in the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement area”

Since a significant sum was missing to fully implement all activities planned under the WOW project, the focus of the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat’s fundraising efforts since 2009 has been on finding the funds to fill this gap. A project proposal was developed in close cooperation with Wetlands International in mid-2009 to apply for funding under the European Commission’s Thematic Programme for Environment and sustainable management of Natural Resources, including energy (ENRTP) and a 18-months project containing matching activities with the WOW project was approved and funded under the title “Enhancing the capacity for conservation planning in the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement Area”. The funding received for this project was €200,000. At the time of writing the project has been completed and final reports have been submitted to the donor.

5. OTHER ACTIVITIES AND OUTPUTS

AEWA’s 15th Anniversary

The Agreement celebrated its 15th Anniversary in The Hague, the Netherlands with a Symposium on 14 - 15 June 2010. The Symposium was hosted by the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality (LNV) and was facilitated by Dr. Gerard C. Boere, one of AEWA’s founding fathers. Representatives from over 25 countries and a large number of partner organizations participated in the event, celebrating 15 years of success in waterbird conservation and defining the major challenges that lie ahead, which can only be tackled successfully if all stakeholders join forces. During the two-day Symposium, a number of workshops were held on various issues, such as climate change, land use developments and the sustainable management of migratory birds.

The discussions and outcomes of the workshops and the plenary discussions culminated in a declaration - *The Hague Action Statement* - which defines the Agreement’s role in the future of international waterbird

conservation and identifies the steps to be taken in order to protect migratory waterbirds in the most efficient way; particularly with regard to the 5th Meeting of the Parties (MOP5) in May 2012. *The Hague Action Statement* can be downloaded under:

http://www.unep-aewa.org/meetings/symposium/docs/the_hague_action_statement.pdf

6th Meeting of the AEWA Standing Committee

The meeting was held in The Hague, the Netherlands on 16 - 17 June 2010, at the kind invitation of the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality of the Government of the Netherlands. The documentation for the meeting can be found at the URL:

http://www.unep-aewa.org/meetings/en/stc_meetings/stc6docs/stc6.htm

The report of the meeting can be found at the URL:

http://www.unep-aewa.org/meetings/en/stc_meetings/stc6docs/stc6_final_report.htm

7th Meeting of the AEWA Standing Committee

The meeting was held in Bergen, Norway on 26 - 27 November 2011, at the kind invitation of the Directorate of Nature Management of the Government of Norway. The documentation for the meeting can be found at the URL:

http://www.unep-aewa.org/meetings/en/stc_meetings/stc7docs/stc7_docs.htm

The report of the meeting is being finalized at the time of writing.

9th Meeting of the AEWA Technical Committee

The meeting was held in Zagreb, Croatia, on 20-23 April 2009, at the kind invitation of the Ministry of Culture of the Government of Croatia. The documentation and the report of the meeting can be found at the URL:

http://www.unep-aewa.org/meetings/en/tc_meetings/tc9/tc9.htm

10th Meeting of the AEWA Technical Committee

The meeting was held in Naivasha, Kenya, on 12-16 September 2011, at the kind invitation of the Kenya Wildlife Service of the Government of Kenya. The report of the meeting is under preparation and will be posted as soon as finalized at the URL:

http://www.unep-aewa.org/meetings/en/tc_meetings/tc10/tc10.htm

Preparations for the 5th Meeting of the Parties (MOP5)

At the time of writing, preparations for the 5th Meeting of the Parties to AEWA (MOP5) are in their final stage. The Secretariat has been in regular contact with the Ministry of Ecology, Sustainable Development, Transport and Housing of France, and participated in several meetings of the MOP5 Organizing Committee established by the French Government. Three joint visits to La Rochelle were undertaken by representatives of the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat and the French Ministry of Ecology, Sustainable Development, Transport and Housing for the logistical preparations. Details concerning the substantive and logistical preparations for the meeting can be found on the MOP5 webpage:

http://www.unep-aewa.org/meetings/en/mop/mop5_docs/mop5.htm

New policy-related developments

Some policy-related developments are taking place within the AEWA region, which are of potential great interest for the future of the Agreement:

Central Asian Flyway (CAF)

In early 2008, CMS launched the Central Asian Flyway (CAF) Action Plan. CAF covers 30 range states of which 16 are located within the AEWA Agreement Area. Also half of the populations listed in this Action Plan are already covered by AEWA. The UNEP/CMS Secretariat has plans to hold an intergovernmental negotiation meeting aimed at clarifying the preferred legal and institutional arrangements for a CMS instrument on this flyway on 12-13 December 2012 in Abu Dhabi following the 1st Meeting of the Signatories to the Raptors MoU. This issue will be introduced in more detail to MOP5 by the UNEP/CMS Secretariat under agenda item 25 (Doc. AEWA/MOP 5.39).

Future shape of CMS & Flyway Working Group

At CMS COP9, which took place in December 2008 in Rome, Italy, it was decided, through Resolution 9.12, to establish an *ad hoc* Working Group on the future shape of CMS. In addition to this working group, COP9 also agreed to establish an open-ended Scientific Council Working Group on flyways. For the future shape of CMS and particularly for the future of AEWA these two working groups are of great importance and therefore the Secretariat has participated in both. Their outcomes were tabled for discussion at CMS COP10 (Bergen, Norway, 20-25 November 2011). As a result of its relevant deliberations, COP10 adopted Resolution 10.9 *Future Structure and Strategies of the CMS and CMS Family*. A number of activities mentioned in the annexes to the resolution are addressed not only to CMS but also to CMS instruments. Of these, several are of direct relevance to AEWA. Relevance of the Future Shape of CMS to AEWA and contribution of AEWA to the implementation of the provisions of CMS 10.9 are expected to be discussed under item 10 of MOP5 agenda.