



15th MEETING OF THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE
09–11 April 2019, Bonn, Germany

REPORT OF THE SECRETARIAT

Introduction

This report covers the work of the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat for the period between March 2018 and February 2019.

In the triennium cycle, the past twelve months have been mainly dedicated to the preparation of the 7th Session of the Meeting of the Parties (MOP7) with a Technical Committee (TC) meeting in April 2018 and a Standing Committee (StC) meeting in July 2018 to review the documents and draft resolutions to be examined by the Parties in December 2018.

The report is divided into five sections:

1. Staffing and Organisation of the Secretariat;
2. General Management, which includes recruitment of Parties and cooperation with other organisations;
3. Science, Implementation and Compliance;
4. Capacity-building; and
5. Communication, Information Management and Outreach.

Activities reported in detail in other TC15 documents are only mentioned briefly here, with a reference to the relevant substantive document containing more information.

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

1. Staffing and Organisation of the Secretariat

Staffing Situation

Staff funded by the core budget

There have been no major changes to the team during the period covered by the report except the retirement of Ms Jolanta Kremer, Programme Management Assistant in the Science, Implementation and Compliance Unit (SICU) in October 2018. Ms Kremer had served the TC for the past 12 years. Ms Jeannine Dicken is the new Programme Management Assistant, and she entered into duty in November 2018. <https://www.unep-aewa.org/en/news/aewa-welcomes-new-staff-member>

African Initiative Unit

The positions of the African Initiative Coordinator (P-2) and the Programme Assistant (G-5) were partly funded (50 per cent) through the AEWA core budget 2016-2018 and this was maintained in the 2019-2021

core budget. The Secretariat was able to maintain the P-2 position at 100 per cent and the G-5 position at 80 per cent from 2016 to 2018, thanks to contributions from the Federal Office for the Environment (FOEN) in Switzerland and the European Commission. The Secretariat expects to be able to maintain both positions at this level until mid-2019 and will need to secure additional funding beyond this period.

Staff fully dependent on voluntary contributions

Associate Programme Officer (P-2) for Single Species Action Plan Support and the coordination of implementation of the Lesser White-fronted Goose International Single Species Action Plan

The position of the Associate Programme Officer for Single Species Action Plan Support and the coordination of implementation of the Lesser White-fronted Goose International Single Species Action Plan has been secured until February 2020. The Secretariat is grateful to the Norwegian Environment Agency for its continuing support of this important position.

Associate Programme Officer (P-2) and Programme Management Assistant (G-5) for the AEWA European Goose Management Platform

The AEWA European Goose Management Platform (EGMP) is managed at the Secretariat level by two full-time project posts: one P-2 Associate Programme Officer and one G-5 Programme Management Assistant. The possibility of maintaining these posts after June 2019 is dependent on the annual voluntary contributions made by the Range States to the EGMP. At the time of writing, these two positions are not secured which could lead to implications in the staffing and the functioning of the entire Platform.

Interns

The UNEP/AEWA Secretariat participates in the CMS Family Internship Programme. In the framework of this programme, eight (seven in IMCA team and one in SICU) interns supported the work of the Secretariat in the period under consideration (March 2018 – February 2019).

Staff reclassification

Through Resolution 7.12 para 21, the 7th Session of the Meeting of the Parties “*recognises that all P posts recommended for upgrade in the reclassification assessment undertaken in 2016 will need to be reconsidered for upgrade at the 8th Session of the Meeting of the Parties in order to meet United Nations rules and regulations*”.

Organisation of the Secretariat

The individual staff members and units work closely as a team, interacting with each other daily on cross-cutting issues; they are divided into four major areas of work (as described in Annex 1 – Organisational Structure and Annex II - Staff Composition of the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat). It should be noted that the AEWA Communication Unit is part of the joint Information Management, Communication and Awareness-raising Unit (IMCA) co-funded by AEWA and CMS.

Each staff member has an annual work plan, which is approved and/or revised each year as well as mid-term by his/her direct supervisor. All the work plans are examined by the Executive Secretary, in order to ensure synergies between the units and to avoid a duplication of efforts. The Secretariat nonetheless faces a number of challenges in the delivery of its mandate and is rather stretched. This is due to the ever-increasing range of services to be delivered: without the extension of the part-time positions and the availability of staff funded through voluntary contributions and the support of interns, the Secretariat would not have been in a position to deliver all services requested during the course of the period covered by the report.

As of 28 February 2019, the core budget covers 7.30 full-time equivalent positions (FTEs), while voluntary contributions have allowed the addition of 4.50 full-time equivalent positions. The Secretariat currently

comprises twelve staff members (see Annex II): seven Professional Staff members (P staff) and five General Staff members (G staff).

2. General Management

Recruitment of Parties

Since TC14, two new Contracting Parties have acceded to AEWA (the Central African Republic on 1 January 2019 and the Republic of Serbia on 1 March 2019), bringing the total number of Parties to 79.

Efforts to recruit additional Parties in Africa, Europe and Central Asia, including Bosnia & Herzegovina, Cameroon, Greece, Kazakhstan, Malawi, the Russian Federation, Turkmenistan and Zambia are continuing together with the promotion of the Agreement in the Arabic peninsula and in the Portuguese-speaking African Range States.

The AEWA Standing Committee

The 13th Meeting of the AEWA Standing Committee took place from 3 to 5 July 2018 in The Hague, the Netherlands. The meeting was kindly hosted by the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality and was chaired by Dr Barirega Akankwasah of Uganda.

The three-day meeting was the final intersessional meeting of the Committee prior to the 7th Session of the Meeting of the Parties to AEWA (MOP 7). The StC13 meeting report is available at: https://www.unep-aewa.org/sites/default/files/document/stc_13_report_FINAL.pdf

The 14th Meeting of the AEWA Standing Committee took place immediately after the closure of MOP7 on 8 December in Durban, South Africa. The seven members, as nominated through resolution AEWA/MOP7 Res. 7.10, are:

- Europe and Central Asia (1): United Kingdom (Alternate: Luxembourg)
- Europe and Central Asia (2): Ukraine (Alternate: Republic of Moldova)
- Middle East and Northern Africa: Algeria (Alternate: Egypt)
- Western and Central Africa: Côte d'Ivoire (Alternate: Nigeria)
- Eastern and Southern Africa: South Africa (Alternate: Ethiopia)
- The Depositary (The Netherlands)
- The Host Country for MOP8 (Hungary).

The Chair (United Kingdom) and the Vice-Chair (South Africa) of the StC were elected.

The StC14 meeting report is available at: https://www.unep-aewa.org/sites/default/files/document/aewa_stc14_meeting_report.pdf

The AEWA Technical Committee

The 14th Meeting of the Technical Committee was held in Bonn, Germany on 10-13 April 2018. The meeting was convened with the aim to review and approve all the scientific and technical documents to be submitted to MOP7. The meeting report is available at: <http://www.unep-aewa.org/en/meeting/14th-meeting-aewa-technical-committee>.

AEWA Institutional Development

Following a mandate given by the Standing Committee in July 2018, the AEWA Secretariat in collaboration with CMS, has attended a meeting in New-Delhi, India, 19 November 2018 to discuss with the Indian Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change and State Authorities the way forward to institutionalise the Central Asian Flyway Action Plan. A roadmap 2019-2021 was discussed to evaluate the possibility of extending the geographic scope of AEWA by incorporating the Central Asian Flyway.

Cooperation with UN Environment and Other Organisations

UN Environment and CMS

CMS and its Family set the course for developing their contributions to the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework which is expected to provide a "New Deal for Nature" for the entire international community. Two years away from its adoption, the post-2020 framework presents the opportunity to raise the visibility of migratory wildlife and promote its conservation. The CMS Standing Committee held in Bonn, 23-24 October 2018, endorsed the establishment of a Working Group (WG) on the development of CMS Family contributions to the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework. The AEWA Secretariat is a member of this WG.

A specific side-event was organised in the margins of MOP7: "Connectivity Conservation towards 2020 and Beyond – CMS Family Contributions to the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework Development".

Ramsar Convention

Cooperation with the Secretariat of the Ramsar Convention has focused mainly on African topics. The UNEP/AEWA Secretariat participated at the 13th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties held in Dubai, the United Arab Emirates, from 21 to 29 October 2018.

The UNEP/AEWA Secretariat is currently organising in collaboration with the Ramsar Secretariat, the Government of Benin and the Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative, an AEWA Training of Trainers (TOT) workshop on the flyway approach to the conservation and wise use of waterbirds and wetlands for francophone Range States in West and Central Africa. The workshop is scheduled to take place from 6 to 10 May 2019 in Cotonou, Benin, and is made possible thanks to the generous financial and in-kind contributions from the Government of Benin and the European Commission's Global Public Goods and Challenges (GPGC) Thematic Programme Strategic Cooperation Agreement (SCA) with UN Environment.

The Ramsar Secretariat is also a partner of the RESSOURCE project (see below) and both Secretariats collaborate in the framework of this project.

BirdLife International

A four-day summit was convened by BirdLife International in association with the MAVA Foundation, the Ornithological Society of the Middle East (OSME) and CMS, among others. This summit took place in Abu Dhabi from 23 to 26 April 2018, with the participation of many key players in global bird conservation including NGOs, the scientific community, governments and the CMS Family. The main item under discussion was how migratory birds could be better protected at every point of their arduous journeys along the flyways. The head of the AEWA Science, Implementation and Compliance Unit attended this meeting. More information can be found here: <http://www.unep-aewa.org/en/news/ground-breaking-flyways-summit-held-abu-dhabi>

Conservation Evidence

A new partnership has been launched with the information resource initiative, Conservation Evidence. Based at the University of Cambridge, UK, Conservation Evidence is a free, authoritative information resource

designed to support decisions on maintaining and restoring global biodiversity. The idea is to give conservationists access to the very latest and most relevant ecological knowledge to support their policy or management decisions. (For further information, please see: <http://www.unep-aewa.org/en/news/aewa-launches-new-partnership-conservation-evidence>). Conservation Evidence was also presented via a dedicated exhibition stand held during MOP7 and a side-event “Solutions Science: An Introduction to Conservation Evidence”.

International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation (CIC)

The UNEP/AEWA Secretariat attended the 65th General Assembly of the CIC, 3-5 May 2018, in Madrid. The Secretariat participated at special events on migratory birds and presented the concept of adaptive management for migratory waterbirds. This meeting was also a good opportunity to meet with other key AEWA Range States. CIC is also a partner of the World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD) campaign.

FAO and FFEM and the RESSOURCE Project

The project entitled RESSOURCE is the acronym for the French equivalent of "*Strengthening expertise in sub-Saharan Africa on birds and their rational use for communities and their environment*". The ecosystems at the core of the project are based on the Senegal River Valley, the Inner Niger Delta, Lake Chad and parts of the River Nile. These are areas upon which almost one billion people depend for agriculture, rearing of livestock, fishing and hunting, and which are equally of critical importance to millions of waterbirds.

The project will attempt to evaluate the sustainability of exploiting the resources represented by waterbirds thanks to its integrated approach which aims to: (i) assess the resources in terms of the numbers, distribution and socio-economic importance, especially for rural communities (ii) preserve its habitats and (iii) propose conservation measures at community level. This project led by FAO and supported by the Fonds français pour l'environnement mondial (FFEM) involves not only the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat but also other key partners such as: ONCFS, CIRAD, OMPO, Wetlands International, BirdLife International and the Ramsar Convention, among others.

A side-event at MOP7 informed participants about the activities and results of the project. The AEWA Secretariat will attend the 3rd Steering Committee meeting at the FAO Headquarters on 11-13 June 2019.

For further information, please see:

<http://www.unep-aewa.org/en/news/conserving-waterbirds-africa%E2%80%99s-sahelo-saharan-region>

The initial activities and outcomes of the project can be assessed here: <http://www.eip.gov.eg/Upload/Publications/project%20ressource-%20july%202017.pdf>

Other Flyways: East Asian-Australasian

The Ramsar Secretariat nominated Mr Sergey Dereliev, Head of Science, Implementation and Compliance at the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat as a member of the Technical Committee of the East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership (EAAFP). His nomination was accepted, and his membership status confirmed in March 2018. This exchange with the partnership in the East Asian-Australasian flyway will allow for closer cooperation and coordination between the two instruments.

Fundraising

From March 2018 to date, voluntary contributions received were earmarked for the:

- European Goose Management Platform;
- Implementation of the Single Species Action Plans for the White-winged Flufftail, for the Grey Crowned-crane and for the Eurasian Curlew;

- IKI project on climate resilient site network across the African-Eurasian flyway; and
- MOP7 and an African regional preparatory meeting for the AEWA-MOP7 (Pre-MOP7), covering the cost for funded delegates to these meetings and various documents for the 7th Session of the Meeting of the Parties, i.e. the 7th edition of the Conservation Status Report, Guidance on the Targeting of Monitoring Schemes, Conservation Guidelines on Waterbird Monitoring, Guide to Guidance on Reducing the Impact of Marine Fisheries on Migratory Seabird Populations Listed under AEWA, Assessment of the Threats Posed by Marine Litter to Migratory Seabird Populations Listed under AEWA and Priorities for Seabird Conservation under AEWA.

The UNEP/AEWA Secretariat would like to express its appreciation for the financial support received towards the implementation of the Agreement. It should, at the same time, be noted that this level of support is still far below the amount estimated as necessary to maintain the basic functioning of the Secretariat and support implementation of the Agreement at a satisfactory level.

Fundraising has become increasingly difficult over recent years due to the continuing global financial crisis. The Secretariat is therefore spending more time on fundraising activities.

At MOP7, Parties have requested the Secretariat to document the in-kind contributions for the implementation of the Agreement as of 1 January 2019. These in-kind contributions, essential to implement the resolutions adopted by Parties, are mostly related to meetings and to scientific expertise (in particular for the EGMP).

Development of the draft AEWA Plan of Action for Africa 2019-2027

Based on the mandate from AEWA Resolution 6.14, the draft Plan of Action for Africa (PoAA) 2019-2027 was developed, following the development of the draft Strategic Plan 2019-2027. The drafting process was conducted by a team of independent consultants, working in close collaboration with the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat and the ad hoc PoAA Working Group established to guide the drafting process. The first consultation draft of the PoAA was submitted to the PoAA Working Group for review and comment in May 2018, as well as to the 13th Meeting of the AEWA Standing Committee (The Hague, July 2018) for consideration. The second consultation draft of the PoAA was submitted to the AEWA African Parties and key stakeholders for review and comment in August 2018. The final draft document was submitted to the AEWA MOP7 in October 2018 for consideration and was approved by the MOP with no further modification.

Pre-MOP7 and MOP7

AEWA African Pre-MOP7: the AEWA National Focal Points from 21 African Contracting Parties met from 12 to 14 September 2018 in the Ezulwini Valley, in the Kingdom of Eswatini, for their preparatory meeting for the 7th Session of the AEWA Meeting of the Parties (Pre-MOP7). The meeting was jointly organised by the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat and the Swaziland National Trust Commission (ENTC), and kindly hosted by the Government of Eswatini and was made possible thanks to the generous financial and in-kind contributions from the Governments of Switzerland (through FOEN), Germany (through the Federal Ministry for Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety - BMU) and Eswatini (through ENTC). Details of the meeting are available here: <https://www.unep-aewa.org/en/news/african-pre-mop-sets-pace-aewa-summit> and the meeting report is available here: <https://www.unep-aewa.org/en/meeting/african-regional-preparatory-meeting-aewa-mop7> .

The 7th Session of the Meeting of the Parties (MOP7) was hosted by the Government of South Africa, 4-8 December 2018 in Durban. The Parties and the Secretariat are grateful to the Government of South Africa, and the province of KwaZulu Natal for their warm welcome.

Fourteen resolutions were adopted. All resolutions drafted by the TC were adopted, some of them with minor adjustments.

The Parties adopted the Strategic Plan 2019-2027 and the Plan of Action for Africa 2019-2027 through Resolution 7.1. as well as the TC Work Plan 2019-2021 (see Doc AEWA/TC 15.6)

Resolution 7.11 approved the institutional arrangements for the AEWA Technical Committee, which includes among others, the Committee's representatives and its Work Plan for the period of 2019-2021.

Resolution 7.12 is dealing with finance and administrative issues. The following results or requests are of particular importance:

- The adoption of the UN scale of assessment for calculating the contributions of Parties to the core budget. This return to the UN scale will be progressive over the next years.
- The adoption of a core budget taking into account the inflation, representing an increase of 4 per cent compared to the past triennium. A small withdrawal from the Trust fund (6000 euros) compared to the past triennium (€310,000) will allow to reconstitute a healthy reserve.
- The Parties request the Standing Committee, with the Secretariat and the Technical Committee, to evaluate the implications of moving from a 3-year to 4-year cycle for the sessions of the Meeting of the Parties and to report on the evaluation at MOP8.
- The Parties also requests the Standing Committee, with the Secretariat and the Technical Committee, to evaluate the possibility to suspend the right of vote for Parties more than three years in arrears and to report on the evaluation by the next Meeting of the Parties.

In the margins of MOP7, 18 side-events were organised, covering most of the aspects of the AEWA aspects. For a complete list, please see the side-events brochure at https://www.unep-aewa.org/manage/sites/default/files/uploads/mop7_side_event_brochure%20%282%29_5.pdf

Last but not least, the decision of the Standing Committee to bestow the title of Honorary Patron on David Stroud was announced at MOP7 on 4 December. David Stroud, Senior Ornithologist at the Joint Nature Conservation Committee, has been part of the bedrock of AEWA since its inception. He has contributed widely to the development and implementation of the Agreement with involvement across the board in all aspects of its work. David actively participated in the work of the AEWA Technical Committee and has chaired many working groups over the years as well as the Committee itself in the period 2012-2015.

3. Science, Implementation and Compliance

AEWA International Species Action and Management Plans and AEWA International Species Working Groups

Five International Species Action and Management Plans were adopted at MOP7: This included two new AEWA International Single Species Action Plans developed for the Velvet Scoter and the Dalmatian Pelican, as well as a revised Single Species Action Plan for the White-headed Duck. All three Plans were developed under the framework of the [EU LIFE EuroSAP project](#), coordinated by BirdLife International. In addition, AEWA International Single Species Management Plans were developed for the Barnacle Goose and for the Greylag Goose (NW/SW European Population) and are now under the framework of the European Goose Management Platform.

An overview on the current status of the establishment and coordination of AEWA International Species Expert and Working Groups was provided in the MOP7 document 'Summary of the Current State of Single Species Action and Management Plan Production and Coordination with Recommendations to MOP for Extension, Revision or Retirement' (document AEWA/MOP 7.21, see <https://www.unep-aewa.org/en/meeting/7th-session-meeting-parties-aewa>).

MOP7 was also a good occasion to highlight the efficiency of the Action Plans and eight features on "Showcasing Action for AEWA Priority Species" were published in November and December 2018 through the AEWA website.

Eurasian Curlew

The Secretariat also concluded a Memorandum of Understanding with the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), which will be coordinating the AEWAs Eurasian Curlew International Working Group. The RSPB is also providing a coordinator on a part-time basis. The 1st Meeting of the AEWAs Eurasian Curlew International Working Group - *N. a. arquata* Breeding Range States, was hosted by the UK Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), with additional support provided by the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU) on 4-6 September 2018 in Aberlady (Scotland), United Kingdom.

The AEWAs Secretariat supported the first World Curlew Day on 21 April 2018, a grassroots initiative launched by environmental organisations such as BirdLife International and Wetlands International. It is a one-day global event aiming to raise awareness about the plight of curlews and to encourage activities to help them.

Bewick's Swan

The 1st Meeting of the AEWAs Bewick's Swan International Expert Group took place in conjunction with the Sixth International Swan Symposium of the Wetlands International/IUCN-SSC Swan Specialist Group (SSG), which took place from 16 to 19 October 2018 in Tartu, Estonia. The SSG was attended by 72 swan biologists from 17 countries: Belarus, Belgium, China, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Poland, the Russian Federation, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The Symposium is grateful for the hospitality of the Estonian University of Life Sciences, which hosted the meeting.

A side-event at MOP7 presented the results of the campaign “Flight of the Swans’ Expedition: How Blood, Sweat, Tears and Multimedia Engaged the Masses in Migration and Conservation”.

Eurasian Spoonbill

The IX International Spoonbill Workshop organised by the AEWAs Eurasian Spoonbill International Expert Group (AEWAs ESIEG) took place in Djerba, Tunisia from 14 to 18 November 2018 and was made possible through the dedication of the Tunisian BirdLife partner, l'Association des Amis des Oiseaux and Tour du Valat. The outcomes of this meeting are now available on the AEWAs website (https://www.unep-awea.org/sites/default/files/Final%20Conclusions_IX%20Spoonbill%20Workshop.pdf).

The next ESIEG Workshop, the tenth in the series, is scheduled to take place in 2021 and will be held in Croatia hosted by the Croatian Society for Birds and Nature Protection.

European Goose Management Platform (EGMP)

The third meeting of the EGM IWG (EGM IWG3) took place on 20-21 June 2018, back to back with the first face-to-face meeting of the EGMP Task Forces (18 June 2018) and the 2nd Management Planning Workshop for the Barnacle Goose and the Greylag Goose, in Leeuwarden, the Netherlands, hosted by the Province of Friesland.

In addition, the adaptive flyway management approach was presented at the 5th Pan-European Duck Symposium, Scotland, United Kingdom, 16-20 April 2018 and received the full support of the scientific community.

The next meeting of the EGMP Modelling Consortium will be held in Kalø, Denmark on 21-22 March 2019.

The fourth meeting of the EGM IWG (EGM IWG4) will be held in Perth, Scotland, from 18 to 20 June 2019. Preceding the EGM IWG4, the three EGMP Task Forces will also meet in parallel on the 17 June 2019 in Perth, Scotland.

Implementation Review Process

For a complete overview, please see Document AEWA/MOP7.18 Rev1.(<https://www.unep-aewa.org/en/document/implementation-review-process-report-mop7>).

Adriatic Flyway

From 19 to 23 March 2018, the 3rd Adriatic Flyway Conference took place in Fruška Gora National Park, Serbia, organised by EuroNatur and the Bird Protection and Study Society of Serbia (BPSSS, BirdLife Serbia). At this meeting, Officials of the Government of Serbia and more than 80 experts and affiliates of Bird Conservation NGOs from central and south-eastern European countries presented and discussed recent findings on the monitoring of migratory bird populations, their conservation status, ecological dynamics and their habitats in the Adriatic Flyway region.

Climate resilient site network project

The project “*Climate resilient site network in the African-Eurasian flyway*” launched at MOP6 in November 2015 is funded by the International Climate Initiative of the German Government and coordinated by Wetlands International. The Secretariat is involved as a co-funder and contributor. The project is developed on the basis of the AEWA climate change agenda and mandates from the MOP. It involves some site assessments, two pilot projects in Mali and Ethiopia, production of guidelines and training of practitioners in African Parties. A side-event was held in the margins of MOP7 to present some results of this project.

Lead shot phase out in the EU

In 2016, the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) initiated a process of compiling a report and draft regulation commissioned by the European Commission, in order to implement the AEWA provisions to phase out the use of lead shot for hunting in wetlands. This involved provision of evidence by various stakeholders to which the Secretariat responded, working together with the Technical Committee (TC). The Secretariat also attended expert meetings at ECHA together with the TC Vice-chair, to review the compilation of evidence and drafting the proposed text of the regulation. Subsequently, the Secretariat - supported by the TC Vice-chair and other invited experts – has, since September 2017, been attending meetings of the relevant ECHA bodies (Risk Assessment Committee and Social and Economic Assessment Committee) as an accredited observer organisation, providing expert advice on the further deliberations on the restriction proposal. The consultation process under ECHA was concluded in June 2018, after which deliberations within the EU REACH Committee have continued and are expected to be concluded during the next months.

A specific side-event was organised in the margins of MOP7: “Steps to a Non-Toxic Future: How AEWA Parties Can Address the Problem of Lead Poisoning”.

Arctic Migratory Bird Initiative

The Secretariat continued to contribute to the implementation of the Arctic Migratory Bird Initiative (AMBI), established under the Arctic Council’s biodiversity-related working group CAFF (Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna). The Secretariat serves on the Steering Group for the African-Eurasian flyway.

The CAFF Secretariat has organised a side-event in the margins of MOP7: “The Arctic Migratory Bird Initiative (AMBI) - a Partnership for Arctic-breeding Migratory Bird Conservation”.

CMS Multi-stakeholder Energy Task Force

The Secretariat is a member of the CMS Multi-stakeholder Task Force. A specific side-event was organised in the margins of MOP7: ‘Working Together to Conserve Waterbirds and Promote Universal Access to Clean, Modern, Sustainable Energy’.

CMS Intergovernmental Task Force on Illegal Killing, Taking and Trade of Migratory Birds in the Mediterranean (MIKT)

The Secretariat is also involved in the CMS MIKT and will attend the joint meeting of the CMS MIKT and the Bern Convention Network of Special Focal Points on Eradication of Illegal Killing, Trapping and Trade in Wild Birds which is scheduled to take place 8-10 May 2019 in Rome, Italy.

4. Capacity-Building

Due to the preparation of MOP7 and lack of funding (specially for the Small Grant Fund) limited activities on Capacity-building were developed or conducted during the period of this report.

In the framework of the AEWA African Pre-MOP7 meeting, the knowledge and capacity of participating National Focal Points from 21 African Parties was enhanced in relation to preparing for AEWA-related meetings, effective negotiation under Multilateral Environmental Agreements, communication skills and national reporting. The CMS Family National Focal Point Manual was used as one of the key training tools in this regard.

As mentioned previously, a training of trainers for francophone countries will be organised in Cotonou, Benin, 6-10 May 2019 on the flyway approach to the conservation and wise use of waterbirds and wetlands.

5. Communication, Information Management and Outreach

Joint CMS/AEWA Communications Unit

Through Resolution 6.22, the Meeting of the Parties requested the UNEP/AEWA and UNEP/CMS Secretariats to develop a proposal within three months after MOP6 detailing implementation arrangements for the joint CMS/AEWA Information Management, Communication and Awareness-raising Unit (IMCA Unit) including staff time and budget sharing ratios, management structure, monitoring and evaluation indicators, among others, to be approved by the Standing Committee.

A report on the results and experiences of the Joint CMS and AEWA Communication Unit was provided by the Standing Committee for consideration at MOP7 (for more information please see annex 1 to document MOP7.6, <https://www.unep-awea.org/en/document/report-standing-committee-1>). The StC recommends permanently continuing the shared service arrangement, in the area of information management, communications and awareness-raising between the UNEP/CMS and UNEP/AEWA Secretariats. The Parties endorsed this recommendation.

The first annual Programme of Work for the Unit was agreed by the two Executive Secretaries for 2017, which was a CMS COP year. The resulting time balance in 2017 was in favour of CMS as a result of the higher workload for the CMS COP12 in October 2017. In 2018, which was an AEWA MOP year, the balance was in favour of AEWA.

Report on Activities (Summary)

Below is a summary of the main communication and information management related activities carried out by the IMCA Unit for AEWA between March 2018 and February 2019.

Information Management

The IMCA Unit technically manages and maintains all external websites and online tools of the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat. This includes the management of the official AEWA website, the AEWA Technical Committee Workspace and a number of AEWA Single Species Action Plan Working Group websites. In addition, the IMCA Unit has supported the development of the EGMP website and workspace over the course of this reporting period.

The IMCA Unit is in charge of the technical management of the Online National Reporting System (ORS), the Online Meeting Registration System and Contacts Database, all of which are used by the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat. The website analytics in place for the official AEWA website show 32,522 unique users and 153,575 pages views in the period from March 2018 to February 2019. There was a visible peak in website traffic on the first day of AEWA MOP7 (4 December) with 776 unique users (compared with an average of ca. 150) visiting the website over the course of one day.

Online National Reporting – Improvements to the AEWA Reporting Format

The IMCA Unit worked closely with the AEWA SICU unit and UNEP-WCMC to help set-up AEWA's MOP7 National Report in the Online Reporting System (ORS) launched in February 2018. Improvements were made to the online presentation of the report through a customised “species per country” option that was previously not available in the AEWA report. The reporting process and technical (IT) support service for AEWA National Respondents on issues relating to the use of the Online Reporting System was also managed by the IMCA Unit for reporting to AEWA MOP7.

Website News Production

A total of 47 website news articles and two Op-Eds were featured on the AEWA website between March 2018 and February 2019. The published stories report on current AEWA activities such as meetings, major events and publications and aim to keep the wider AEWA network informed of the activities of the Secretariat and other AEWA stakeholders. The articles are usually drafted by the responsible officers at the Secretariat and then prepared for web publishing by the IMCA Unit. For a full overview of news articles published on the AEWA website since March 2018, please visit the following link: <http://www.unep-aewa.org/en/news>.

Social Media Highlights

The IMCA Unit manages the AEWA Twitter and Facebook social media channels. Over the course of the reporting period (March 2018 – February 2019) the number of AEWA Facebook page fans grew from 1,420 in February 2018 to 1,680 fans in February 2019, while the number of Twitter followers grew to a total of 1,385. The channels are being used mainly to promote unique AEWA content published on the AEWA website and/or selected AEWA relevant content from major partners and active members of the wider AEWA community.

Campaigns and Events

The IMCA Unit is charged with managing the public outreach and awareness-raising activities of the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat. The primary outreach campaign for AEWA (and CMS) being led by the IMCA Unit continues to be World Migratory Bird Day.

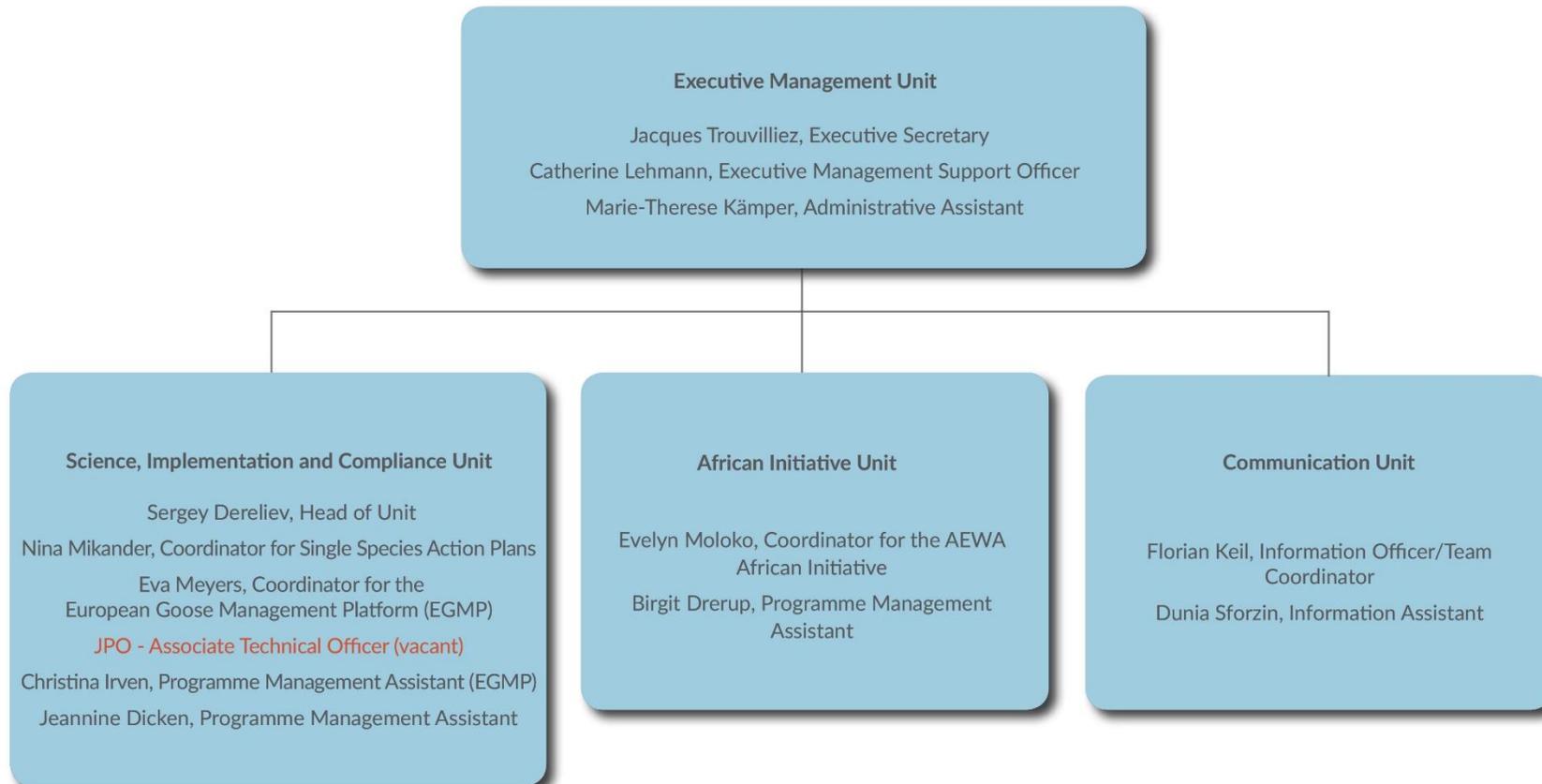
The theme of World Migratory Bird Day 2018 was “*Unifying Our Voices for Bird Conservation*” and was celebrated on the second Saturday of both May and October. The year 2018 was an important transition year in the history of World Migratory Bird Day as it was the first year where the International Migratory Bird Day (IMBD) and World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD) were united into one single global campaign.

The theme of World Migratory Bird Day 2019 is “*Protect Birds: Be the Solution to Plastic Pollution*”. The two peak days of WMBD celebrations in 2019 will be 11 May and 12 October. For more information on this global campaign please visit the WMBD website: www.worldmigratorybirdday.org

ANNEX I – UNEP/AEWA Secretariat Organisational structure



UNEP/AEWA Secretariat: Staff Composition



ANNEX II – UNEP/AEWA Secretariat Staff Composition

