REPORT OF THE 15th MEETING OF THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE[1]

9-11 April 2019, Bonn, Germany

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[1] Report finalised after consultation with the Technical Committee and other participants of TC15.

Summary of TC15 Decisions

AGENDA ITEM		DECISION
Agenda item 4.	Adoption of the Agenda and Work Programme	The Meeting adopted the Agenda and Work Programme with the minor amendment to place Working Group 6 at the very end.
Agenda item 5.	Admission of Observers	The Committee agreed to admit the observers present and welcomed them to the meeting.
Agenda item 6.	Election of Officers	Ms Cromie was elected as Chair and Mr Bino as Vice-chair of the Technical Committee for the triennium 2019-2021.
Agenda item 9.1.	Working Group 1 – Field of Application	All proposed population delineations of the Common Eider (*Somateria mollissima*), the Goosander (*Mergus merganser*), the Atlantic Puffin (*Fratercula arctica*), the Black Guillemot (*Cepphus grylle*), the Razorbill (*Alca torda*), the Little Auk (*Alle alle*), the Thick-billed Murre (*Uria lomvia*) and the Common Murre (*Uria aalge*) as presented in documents TC 15.7 Rev.1 to 15.14 Rev.1 were approved for submission to the StC.
Agenda item 9.2.	Working Group 2 – Species Conservation	The prioritisation method related to the development of species action and management plans presented in Doc. TC 15.15 Rev.1 to be revised; the proposed process for the development and maintenance of conservation and management guidance and the priority population list as presented in Doc. TC 15.16 Rev.2 were approved.
Agenda item 9. 3.	Working Group 3 – Habitat Conservation	Framework of internationally and nationally important sites proposed in Doc. TC 15.17 approved with minor additions; ToR for the Development of a Monitoring Framework for the AEWA flyway site network presented in Doc. TC 15.18 approved with minor modifications; concept for an Agreement-wide Assessment of the Status of Principal Waterbird Habitats presented in Doc. TC 15.19 approved. Approval of draft ToR for an AEWA Habitat Conservation Action Plan presented in Doc. TC 15.20 was deferred to after TC15 as it requires further work.
Agenda item 9.5.	Working Group 5 – Research and Monitoring	ToR for Elaborating Priorities for the Systematic Development of Monitoring of Waterbird Populations and the Drivers of their Trends presented in Doc. TC 15.21 to be revised.
Agenda item 9.6.	Working Group 6 – Education and Information	TC members to support the communication work of the Agreement as well as the implementation of CEPA activities linked to specific tasks. UNEP/AEWA Secretariat to identify CEPA

		relevant tasks in the TC workplan to be reviewed by the TC members.
Agenda item 9.7.	Working Group 7 – Implementation	Proposals outlined in Doc. TC 15.22 with respect to the future format and content of the triennial Conservation Status Report were agreed upon.
Agenda item 9.8.	Working Group 8 – Strategic, Reporting, Emerging and Other Issues	Reporting format on population status for the period 2013-2018 as presented in Doc. TC 15.23 was approved.

Agenda item 1. Opening

1. The Vice-chair of the Technical Committee (TC), Ms Ruth Cromie, opened the meeting, welcoming all those present. She noted that there were many important documents on the agenda for review. She wished all those present, particularly the new TC members, a productive and enjoyable meeting.

2. Mr Jacques Trouvilliez, AEWA Executive Secretary, warmly welcomed the members and observers to the Committee. He was also very happy to see the engagement of the numerous Parties and Partners present and their interest in the work of the Technical Committee. He reiterated that the Technical Committee had a busy meeting ahead of it, stressing its important function in providing the substance for the work of the Agreement. He wished all those present a fruitful meeting.

Agenda item 2. Welcome Addresses

3. Mr Nick Davidson, representative of the East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership (EAAFP), mentioned the recent passing of Mr Lew Young, the late Chief Executive of the EAAFP, and that he will always be remembered as a much-valued colleague at the Ramsar Convention Secretariat and as one of the most engaged people working on wetland and waterbird conservation. Mr Davidson extended his sympathies not only to Mr Young's family but also to the whole wetland and waterbird community.

4. Ms Cromie thanked Mr Davidson and also mentioned the passing of Mr Bradnee Chambers, the late Executive Secretary of the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS). Reflection on personal losses was important, Ms Cromie said, but also on the loss of professional expertise.

5. Ms Cromie then invited all those present to briefly introduce themselves. Each member and observer present made a short introduction to their affiliation and expertise.

Agenda item 3. Modus Operandi of the Technical Committee

6. Mr Sergey Dereliev, the Head of Science, Implementation and Compliance Unit at the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat, introduced document TC 15.2 *Modus Operandi of the Technical Committee of AEWA*, explaining that it had been adopted by a previous session of the MOP and that changes could only be done at the next MOP in 2021, if necessary.

Agenda item 4. Adoption of the Agenda and Work Programme

7. Ms Cromie noted that looking at the agenda there was a lot of work ahead and welcomed the idea to have all working groups consecutively in the plenary. She also thought it was a good decision to place Working Group 6 at the very end in order to reflect on the CEPA needs of all other working groups.

8. Mr Dereliev reiterated the afore mentioned heavy and intense agenda and pointed out that all agenda items were time budgeted. Since many participants would have travel plans already on Thursday afternoon, Mr Dereliev urged everyone to strive to be brief in their comments and statements in order to finish early.

Decision: The Meeting adopted the Agenda (document TC 15.3 Rev. 1) and Work Programme (document TC 15.4 Rev. 1) with the minor amendment to place Working Group 6 at the very end.

Agenda item 5. Admission of Observers

9. Introducing this agenda item, Mr Dereliev informed those present that four of the AEWA NGO partner organisations were permanent observers to the Technical Committee, all of which played a critical role by contributing additional expertise towards the delivery of the work of the Committee: the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust (WWT), BirdLife International, the Federation of Associations for Hunting and Conservation of the EU (FACE) and Migratory Birds of the Western Palearctic (OMPO).

10. Mr Dereliev noted that there were more observers present than members of the Technical Committee. There was a total of 15 members, whereby two were vacant and there were two last minute cancellations. Observers included representatives of the Contracting Parties, the United Kingdom (the Chair of the AEWA Standing Committee), South Africa (Host of the 7th Session of the Meeting of the Parties to AEWA, 04-08 December 2018 and Vice-chair of the AEWA Standing Committee), Belgium, Botswana, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Senegal as well as the Ramsar Convention Secretariat, the EAAFP Technical Committee and Mr Olivier Biber, Chair of the CMS African-Eurasian Migratory Landbirds Working Group and members of the UNEP/CMS Secretariat. The meeting was also joined by Ms Becky Price, representative of UNEP-WCMC.

Decision: The Committee agreed to admit the observers present and welcomed them to the meeting.

Agenda item 6. Election of Officers

11. Introducing this agenda item, Mr Dereliev noted that Mr Saulius Švažas, had retired at MOP7 after two mandates on the Technical Committee and that officers were to be elected for the triennium 2019-2021.

12. Upon Mr Dereliev's invitation for nominations for the Chair of the Technical Committee, Mr Imad Cherkaoui, Regional Representative for Northern Africa, nominated Ms Ruth Cromie, Regional Representative for North and South-Western Europe and previous Vice-chair of the TC. There were no further nominations. The Committee elected by acclamation Ms Ruth Cromie as Chair of the Technical Committee for the triennium 2019-2021.

13. Upon Mr Dereliev's invitation for nominations for the Vice-chair of the Technical Committee, Mr Szabolcs Nagy, representative of Wetlands International, nominated Mr Taulant Bino, Regional Representative for Central Europe. There were no further nominations. The Committee elected by acclamation Mr Taulant Bino as Vice-chair of the Technical Committee for the triennium 2019-2021.

Decision: Ms Cromie was elected as Chair and Mr Bino as Vice-chair of the Technical Committee for the triennium 2019-2021.

Agenda item 7. Reports by the Regional Representatives

14. The attending regional representatives delivered progress reports to the meeting from their respective regions. The reports by the regional representatives on the implementation of AEWA in their respective regions are available in Appendix I. These include reports from Central Europe, North and South-western Europe, Northern Africa, Southern Africa, Eastern Africa and South-western Asia regions.

15. Mr Dereliev started with the report for the Southern Africa region, as Ms Lizanne Roxburgh, who is the representative for this region, could not attend the meeting. Following this presentation, there was a brief discussion with respect to the situation of the sardine stock, which is of great concern as it is a major prey species for a number of AEWA-listed seabirds. Mr David Stroud, representative of Ramsar, mentioned the possibility of allowing Parties to convene in the event of an emergency and that the situation with respect to the Benguela fish stocks may be appropriate for relevant parties to trigger such a response.

16. Mr Dereliev confirmed that the AEWA Secretariat was already working on convening a meeting of the working group on the Benguela Multi Species Action Plan and that this could be an occasion to hold a meeting on the sardine's situation. However, if it proved to be complex, it could also be considered to convene a meeting specifically on that topic.

17. Following the presentation of the Eastern Africa region by Mr Peter Njoroge, Mr Pierre Defos du Rau, Expert for Game Management, asked whether there had been studies before concluding that House Crow had to be managed using starlicide. Mr Njoroge told those present about the Kenya Bird Map project from which data was used to see the distribution status and the spread of the species across the country.

18. Following the presentation of the Northern African region by Mr Imad Cherkaoui, Mr Emmanuel Kasimbazi, Expert on Environmental Law, questioned the format of reporting, wanting to see some legal measures being taken to protect the birds. He added that it could be a challenge if there was no action taken in terms of law. Mr Dereliev responded that there was indeed a format for the reports of the regional representatives, which was quite flexible. However, the monitoring of the legal status of populations was done through the national reporting. It was, therefore, not the TC's regional representatives' prerogative to collect this type of information.

19. Mr Nagy asked the Secretariat whether it had received any IRP concerning the Sebkha Séjoumi area (Tunisia). He said that he had seen that that area is being landfilled. He would suggest that the Secretariat looked into that issue and asked for further information from the national authorities. Mr

Dereliev confirmed that the Secretariat knew about this issue and that there had been a discussion of an IRP but that nothing had been received so far.

20. Mr Defos du Rau fully supported Mr Nagy and asked whether Ramsar could send an advisory mission, since Sebkha Séjoumi was also a Ramsar site. He thought that this could be very useful and that it would be a strong signal for all Northern African countries. Mr Stroud responded that an advisory mission may be appropriate but would need to be requested by the concerned government.

21. Mr Stroud further mentioned the illegal killing along the North Egyptian coast and asked Mr Cherkaoui whether he had any information on whether the extent of that killing was changing. Mr Cherkaoui responded that there was no published report according to his latest information, but that there were lots of efforts to reduce the number of illegal killings. First results showed that they were decreasing for some endangered species.

22. Following the presentation of the South-western Asia region by Mr Laith El-Moghrabi, Ms Cromie hoped that Mr El-Moghrabi would be able to re-establish the communication with the National and Technical Focal Points in the region. Mr Dereliev added that this was the region with the least number of Parties and noted that the Parties had not been very active. He confirmed that the re-activation of communication was indeed very important and was confident that this would be possible with the support of Mr El-Moghrabi. Another issue to focus on was to gain more Parties in the region, which the Secretariat was working on. Saudi Arabia had, for instance, been reporting that they had been close to acceding to the treaty. This would be a game-changer for the region and may be an encouragement for other Gulf States to join the treaty, too. Mr Dereliev informed those present that a MOP decision had been taken to come up with a Plan of Action for this region, similarly to the Plan of Action for Africa, which would provide a structured approach to the implementation of the treaty.

23. Following the presentation of the Central Europe region by Mr Taulant Bino, Ms Janine van Vessem, representing Belgium, wanted to know which guidelines were being implemented in the region. Mr Bino responded that national guidelines similar to those of AEWA were sometimes being implemented or guidelines developed by other international institutions, such as IUCN.

Agenda item 8. Report by the Secretariat

24. Mr Jacques Trouvilliez, the AEWA Executive Secretary, introduced document TC 15.5 *Report of the Secretariat* and said that it covered the period between the last TC in April 2018 and now. Mr Trouvilliez emphasised that the Secretariat's main task during that time was to prepare MOP7.

25. With regards to staffing and organisation Mr Trouvilliez said that there were no major changes to the team, except for the retirement of Ms Jolanta Kremer, who had served more than 11 years with the AEWA Secretariat and was replaced by Ms Jeannine Dicken.

26. Moving on to the African Initiative, Mr Trouvilliez noted that both staff in this team were funded only at 50% by core funds and that the balance was always covered by voluntary contributions.

27. Mr Trouvilliez then reminded everyone present that the Secretariat was divided into four units: The Executive Management Unit, led by himself, the Science, Implementation and Compliance Unit, led by

Mr Sergey Dereliev, the African Initiative Unit, led by Ms Evelyn Moloko and the Joint CMS/AEWA Communications Unit, led by Mr Florian Keil.

28. Mr Trouvilliez recalled that there were several staff dependant on voluntary contributions and in particular pointed out Ms Nina Mikander, who was the Associate Programme Officer for Single Species Actions Plans and the Coordinator for the Lesser White-fronted Goose. He thanked the Norwegian Environment Agency for its continuous support for this important position.

29. Mr Trouvilliez reported that the Secretariat was able to create two new positions (P2 and G5) supporting the European Goose Management Platform (EGMP), which was a very important programme also funded through voluntary contributions.

30. Moving on to the General Management of the Secretariat, Mr Trouvilliez was very happy to announce that two new Parties had acceded to AEWA, since the last TC meeting: The first one being the Central African Republic and the second the Republic of Serbia. He added that the Secretariat was constantly trying to recruit new Parties, lately particularly Portuguese speaking African range states, such as Angola and Mozambique. Countries within the Arabian Peninsula were also being targeted.

31. Mr Trouvilliez went on to mention the new Standing Committee (StC) officers, which had been elected at MOP7: The United Kingdom had been elected as the Chair and South Africa as the Vice-chair. There were two seats for Europe and Central Asia: The United Kingdom and Ukraine. For the Middle East and Northern Africa Algeria had been elected. Western and Central Africa was represented by Côte d'Ivoire and Eastern and Southern Africa by South Africa. The depositary – the Netherlands – has a permanent seat and the last member is Hungary being the host of MOP8 in 2021.

32. Referring to the Secretariat's development of partnerships with other organisations, of which many were present at the meeting, Mr Trouvilliez highlighted that the AEWA Secretariat and the whole CMS family were trying to push the wildlife connectivity concept not only through the post 2020 Global Biodiversity Framework but also through UNEA.

33. With the Ramsar Convention the Secretariat was mainly focusing on African topics and a Training of Trainers was being organised in Benin in May 2019 together with the Government of Benin and the Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative. This training was being initiated for Francophone countries, as one for English speaking countries had already been done in the past.

34. Mr Trouvilliez further noted that the Ramsar Convention was also a partner of the RESSOURCE project, a project on the sustainable use of migratory waterbirds in the Sahel, funded by the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO), the French Facility for Global Environment (FFEM) and the European Union (EU).

35. The AEWA Executive Secretary was pleased to remind everyone that the Secretariat also had a partnership with Conservation Evidence, which aimed to give conservationists access to the very latest and most relevant ecological knowledge to support their policy or management decisions. Mr Trouvilliez thought it was very important to share this kind of knowledge and information.

36. The Secretariat had also been working with the International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation, which mainly promoted adaptive harvest management. Mr Trouvilliez informed those

present that he would be attending their next General Assembly to promote AEWA in Namibia, which was not yet a party to AEWA.

37. With reference to the other flyways, Mr Trouvilliez stressed the presence of the EAAFP, which showed the strong link between the two flyway organisations.

38. Mr Trouvilliez then went on to highlight that the Plan of Action for Africa (PoAA) had been developed in 2018 and adopted by MOP7.

39. The Secretariat was able to fund all sponsored delegates for MOP7. Mr Trouvilliez took this opportunity to thank the Government of South Africa for having given all delegates such a warm welcome and that they were able to discover how fantastic the country was and that it offered such diverse ecosystems.

40. Mr Trouvilliez moved on to stress that the Secretariat was returning to the UN scale of assessment for calculating the contribution of Parties. He explained that the UN scale of assessment was adopted at the UN General Assembly and that it was a common scale for all MEAs. He was glad that Parties agreed to return to it.

41. The core budget, taking into account the inflation, representing an increase of 4% compared to the past triennium, had also been adopted by MOP7, Mr Trouvilliez added. Furthermore, the parties had agreed to not ask for a withdrawal from the Secretariat's trust fund during the coming triennium. This would help to reconstitute a healthy reserve. Mr Trouvilliez took this opportunity to thank Mr Øystein Størkersen for chairing the finance working group during MOP7 and Mr David Stroud for chairing the technical working group and praised both for their excellent work.

42. Mr Trouvilliez then mentioned that the idea of moving from a 3-year to a 4-year cycle was under discussion as well as how to encourage Parties to pay their contributions. Although there had been a tremendous improvement on the latter, funds would have to be taken from the trust fund, if Parties did not pay.

43. The AEWA Executive Secretary pointed out that there had been many side events during MOP7, which allowed partners to present some aspects in their work related to AEWA.
44. Mr Trouvilliez went on to report that five International Single Species Action and Management Plans have been adopted at MOP7, which he found very impressive.

45. The necessity of continuing to work on the lead shot phase out in the EU was then stressed by Mr Trouvilliez. The Secretariat had attended expert meetings at ECHA together with the former 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.

46. In terms of capacity building, the lack of funding as well as the preparation of MOP7, unfortunately, resulted in limited activity.

47. Thanks to the efforts of the Information Management, Communication and Awareness-raising Unit, the pre-MOP for Africa and MOP were highlighted through a number of communication channels. The team had created a Newsroom especially for the MOP where there was good coverage throughout the meeting. Mr Trouvilliez also stressed the next campaign of the World Migratory Bird Day, whereby this year's theme was '*Protect Birds: Be the Solution to Plastic Pollution*'.

48. With that Mr Trouvilliez opened the floor for comments and questions. Mr Davidson mentioned a meeting back in 2011, which looked at bringing together all the north-south flyway initiatives to start sharing a better understanding. There had been a big set of recommendations from that meeting. The suggestion had been to establish a network horizontally around the world and the Global Interflyways Network (GIN) had subsequently been established. Mr Davidson thought it may be worth revisiting this.

49. Mr Trouvilliez responded that the AEWA Secretariat would be more than happy to make this happen with some concrete action. Ms Cromie suggested that this could be developed further informally during the breaks of the meeting and that the results could be reported back upon under any other business at the end of the meeting. Ms Nicola Crockford, representative of BirdLife International, found the suggestion very interesting and mentioned the Arctic Migratory Bird Initiative that could help kick-off the GIN discussions.

Agenda item 9. TC Work Plan 2019-2021

50. Ms Cromie introduced document TC 15.6 Corr.1 *Workplan for the AEWA Technical Committee 2019-2021*, which was going to be reviewed during the substantive part of the meeting. She thought that the TC had a very ambitious workplan for the triennium 2019-2021 and said that this would be the meeting where all the planning would begin.

51. Handing over to Mr Dereliev, Ms Cromie asked him to introduce the workflow of the meeting under this agenda item. Mr Dereliev explained that the workplan, which had 48 tasks, would be discussed in detail within the 8 working groups which would take place in the plenary consecutively. He further explained that sub-tasks would have to be agreed upon and established for each task.

52. The detailed outcome of the discussions in these working groups under agenda items 9.1 to 9.8 were summarised in the further reviewed and elaborated TC workplan for the triennium 2019-2021. The report below from items 9.1 to 9.8 includes records only on those agenda items which required a decision to be taken on at this meeting.

Agenda item 9.1. TC Working Group 1 (Field of Application)

53. Mr Peter Njoroge had been nominated as chair for this working group and was supported by Ms Nina Mikander from the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat.

54. Most documents were introduced by Mr Szabolcs Nagy and some by Mr David Stroud. Based on the discussions all proposed population delineations of the Common Eider (*Somateria mollissima*), the Goosander (*Mergus merganser*), the Atlantic Puffin (*Fratercula arctica*), the Black Guillemot (*Cepphus grylle*), the Razorbill (*Alca torda*), the Little Auk (*Alle alle*), the Thick-billed Murre (*Uria*

lomvia) and the Common Murre (*Uria aalge*) as outlined in documents AEWA/TC 15.7 Rev.1 to 15.14 Rev.1 were approved for submission to the Standing Committee.

55. There was a more elaborate discussion on document TC 15.14 Rev.1 *Delineation of Biogeographic Populations of the Common Murre (Uria aalge)* with regards to the East Atlantic Baltic split of the *Common Murre*, which resulted into a break-out group. Later it was reported back that it was agreed that the proposal could be approved as presented in the document.

Decision: All proposed population delineations of the Common Eider (*Somateria mollissima*), the Goosander (*Mergus merganser*), the Atlantic Puffin (*Fratercula arctica*), the Black Guillemot (*Cepphus grylle*), the Razorbill (*Alca torda*), the Little Auk (*Alle alle*), the Thick-billed Murre (*Uria lomvia*) and the Common Murre (*Uria aalge*) as presented in documents TC 15.7 Rev.1 to 15.14 Rev.1 were approved for submission to the StC.

Agenda item 9.2. TC Working Group 2 (Species Conservation)

56. Ms Nina Mikander from the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat facilitated the discussions of this working group, as Ms Lizanne Roxburgh, who had originally been nominated as chair, was not present at the meeting.

57. After an extensive discussion on document TC 15.15 *Draft priority list of populations for action and management planning* it was decided to remove the climate change criteria but also to re-think the prioritisation method for the development of species action and management plans, the details of which were to be further developed amongst TC members by July based on comments submitted by TC members both before and during the meeting.

58. Moving on to document TC 15.16 Rev.2 *Discussion Paper on Conservation and Management Guidance for AEWA Populations*, the proposed process for the development and maintenance of conservation and management guidance as well as the presented priority population list were both approved based on the discussions.

Decision: The prioritisation method related to the development of species action and management plans presented in Doc. TC 15.15 Rev.1 to be revised; the proposed process for the development and maintenance of conservation and management guidance and the priority population list as presented in Doc. TC 15.16 Rev.2 were approved.

Agenda item 9.3. TC Working Group 3 (Habitat Conservation)

59. Mr Szabolcs Nagy had been nominated as chair for this working and was supported by Ms Nina Mikander from the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat.

60. After the introduction of document TC 15.17 *Preliminary Proposal for an Inventory Framework of Internationally and Nationally Important Sites* and some interventions from the participants, Mr Nagy concluded that there was a need for looking at what the existing internationally accepted criteria are and how they relate to each other. He thought that that could easily be done after the meeting and that that should not stop them from moving forward on this task.

61. Mr Nagy explained that countries were not being asked to come up with new criteria but to apply the existing ones to the set of sites and nominate the sites in their territory based on the internationally accepted criteria.

62. Moving on, the proposed definitions of nationally and internationally important sites were approved, and the proposed process was agreed upon, including minor additions to the document.

63. Similarly, after introduction of document TC 15.18 *Draft Terms of Reference for the Development of a Monitoring Framework for the AEWA flyway site network* the ToR presented in the document were approved, including minor modifications, after brief discussions.

64. The concept presented in document TC 15.19 *Draft Concept for an Agreement-wide Assessment of the Status of Principal Waterbird Habitats* was also approved.

65. The decision on document TC 15.20 *Draft Terms of Reference for an AEWA Habitat Conservation Action Plan* to finalise the ToR was deferred, as there was a need for editing these based on the discussions. A small break-out group was proposed in order to review the draft ToR. This could be shared later on the TC workspace for final approval by the Committee.

Decision: Framework of internationally and nationally important sites proposed in Doc. TC 15.17 approved with minor additions; ToR for the Development of a Monitoring Framework for the AEWA flyway site network presented in Doc. TC 15.18 approved with minor modifications; concept for an Agreement-wide Assessment of the Status of Principal Waterbird Habitats presented in Doc. TC 15.19 approved. Approval of draft ToR for an AEWA Habitat Conservation Action Plan presented in Doc. TC 15.20 was deferred to after TC15 as it requires further work.

Agenda item 9.4. TC Working Group 4 (Management of Human Activities)

66. Mr Taulant Bino had been nominated as chair for this working and was supported by Ms Eva Meyers from the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat.

67. After some discussions all tasks were reviewed and elaborated further. There were no documents to discuss within this working group and no immediate decisions were taken.

Agenda item 9.5. TC Working Group 5 (Research and Monitoring)

68. Mr Imad Cherkaoui had been nominated as chair for this working group and was supported by Ms Evelyn Moloko from the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat.

69. After some brief discussions on document TC 15.21 *Draft Terms of Reference for Elaborating Priorities for the Systematic Development of Monitoring of Waterbird Populations and the Drivers of their Trends* it was agreed that the ToR would need to be revised in order to incorporate some additional elements as described in the summary of the TC workplan.

Decision: ToR for Elaborating Priorities for the Systematic Development of Monitoring of Waterbird Populations and the Drivers of their Trends presented in Doc. TC 15.21 to be revised.

Agenda item 9.6. TC Working Group 6 (Education and Information)

70. Ms Olesya Petrovych, AEWA TC CEPA Expert, had been nominated as chair for this working group and was supported by Mr Florian Keil from the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat.

71. After an introduction by Ms Petrovych on the topic of Communication, Education and Public Awareness (CEPA) as it relates to the work of the Technical Committee, the discussion that followed focused on the role the Technical Committee members could play in both the identification of priority

issues for communication in the TC Workplan and how each member could potentially support the Secretariat's communication efforts using their own social media networks. In this context, both Ms Petrovych and Mr Keil highlighted the importance of these personal networks as powerful ways to help amplify key AEWA conservation topics as well as the products (guidelines and reports) being developed under the guidance of the AEWA Technical Committee.

72. Further discussions resulted in the recognition that several TC products would benefit from an improved design and presentation. It was also noted that budget was needed to engage professional designers and content creators to develop targeted communication products (Info-graphics and other visual products) to enhance these.

Decision: TC members to support the communication work of the Agreement as well as the implementation of CEPA activities linked to specific tasks. UNEP/AEWA Secretariat to identify CEPA relevant tasks in the TC workplan to be reviewed by the TC members.

Agenda item 9.7. TC Working Group 7 (Implementation)

73. Mr Laith El-Moghrabi had been nominated as chair for this working group and was supported by Mr Sergey Dereliev from the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat.

74. Introducing document TC 15.22 *Discussion Paper on the Format and Content of the 8th Edition of the Conservation Status Report*, Mr Nagy proposed an alternating style of reports to overcome time and resource limitation. Instead of always producing reports which produce the population sizes, the trends and the patterns in them, it is proposed to alternate this with drivers and responses reports. This would look more into other literature and research, which could explain some of the patterns.

75. Subsequently and after further brief discussions, the proposal on the vision for future editions of the CSR was approved.

Decision: Proposals outlined in Doc. TC 15.22 with respect to the future format and content of the triennial Conservation Status Report were agreed upon.

Agenda item 9.8. TC Working Group 8 (Strategic, Reporting, Emerging and Other Issues)

76. Mr Emmanuel Kasimbazi had been nominated as chair for this working group and was supported by Mr Sergey Dereliev from the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat.

77. Document TC 15.23 *Draft Module on National Reporting of Waterbird Population Status* was introduced by Mr Dereliev. After some brief discussions, Mr Dereliev concluded that the module would be maintained as it was, which would align with the EU Birds Directive's Article 12 reporting format, hoping to be invited to give input on it when it is revised for the next reporting cycle by the European Commission and the Member States. This could help align the two formats further.

Decision: Reporting format on population status for the period 2013-2018 as presented in Doc. TC 15.23 was approved.

Agenda item 10. Date and Venue of the next Technical Committee Meeting

78. Mr Dereliev said that there would be a total of two TC meetings in this triennium and that the next meeting should be scheduled for early 2021, which would be the second and last meeting before MOP8. He further explained that the second Standing Committee (StC) meeting for the triennium would be held in May 2021 and that the second TC meeting should be held three months before the StC, i.e. in February 2021. The Secretariat hoped that a host could be found, otherwise the Meeting would again take place at the UN Campus in Bonn, where the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat is based. Once there was more clarity on this, information would be posted on the TC workspace accordingly.

Agenda item 11. Any Other Business

79. No further issues were raised.

Agenda item 12. Closure

80. Upon Ms Cromie's invitation to make final comments, Mr Dereliev reminded those present that a call was made upon parties at MOP7 to provide a Junior Professional Officer (JPO) to support the work of the Technical Committee. As it had become evident that there is much need for extra support, since the Secretariat had taken up many commitments, Mr Dereliev encouraged Parties to seriously consider providing a JPO to the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat. This would improve the possibility to deliver on the commitments and facilitate the work. Mr Dereliev added that he was looking forward to increasing the capacity of the Secretariat.

81. Mr Trouvilliez thanked those present for their participation. He said that this meeting clearly showed that the Technical Committee's work is in fact at the core of AEWA's work. If the TC was able to deliver on all tasks, it would be a great move towards better knowledge and more efficient action. Mr Trouvilliez emphasised that the Secretariat counted on the TC members to deliver on as many tasks as possible. On behalf of the Secretariat, he wished everyone a safe trip home.

82. Ms Cromie echoed Mr Trouvilliez' thanks and said that it had been great to hear some additional engagement promises. She thanked everyone for all the energy and inputs throughout the meeting and reiterated that this was only the planning meeting and that everyone would need to be committed and engaged. She urged everyone to keep the waterbirds at the front of their minds.

83. With that the Chair declared the meeting closed.

APPENDIX I – Reports by the TC Regional Representatives on the Implementation of AEWA in their Respective Regions

Southern Africa – Ms Lizanne Roxburgh

Activities to Implement the ISSAPs in the region

Botswana

No activities were done on the species action plans due to shortage of funding during 2018/19 financial year.

South Africa

White-winged Flufftail Single Species Action Plan

1.1 Designate all qualifying sites as Ramsar sites: Process initiated by Eskom to declare Ingula as a Ramsar site, following the declaration of Ingula as a Nature Reserve.

1.2 Engage local communities in seeking local solutions to habitat destruction through community-based habitat conservation initiatives: Funding available through AEWA as negotiated with the European Union (EU). Contracts and agreements need to be signed and BirdLife South Africa to appoint a consultant to assist with formalising the community project at Berga.

1.3 Designate all sites under national protected area legislation: Middelpunt forms part of the Greater Lakenvlei Protected Environment (GLPE) which is declared under a Stewardship agreement in Mpumalanga, and Ingula has been declared as a Nature Reserve.

1.5 Design and implement site management plan(s): Best practice guidelines for habitat management for White-winged Flufftail developed and near-finalised by BirdLife South Africa.

Whitecross, MA, Colyn, RB & Smit-Robinson, HA. 2019. Best Practice Guidelines for the Management of Suitable Habitat for the Critically Endangered White-winged Flufftail in South Africa. BirdLife South Africa, Johannesburg. In prep.

1.8 Prevent mining which will affect the species' habitat: BirdLife South Africa registered as Interested and Affected Party for coal and diamond mining applications in the Greater Lakenvlei Protected Environment and actively involved where necessary.

5.1 Undertake genetic and isotopic investigations to determine if there are multiple populations of the species: Completed

1. Dalton DL, Smit-Robinson HA, Vermaak E, Jarvis E, Kotzé A. 2018. Is there genetic connectivity among the Critically Endangered Whited-winged Flufftail (*Sarothrura ayresi*) populations from South Africa and Ethiopia? *African Journal of Ecology* 56: 28-37.
2. Du Plessis M, Dalton DL, Smit-Robinson HA, Kotzé A. 2017. Next generation sequencing yields the mitochondrial genome of the critically endangered *Sarothrura ayresi* (White-winged Flufftail). *Mitochondrial DNA Part B: Resources* 2: 236–237.
3. Dalton DL, Vermaak E, Smit-Robinson HA, Kotzé, A. 2016. Lack of diversity at innate immunity Toll-like receptors genes in the critically endangered White-winged Flufftail (*Sarothrura ayresi*). *Scientific Reports*. 6: 36757–63665. DOI: 10.1038/srep36757

7.1 Design and implement a scientific study to undertake a thorough assessment of habitat requirements, including the understanding of the hydrological functioning of the plateau floodplains: Ongoing camera trap study over past three seasons (2016/2017; 2017/2018; 2018/2019) at Middelpunt Wetland. Press releases referred to the discovery of first breeding record in the southern Hemisphere at Middelpunt Wetland, unequivocal confirmation of call and confirmation of breeding at Middelpunt Wetland again during the past season.

1. Colyn R, Campbell A, Smit-Robinson HA. 2019. The site occupancy, activity patterns and behaviour of Critically Endangered White-winged Flufftail *Sarothrura ayresi* and other rallid species in palustrine wetlands, South Africa. *Bird Conservation International* 1: 1-16.

2. Colyn R, Campbell A, Smit-Robinson HA. 2017. The application of camera trapping to assess rallidae species richness within wetland habitat types, eastern Free State, South Africa. *Ostrich.* 2017: 1–11 (ISSN 0030–6525)

8.1 Identify and explore potential sites in South Africa and Ethiopia: Ecological Niche Model and remote sensing aspects completed and will be submitted for peer review.

10.1 Design and implement a scientific study to determine the species' breeding biology: Collection of co-variate field data and breeding biology data during 2018 field trip to Berga, Ethiopia.

13.1 Compile and disseminate species information: Marketing and awareness – Annual Flufftail Festival held for past 5 years.

International Multi-species Action Plan for the Conservation of Benguela Current Upwelling System Coastal Seabirds

In 2018, South Africa continued its annual monitoring of breeding by African penguins and Cape gannets at all colonies and of breeding by Cape and bank cormorants at selected, important colonies. All four species are endemic to the Benguela ecosystem, compete with fisheries for prey and have a global Red List status of Endangered. Numbers of African penguins (Fig. 1), Cape gannets (Fig. 2) and Cape cormorants in South Africa have decreased in the present century, especially along its west coast north of Cape Town. Each of these seabirds feeds mainly on anchovy and sardine. A long-term study on the diet of gannets has shown a marked decrease in the availability of these forage fishes off South Africa's west coast and an increase in Hake since the mid-2000s and food scarcity is considered the main reason for the recent decreases in the populations of these seabirds[2] and for the lack in successful implementation of the first five-year phase of South Africa's *African Penguin Biodiversity Management Plan* (APBMP) to achieve its aim of stabilising the South African population of African penguin. It is recognised that securing sufficient food for penguins will be key to attaining a similar objective in a proposed second phase of the APBMP. Also, off northwest South Africa, abundance of rock lobster, a key prey item for bank cormorants, has decreased.

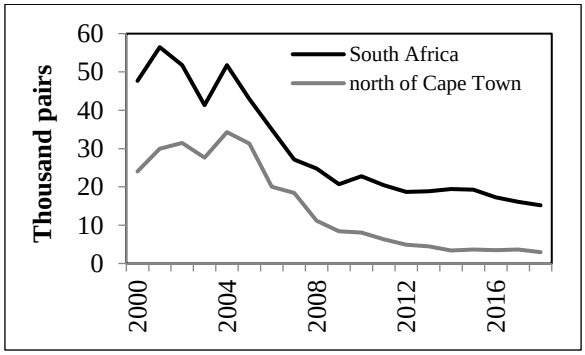

Figure 1: Numbers of African penguins breeding in South Africa and north of Cape Town, 2000–2018. It is apparent that the large recent decrease in South Africa was driven by the decrease north of Cape Town

[2] Crawford RJM, Sydeman WJ, Thompson SA, Sherley RB, Makhado AB. In press. Food habits of an endangered seabird indicate recent poor availability of abundant forage resources. *ICES Journal of Marine Science*.

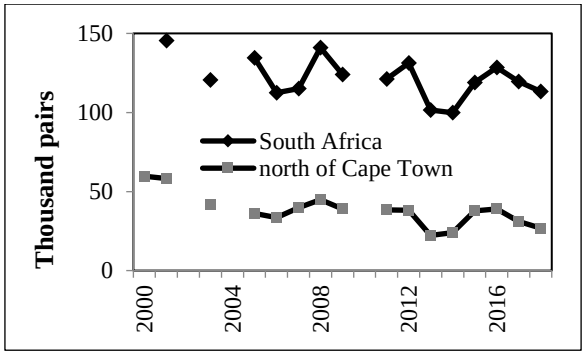

Figure 2: Numbers of Cape gannets breeding in South Africa and north of Cape Town, 2000–2018. The overall decrease was driven by the decrease north of Cape Town, where there has been a recent scarcity of prey

In 2018, analysis of surveys conducted in South Africa's Northern Cape Province showed a decrease in abundance of all seabirds breeding there.[3] This was of particular concern for another Benguela endemic, the Damara tern, which has a Red List status of Vulnerable. Decreases of this species in the Northern Cape are thought mainly attributable to habitat loss through mining and human disturbance. Numbers breeding in South Africa, where it is considered Critically Endangered, are now likely to be < 100 pairs.

Considerable tracking of the at-sea distributions of African penguins, Cape gannets and Cape cormorants in South Africa has now been undertaken and it is hoped that results will inform marine spatial planning.

BirdLife South Africa is working together with the AEWA Secretariat to convene the International Working Group (IWG) that will be responsible for decisions and actions relating to the IMSAP. The convening of the IWG is the first step towards meaningful, coordinated conservation action as stipulated in the IMSAP. Contact has been initiated with each of the range states (South Africa, Namibia and Angola) and formal invitation letters are being sent out to request the nomination of country delegates and local experts to sit on the IWG. The Secretariat is hoping to hold the first meeting of the IWG in November 2019, depending on the availability of the IWG members and funding.

Grey Crowned-crane Single Species Action Plan

Activities under Objective 1: Reduce adult and juvenile mortality and loss of birds

Through the EWT/Eskom Partnership, we aim to reduce the risk of Grey Crowned-crane collisions with overhead powerlines through the following approaches. 1. We are actively involved in EIA's related to energy infrastructure development in order to guide appropriate mitigation such as line placement/routing, line marking and line design. 2. Grey Crowned-cranes are included in the collision risk modelling completed by the EWT for Eskom in order to identify high collision risk areas within Eskom's management units, in order to guide proactive line marking and/or the placement and mitigation of any new power lines not subject to the EIA process (132 kV or less). 3. We investigate any and all reports of Grey Crowned-crane mortality as a result of colliding with overhead power lines and propose appropriate mitigation to prevent reoccurrence.

Activities under Objective 2: Increase breeding success and reproductive rates and 3: Significantly reduce further loss, fragmentation and degradation of habitat

[3] Crawford RJM, Dyer BM, Geldenhuys L, Oosthuizen WH, Makhado AB. 2018. Seabird breeding populations decrease along the arid coastline of South Africa's Northern Cape province. Ostrich 89: 299–305.

These activities specifically refer to the protection of Grey Crowned-crane breeding sites (wetlands). The ICF/EWT partnership, as well as provincial conservation agencies, Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife (EKZNW), Eastern Cape Parks and Tourism Agency (ECPTA) and Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency (MTPA), have facilitated the declaration of several protected areas under the Biodiversity Stewardship Programme that support Grey Crowned-crane breeding pairs. These include the declaration of the Cedarville Protected Environment in the Eastern Cape (15,800 ha), protecting 10 -15 breeding pairs; Beaumont Nature Reserve (1,500ha) in KwaZulu-Natal supporting one breeding pair; Chrissiesmeer Protected Environment (60,000 ha) and Greater Lakenvlei Protected Environment (15,000 ha) in Mpumalanga protecting 5 to 10 breeding pairs each. There are several other sites currently under negotiation to protect under NEMA:PA across the core Grey Crowned-crane range, which could potentially protect a further 40 to 70 breeding pairs.

In addition to protection of habitat to reduce disturbance and prevent further loss of breeding habitat, we engage with South Africa's Working for Wetlands Programme and Eastern Wetland Rehabilitation to rehabilitate key wetlands for cranes, and also undertake alien plant clearing around key wetlands and in key catchments. For example, in the Chrissiesmeer Protected Environment, a successful Land User Incentive application has resulted in the clearing of nearly 100ha of Black Wattle in catchments surrounding wetlands using by Grey Crowned-cranes for breeding.

Activities under Objective 4: Filling knowledge gaps

We have completed the 25th annual aerial survey for cranes in KwaZulu-Natal. The area covered by the survey accounts for approximately 65-70% of the national population size of Grey Crowned-cranes. The survey results continue to show increasing trend in Grey Crowned-crane numbers, with 3,132 Grey Crowned-cranes recorded in the 2018 aerial survey. (See graph below)

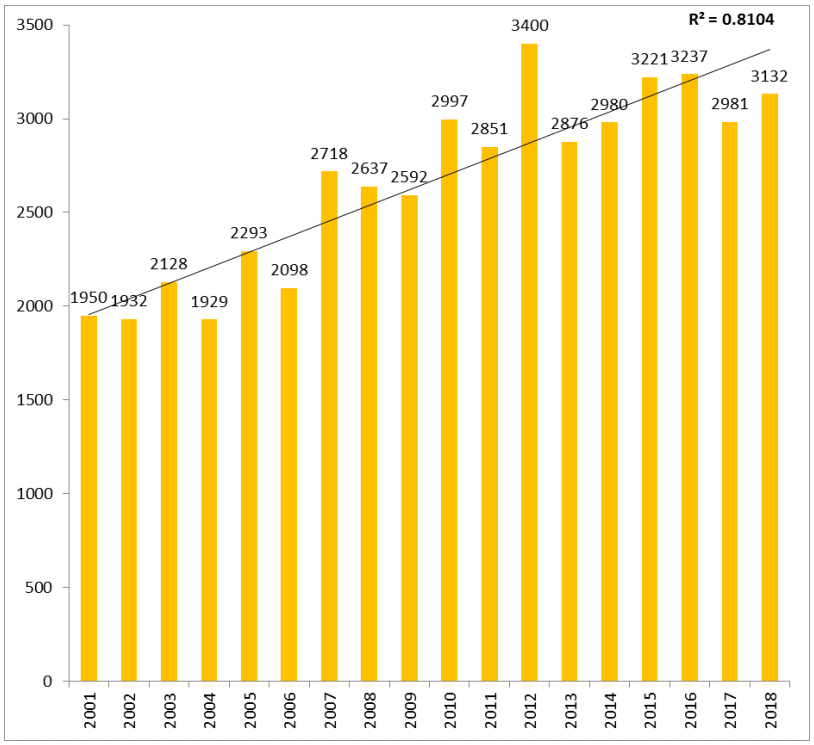

Figure: The number of Grey Crowned-cranes sighted in the KZN aerial surveys from 2001-2018

Currently, an MSc student, Claire Lenahan, is conducting a conservation genetic study on Grey Crowned and Wattled Cranes. As part of the study, she is looking at the genetics of the South African population to determine heterogeneity within the population, as well as looking at comparing the East African and Southern African sub-species. Her study will be complete by the end of 2019.

Zimbabwe

Grey Crowned-crane

In 2018 two ground surveys of cranes were conducted in the Driefontein Grasslands (central Zimbabwe) and in Matabeleland North region. The purpose of this survey was to determine population status of cranes in these key target areas. These ground surveys were conducted by BirdLife Zimbabwe in collaboration with the Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority (ZPWMA). In areas located outside protected area system (Driefontein Grasslands, Nkayi and Lupane), local communities participated in the ground surveys of cranes and this was useful in helping identifying wetland sites used by cranes. A total of 84 Wattled Cranes and 115 Grey Crowned-cranes were recorded in Driefontein Grasslands in July 2018. These comprised of 77 adults and 7 juveniles for Wattled Cranes, and 107 adults and 8 juveniles for Grey Crowned-cranes. In December 2018, a total of 18 Grey Crowned-cranes were recorded in Nkayi, 224 Grey Crowned-cranes recorded in Lupane (Jotsholo) and 58 Grey Crowned-cranes were recorded in Hwange National Park. Awareness on crane conservation was raised in communities where cranes were sighted. A network of local based custodians was established by BLZ in target areas to help provide more information on crane sightings and threats. A total of 8 people was trained in site monitoring, data capturing and record keeping in Driefontein Grasslands. At Hwange National Park, a total of 16 people participated in the site monitoring and data capturing training facilitated by BLZ. Some of the threats to cranes in these key areas were identified during the surveys. These include wetland degradation mainly due to cultivation in rural areas, direct human disturbances at some wetland habitat sites, powerlines in agricultural areas where cranes were recorded, and veld fires. This work only targeted few sites for ground surveys of cranes due to limited resources available. Plans are in place to cover other potential areas as well as repeat target areas to fully establish current population status and distribution of cranes in Zimbabwe.

A social survey conducted in Driefontein Grasslands in June 2018 established local perceptions of cranes, spatial and temporal human-crane interaction patterns. The local perceptions include values communities attach to natural resources, habitats, and drivers to environmental changes, opinions on how they can co-exist with threatened species and level of attachment to species and habitats. Findings of the social survey revealed that rural communities in Driefontein Grasslands were able to distinguish between a Wattled Crane and Grey Crowned-crane, 47% of respondents confirmed that they like both species of cranes. Habitat use by crane species was correlated to human habitat use. The results show an overlap of habitat use by cranes and humans in this Important Bird Area (IBA). The Grey Crowned-crane was viewed as a crop pest by 43% of the respondents. With regards to gender, girls interact less frequently with wetland habitats as compared to men, women, and boys. Understanding perceptions has been considered a key step in identifying community priorities, practices, knowledge and beliefs that aid species conservation while at the same time identify misconceptions and lack of knowledge that could be contributing to species decline.

BirdLife Zimbabwe is grateful to AEWA Small Grant Fund for supporting this work.

Emergency situations (extreme cold, draught, toxic or oil spills, etc.) that have happened and affected waterbirds and/or their habitats since the last TC meeting and response to them.

South Africa

a) Lesser Flamingos at Kamfer's Dam

In 2018/19 the Lesser Flamingos bred for the second consecutive year since 2011 at Kamfers Dam, Kimberley, South Africa, after no breeding was recorded from 2011 to 2016 at this pan. Unfortunately, the combination of prolonged drought and a very limited effluent flow into the dam, lowered the water level of the dam. These critical conditions were exacerbated by prolonged temperatures exceeding 35 degrees while the area suffered from an extended heat wave in late January 2019, turning the 2018 breeding event into a crisis situation at Kamfers Dam. The receding

water levels and high temperatures exposed the breeding colony to increased predation. As conditions worsened, members of a local volunteer group, assisted by staff from Kimberley animal welfare, rescued 1 934 flamingo chicks ultimately distributing these birds to rehabilitation facilities all around the country with a view to raise and release them back to the wild. BirdLife South Africa became actively involved, not with the rescue, but with monitoring both the birds and the conditions on the dam, to safeguard and minimize further set-backs to the still ongoing breeding event.

The time spent on site by these contracted and volunteer observers and BirdLife South Africa's Robin Colyn was mainly taken up with daily passive observation of the colony from a safe distance away with binoculars and a spotting scope and minimizing possible sources of disturbance. Other activities included overseeing drone-based aerial surveys of the colony and the dam, tracking water levels, and maintaining constant communication and coordination between the various local and off-site stakeholders. BirdLife South Africa also built models to count the birds depicted in sample drone images and were able to interpret satellite-derived images of water levels and algal densities in the dam, on a daily basis. Despite brief spells of rainfall earlier in February 2019, water levels remained low and the 350 active nests still remaining in the colony (most of the others had produced chicks by then which had moved off to the créches) were subjected to a nocturnal raid by feral dogs on the night of 16 February. Only a few adults were left in the area the next day and by the afternoon of the 17th the colony had been completely abandoned.

Following the termination of the breeding event, the focus turned to the 5000 chicks still alive on the dam. With the extreme heat conditions prevailing, an urgent meeting with all the various parties associated with the management of the crisis to date was called, to plan for the distinct possibility that the adult flamingos might be forced to vacate the area, leaving the flightless young birds behind. This meeting was held in Kimberley on February 27th and plans were discussed to ensure that all were better prepared to deal with the reality of the approaching disaster. Thankfully, however, partly because of the commitment and hard work of the local mining company (Ekapa Mining) with the Sol Plaatje Municipality to repair water and sewage pipelines and increase the flow of sewage into the dam, and partly because of a massive downpour of >100 mm of rain that fell on 11 March, both water level and algal densities on the dam have improved back to the required state. Planning for crisis management is no longer needed.

Background to Kamfers Dam:

Lesser Flamingos only regularly breed at four locations in the world – Lake Natron in Kenya, Etosha Pan in Namibia, and Sua Pan in Botswana and more recently at Kamfers Dam.

- About 30 years ago the construction of the Homevale Waste Water Treatment Works at the edge of a large ephemeral pan just north of Kimberley transformed the ecology of the pan. The effluent from the waste water treatment encouraged blue-green algal blooms and turned Kamfers Dam pan into possibly the best foraging habitat for Lesser Flamingos in South Africa.

- More than 10 years ago, a large island in the dam was built, customized to encourage the flamingos to settle and breed. This project was undertaken under the lead of Mark and Tania Anderson with support from the owners of Ekapa mining and the property owners.

- Lesser Flamingo numbers at Kamfers Dam increased to 80 000+ birds.

- In 2007/2008 all the pieces fell into place and a significant breeding event took place on the island, producing about 9000 young flamingos, followed by successful events in 2008/2009 (13000 chicks), 2009/2010 (800 chicks) and 2010/2011 (>100 chicks). This was a remarkable outcome given that breeding is dependent on rainfall and only happens sporadically. Given that the Lesser Flamingo continues to lose critical habitat across its range to human disturbance and climate change, the Kamfers Dam intervention was an unqualified success and a very important win for Lesser Flamingo conservation.

- Heavy rainfall in 2011 caused flooding that effectively destroyed the breeding island, and fluctuations in both the amount and quality of water precluded nesting at Kamfers Dam from 2011-2016.

- During January 2019 more than >8000 adults incubating on nest turrets and >1000 already mobile chicks forming protective 'créches' close to the colony were counted.

(Adapted from text prepared by Dr Andrew Jenkins on behalf of BirdLife South Africa)

The recent happenings at Kamfers Dam have highlighted the fact that the local conservation of Lesser Flamingos is in disarray and that the SSAP for this species is not being effectively implemented in RSA. This does not mean no effort is being made to conserve this species, but rather that the SSAP is not being used strategically to guide interventions and to allocate resources. This would be a good point to revisit all SSAPs that South Africa has committed to. Progress needs to be assessed and mechanisms put in place to revitalise the implementation of those that have stalled or never really got going, such as the Flamingo SSAP.

b) Sardine stocks at dangerously low levels

Sardines are a primary food source for many seabirds, including those species on the Benguela coastal seabirds IMSAP that rely on small pelagic fish (African penguin, Cape cormorant, Cape gannet, and Greater Crested Tern). The sardine fishery is South Africa's largest fishery by volume.

The small pelagic fish biomass is estimated each year by the Department of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries based on surveys in November every year. The 2018 survey for sardine was cause for major concern. The biomass estimate of 90 000 tonnes is less than a third of the 355 000 tonnes for 2017, and well below the long-term average of 912 000 tonnes for 1984-2017). The estimate for 2018 is the lowest since 1985. In addition to the low biomass, the index of body condition for sardine was also well below long-term average levels, which raises concern about the spawning and recruitment in the next season, which is key to the ability of the stock to recover. In particular, the extremely low density and abundance of sardine on the west coast in proximity of a number of important seabird colonies (e.g. Malgas Island, Robben Island, Dassen Island) is particularly worrying for the above-mentioned seabird species.

The Total Allowable Catch (TAC) for sardine in 2019 was the subject of much discussion as the estimate fell outside of the lower bounds of the projected biomass levels for the Operational Management Procedures (OMP-18) which governs the setting of catch limits. OMP-18 was revised in early 2019 to account for the extremely low estimate, and a TAC of 4750 tonnes was set in addition to a Total Allowable Bycatch of 3750 tonnes. Concerns have been raised by observers at the Small Pelagic Scientific Working Group about the unwillingness of management to close the fishery in order to allow the stock to recover, as well as the lack of guidance in the OMP-18 around when closure of the fishery is considered an appropriate action. The OMP does not currently take the needs of the wider environment into account, including the requirements of predators such as seabirds. There is strong scientific evidence showing that seabird populations are strongly linked to the availability of food, and this worrying biomass estimate for sardine is likely to further restrict the ability of seabird populations to sustain themselves.

c) Avian influenza outbreaks in coastal seabirds

The H5N8 strain of avian influenza was first diagnosed in South African poultry in 2017 and negatively affected both chicken and ostrich farms. A handful of wild bird species were also diagnosed with the disease, but there was no major outbreak in the wild until the disease was picked up in terns in the Western Cape of South Africa in December 2017. Subsequently, the outbreak then spread from terns to other coastal seabirds such as gulls, gannets, and penguins, though susceptibility to the disease was most severe in Greater Crested Terns (5365 suspected mortalities according to state veterinarian reports) and Cape Gannets (1627 suspected mortalities). Other species of concern that were adversely affected were African Penguins (109 suspected mortalities) and Cape Cormorant (100 suspected mortalities). The last positive diagnosis of H5N8 in wild seabirds in the Western

Cape of South Africa was on 23 May 2018. During the outbreak there were precautionary restrictions imposed on research and movement in all seabird colonies.

After a few months with no reports of the disease in the southern African region, there was a fresh outbreak in African Penguins on Halifax Island, Namibia, in late 2018/early January 2019. As at 29 March 2019, local experts estimate that over 500 penguins have perished as a result of the disease at this colony. In March 2019, the first cases were detected at Ichaboe and Mercury Islands, but at the time of writing there are no reliable estimates of mortality. While the situation is not yet as serious as at Halifax, the outbreak is still fairly new, and it is possible that there will be significant mortality at these colonies too. Unlike the outbreak in the Western Cape of South Africa, the Namibian outbreak has to date seemingly affected only penguins and no other seabird species. The reason for this is unclear, but the possibility remains that other species that breed in close proximity to penguins may be susceptible to the disease in future. Management authorities have undertaken trips to the islands in order to monitor the colonies and to collect and incinerate carcasses in an effort to contain the outbreak.

Zimbabwe

Intense Tropical Cyclone Idai, in March 2019, was one of the worst tropical cyclones on record to affect Africa and the Southern Hemisphere as a whole. The storm caused catastrophic damage in Mozambique, Zimbabwe, and Malawi, leaving more than 1,000 people dead and thousands more missing.

New or major ongoing waterbird species re-establishment (reintroduction, supplementation) initiatives

African Penguin BMP implementation

The BMP for the African penguin has been compiled and submitted to authorities for official gazetting. The past BMP expired at the end of 2018. BMP revision takes place every 5 years.

BirdLife South Africa is working to improve penguin populations by investigating re-establishing extinct colonies and establishing additional new colonies in suitable areas. This is in alignment with activities on the BMP. The aim of trying to establish new colonies of penguins is to move penguins closer to areas where there is evidence of abundant prey species, and where they can also be protected from predators. The need for assisted colony development is due to the African Penguin's favoured prey, sardine and anchovy, having shifted in distribution from the west coast, where many of the penguin colonies are, to the southern coast. This leaves the population highly vulnerable to any catastrophic event, e.g. an oil spill or disease outbreak. The establishment of new colonies will create resilience in the penguin population by bridging the gap between the west and east populations. In South Africa, the penguin population is concentrated in just two regions - the west coast and Algoa Bay.

Furthermore, South Africa is currently drafting guidelines for the conservation translocation of African Penguins. These guidelines include translocation for establishing a new colony, as well as re-establishing extinct colonies and will lay out the options available for source penguins for the new colony. Before penguins are moved to a chosen site, it will be prepared to make it seem like an established colony. Decoys, sound recordings and mirrors will be used to give the illusion of penguins using the colony. Nest boxes will be deployed to create additional breeding habitat for the penguins. A predator proof fence will be constructed to prevent the intrusion of predators. Once the site has been prepared, penguin fledglings and/or juveniles will be released at the site. As penguins start breeding at 3 to 5 years of age it will take a few years before any return to breed.

Activities on eradication or other type of action regarding alien species

The management of established invaders in South Africa has varied based on the taxon, the invasion location, and which stakeholders are involved. South Africa has the National legislation that address

species that are threats to biodiversity which include Alien Invasive Species. The purpose of National Environment Management Biodiversity Act (NEMBA) as it relates to Alien Invasive Species is to prevent the unauthorised introduction and spread of Alien and Invasive species to ecosystems and habitats where they do not naturally occur; manage and control Alien and Invasive Species to prevent or minimise harm to the environment and to biodiversity in particular; and to eradicate alien invasive species from ecosystems and habitats where they may harm such ecosystems or habitats. In 2014, DEA published Regulations on Alien and Invasive Species (AIS) in terms of the NEMBA, for implementation. The AIS Regulations are aimed at preventing the introduction of more species that may be potentially invasive into the country. The AIS regulations has listed approximately 24 bird species and are categorised in three categories based on their impacts. In which category 1a species are those species which must be combated and eradicated and i=any form of trade is prohibited.

Progress of the region in phasing out the use of lead shot for hunting in wetlands

South Africa: National poisoning task team

The Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA) held the first workshop on the 2nd August 2018 with all relevant stakeholders to discuss the poisoning issues threatening the wildlife. The outcomes of the meeting indicated that there is a need for DEA to establish a national working group to deal with all poisoning issues. It was then agreed that the group should be called the National Wildlife Poisoning Prevention Working Group (NWPPWG). The Terms of Reference (ToRs) were drafted to guide the NWPPWG in implementing the National Wildlife Poisoning Prevention Strategy in agreement with the international strategy. The ToRs also cater for several sub-working groups to be established to deal with different poisoning issues. In addition to that, the sub-working group responsible for lead, the Lead Poisoning Task Team, has been established, and it will work independently however, it will report to the main working group. This group met for the first time on the 18-19 February 2019 for ground-breaking processes. The nomination letters for candidates to serve on the NWPPWG have been drafted and approved by the Director General (DG) and were sent to all stakeholders for consideration. Currently, the department is receiving the nominations and in the next financial year, appointment letters will be drafted, sent to the DG for approval and circulated to nominees for official appointment. A focused workshop was held on progress in South Africa at the 7th Meeting of the Parties (MoP) in December 2018. Most research focused on lead toxicosis in southern Africa links directly to vulture conservation, rather than the use of lead shot over wetlands.

New or major ongoing education and information activities on waterbirds, waterbird habitats and the agreement

Botswana

BirdLife Botswana hosted World Migratory Bird Day celebration on 13 October at Nata Village main Kgotla. The main objective of the celebration was to raise awareness on migratory birds using the theme "Unifying our Voices for Bird Conservation". The participants consisted of Nata community and leadership (Chief, councillors, Botswana Ash mine Managing Director, VDC), conservation stakeholders and schools in Nata and surrounding villages. Schools were expected to convey message/theme through performing arts been drama, poetry and song. As birds migrate during different seasons throughout the year, World Migratory Bird Day will be observed on both the second Saturdays of May and October, making it possible for individuals and organizations to present educational activities and awareness-raising events in their countries at the time of migration. International cooperation across the entire migratory range is therefore essential. About 200 people came to the

Kgotla to celebrate WMBD. 135 students from nine schools accompanied by two teachers from each school graced the event.

People were acknowledged for attending the event. It was explained that migrant birds need to be protected and be safe wherever they are, he stated that birds do not understand of any boundaries as such they fly freely so people's responsibility is to make sure the route they take are safe from any harm. It was highlighted that Migratory birds cross international borders during their migrations and require quality habitats and a network of suitable sites to support their annual journeys. The relationship between BotAsh mine and BirdLife Botswana was explained as a long-lasting relationship and the mine made a lot of major changes to cater for flamingos which are found in large number at Sowa and Nata village. It was stated that before BotAsh mine opened, there was thorough assessment which was made around 1980 and bird experts were called to idealize on how the mine can operate without affecting the existence birds especially flamingos. It was stated that the first step they took was to lower electrical poles below the earth surfaces so that they can avoid issues of electrocutions. It was highlighted that the BotAsh logo which has a flamingo depicts the importance and value of the bird. It was stated that birds are common in most habitats, and people often overlook their ecological significance, but their ecological roles are incredibly important, and humans can benefit monetarily through the many actions of birds. It was added that birds act as rodent control unlike insects, rodents are a big problem to crops. Rodents eat away the yield of the crop so birds like eagles keep an eye on these rodents. It was stated that scavenging birds quickly and effectively dispose of carcasses of dead animals they find, especially roadkill so is important people keep vultures alive to perform duties for free. It was also stated that birds are recognized as one of the most important indicators of the state of the environment since they are sensitive to habitat change. He concluded by advising people to avoid veld fires because wild fires end up destroying eggs and birds habitat too thus forcing birds to migrate to other countries or areas.

Nine schools from Nata and neighbouring villages competed in three categories, Drama, Poetry and Song. The schools were expected to raise awareness through performing arts using the theme of the day to showcase their artistic talent. Junior schools and senior schools competed in drama category while primary schools did poetry and song. The first category was Poetry where Zoroga Primary School, Maposa Primary School and Gweta Primary School competed and the former scooped position one while Gweta Primary School took position two and position three went to Maposa Primary School. Song category saw three primary schools competing for position one. Nata Primary School, Tsokatshaa Primary School and Manxotae Primary School battled for position one and the latter managed to scoop position one, position two went to Tsokatshaa Primary School and Nata Primary School took position three. The last category was Drama where Sua Junior secondary school, Kutlwano junior secondary school and Nata senior secondary school competed for what seemed to be a mouth-watering encounter. Sua Junior secondary school took position one, position two went to Nata senior secondary school and Kutlwano took position three. Each school was awarded with a certificate for participation and trophies were awarded to winners from each category.

South Africa

a) The Penguin Promises Campaign: This campaign was established in 2011 at uShaka Sea World in collaboration with the Animal Keepers Association of Africa (AKAA). It encourages people to choose to make one change in their daily lives to become more environmentally responsible. There are then asked to record their behaviour change promise via a website, a postcard or email. Their promise is their commitment to the environment. The campaign is multi-faceted and utilises social media, with a dedicated website linked to Facebook and Twitter Accounts as its primary communication tool. The project also includes a research component and ongoing evaluation of the types of promises that are being made, where promises are being made, what

inspires a promise and whether or not people are keeping their promises. This provides valuable information to assess the impact of the campaign in order to improve the campaign in the future.

b) Waddle: The annual Penguin Waddle generates a great deal of media coverage by covering a 130km stretch of the coastline of South Africa. Participants range from school children to animal keepers and rural community members.

c) SAFE Conservation Program: The Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) has launched a new conservation program entitled Saving Animals From Extinction (SAFE) and the African penguin was selected as one of our four pilot species. SAFE will utilize the strengths of the AZA community, including expertise and resources, to recognize, support and bolster conservation efforts already in place in range countries, such as those associated with the APBMP.

d) Cranes in the Classroom: The ICF/EWT Partnership and the KZN Crane Foundation have been implementing the Cranes in the Classroom learning series in over 20 schools in KwaZulu-Natal, Mpumalanga and the Eastern Cape, reaching over 500 children between Grade 1 and 6. This learning series, linked to CAPS, is a fun interactive lessons' based series where cranes serve as flagships for story-telling, role-playing and art whilst learning about the environment.

e) Flufftail Festival: The fifth annual Flufftail Festival was hosted by BirdLife South Africa, Water Wise and partners at both the Johannesburg Zoo and National Zoological Garden, Pretoria, South Africa in February and March 2019 respectively. The main purpose of the Flufftail Festival is to celebrate the importance of conserving water, wetlands and waterbirds. At both venues a fun-filled Friday morning focused on educational activities for learners, followed by either a focused community outreach or family day. The Festival has since its inception in 2015 educated the young about the conservation of water (South Africa's most precious resource), wetlands and waterbirds. This event is named after the Critically Endangered and elusive White-winged Flufftail.

Zimbabwe

BirdLife Zimbabwe raised awareness and educated local communities on the importance of wetlands in areas reached during crane surveys. In addition, BLZ is working closely with civil society organisations and communities in promoting wetland conservation in Harare, educate local communities on wetland conservation, and do site monitoring together with local residents. Substantial work has been done by BLZ to influence policy for improved wetland conservation in Harare.

Problematic cases threatening waterbirds or their habitats (e.g. infrastructural developments, changes in legislation, etc.)

South Africa

a) Prospecting applications for unconventional gas (shale gas, coal-bed methane etc) in the broader Drakensberg area and foothills poses a significant threat to Grey Crowned-canes and other associated biodiversity should prospecting lead to extraction. The Rhino Oil and Gas prospecting application covers an area of approximately 1,000,000ha and over 6,000 farms. This same area holds approximately 70% of our country's Grey Crowned-crane population.

b) Ongoing mining applications in Greater Lakenvlei Protected Environment, Dullstroom, Mpumalanga.

Any other information

Botswana

Few activities were conducted, except for the waterbird counts and the world migratory bird day celebration. This is due to issues of concentration on other political issues like human wildlife conflict and others in the country that took all the time and resources. The plan is to source funding from donors for 2019/20 for AEWA activities in the country. Botswana will need technical, financial and logistical support from both the AEWA secretariat and other partners so that it can realise the full benefit of AEWA accession.

Eastern Africa – Mr Peter Njoroge

Activities to implement the AEWA International Single Species Action Plans

1. **Lesser Flamingo**
    i. Annual Waterfowl counts in Kenya. Jan 2018-163,000; July 2018-781,000; Jan 2019-36,000.
    ii. Developing a Community Based Ecotourism Model at Lake Natron, Tanzania
2. **White-winged Flufftail**
    i. The Ethiopian wildlife and Natural History society (EWNHS) have ongoing site-based work at the Berga Wetlands, the main breeding site for the species in the country. No reports on the status/results of the work were received.
3. **Grey Crowned-crane**
    i. In Kenya a National census of the species was conducted during February 2019. Final report not ready but a preliminary estimate of population size is 8000 to 10000 individuals.
    ii. Ecological study of the species at lake Ol bolossat ongoing.

Activities on eradication or other type of action regarding alien species

Kenya: A ministerial task force was formed in 2018 to coordinate eradication activities of the Indian House Crow at the coast. Plans to use a Starlicide for the purpose.

New or major ongoing activities on habitat (site) inventory, conservation or restoration and rehabilitation of waterbird habitats

Climate Resilient Altitudinal Gradients (CRAG II) project (Rwanda and Burundi)

- It is the second phase of the CRAG I project
- Aim is to build climate change resilience using community and ecosystem-based approach to restore Lake Kivu and Lake Tanganyika basins
- Crag approach involves:
    - giving space for climate change resilience
    - Maintains ecosystem services
    - Manages buffer zones (Key Biodiversity Areas)
    - integrated watershed management

- focused land use policy and advocacy

New or major ongoing research and monitoring activities on waterbirds and waterbird habitats

Annual waterfowl census in Kenya (summary results)

	Total waterbirds counted	Total MIgrants	Flamingos
January 2018	294,950(126 species)	48350	163,164
July 2018	808,862(81 species)	0.0	781,921
January 2019	159119	59252	42741

New or major ongoing education and information activities on waterbirds, waterbird habitats and the Agreement

Lake Ol' Bolossat in Kenya

- Community awareness and training activities and monitoring of impacts of livestock at nesting sites by the Cranes Conservation Volunteers and supported by Critical Ecosystems Partnership Fund,
- Declaration and publication of a Government of Kenya gazette notice (legal notice No. 179 of 2018) on Lake Ol' Bolossat as a Protected Area under the provisions of EMCA (No. 8 of 1999). A total area declared is 147 sq. km. The PA will encompass Lake Ol' Bolossat,
- Identification of breeding sites for zonation by the local review team on the Integrated Management Plan for Lake Ol' Bolossat,

Mara Wetlands in Tanzania

Mara wetland Management Integrated Plan (2018-2022)

Actions:

- land use and wetland management;
- awareness raising;
- capacity building and governance;
- sustainable alternative livelihoods;
- water sanitation and hygiene;
- research information and data needs.

Lake Natron in Tanzania

Developing a Community Based Ecotourism Model

Objectives

- Developing a Tourism Development Plan to help coordinate ecotourism activities.
- Building the capacity of the community to run ecotourism business and improve livelihoods.
- Protect key wetlands vital for biodiversity especially flamingos and improve natural resource decision making.
- Promote the value of Lake Natron for biodiversity and ecotourism.

Problematic cases threatening waterbirds or their habitats (e.g. infrastructural developments, changes in legislation, etc.)

Wind Energy Development in Kenya

- Heavy projected investment in the sector
- SEA process for wind power and biodiversity has been initiated
- Process follows local legal and international best practices
- Aims to fill a knowledge gap regarding effects of wind energy facilities on species at the national and regional level
- The process so far has: Identified and prioritised sensitive species and sites (VECs); Undertaken sensitivity mapping and modelling against the wind power resource map; Identified priority information gaps for VECs

Northern Africa – Mr Imad Cherkaoui

Activities to implement the AEWA International Single Species Action Plans

Morocco

White-headed duck National Action Plan

- In 2018 it has been proposed to the national council of hunting to include The Black-Tailed Godwit as protected species in Morocco
- BTG count is being conducted in 2018 to estimate the wintering population in Morocco
- Improvement of the NBI situation in Morocco

Tunisia

The AEWA Eurasian Spoonbill International Expert Group (ESIEG) in conjunction with the Association "les Amis des Oiseaux", the BirdLife partner in Tunisia, is organizing a workshop to be held on Djerba Island from 14 to 18 November 2019.

Emergency situations (extreme cold, draught, toxic or oil spills, etc.) that have occurred and have affected waterbirds and/or their habitats since the last TC meeting and response to them

Algeria

- Mortality of 1300 individuals of waterbirds except the Greater flamingo at two sites (Kef Dokhane and Sebkhet El-Maleh)
- H7N1 bird flu detected on migratory birds
- Mortality of 190 marbled teals

Morocco

- Isolated cases of bird mortality have been recorded and following which commissions have formed to investigate and perform veterinary tests. The conclusions of the reports reveal that mortalities are due to extreme weather conditions.

New or major ongoing waterbird species re-establishment (reintroduction, supplementation) initiatives

Egypt

There is only a study still not finalized for reintroduction of Sacred Ibis and the result of this study is not published yet. the waterbirds issues still not a priority in for the government including environment ministry except for birds flu incidence, However there are some potentials for resolving this point with the presence of some regional and international cooperation projects for conservation and for monitoring and studying migratory waterbirds such as Mediterranean wetland observatory project, migratory soaring birds project in addition to sample scale project for conducting waterbirds census in selected wetlands (i.e with ONCFSFrance and RAC/SPA- Tunisia).

Activities on eradication or other type of action regarding alien species

Egypt

- A National Strategy and Action Plan for Invasive and Alien Species is being developed. The first draft was produced in 2017. It's expected to have it in place in 2019.
- Elimination of the aquatic weeds and reeds as part of the National Program for Rehabilitation of the Northern Lakes. The program is currently being implemented in Burullus and Manzala Lakes and will extend to cover all the lakes.

Libya

EGA is preparing a national legislation dealing with invasive and alien species, to be approved later on by the government.

Morocco

Law 29.05 on the protection of wild flora and fauna and the control of their trade, adopted in 2011, provides regulations for the introduction or reintroduction, in the natural environment, of non-native species including birds. Such transactions are subject to obtaining a permit, which includes the conditions under which these operations must be performed and precautionary measures to be taken. Each operation must be evaluated scientist.

New or major ongoing activities on habitat (site) inventory, conservation or restoration and rehabilitation of waterbird habitats

Egypt

- The National Program for Rehabilitation of the Northern Lakes

The important areas for waterbirds that are declared as protected areas are managed as part of the conservation programs of the protected areas, thus NCS is following a holistic approach in conserving the national ecosystems. Those areas which are of international importance and aren't declared as protected areas have also a good level of protection through Law 4 of 1994 for protection of environment. a number of those areas are listed in the future protected areas list.

Libya

- Waterbirds survey since 2005

New or major ongoing research and monitoring activities on waterbirds and waterbird habitats

Algeria

- Breeding ecology of the common coot (Fulica atra) at El-Golea Lake (Algerian Sahara)
- Time Budget of Gadwall Anas Strepera Wintering at Garaet Hadj-Tahar (Guerbes-Sanhaja, Northeast Algeria)
- 4th Ornithological North-African Congress- Bejaia, October 2017
- Modelling climate influences on population dynamics and diurnal time-budget of the Shelduck (*Tadorna tadorna*) wintering in Ramsar wetlands of Algeria
- First study on waterbirds wintering at the southern Mekhada marsh (North-East Algerian Ramsar site)
- Activity patterns in two sympatric duck species in a Mediterranean remnant wetland: Performance, seasonal variability and implications
- An assessment of the effect of climate change on natural habitats, including important sites for birds is provided for in the National Management Strategy Action Plan Ecosystem of wetlands in Algeria

Egypt

- Monitoring programs of waterbirds are mainly confined the wetlands located within protected areas like Ras Mohamed, Red Sea Islands. Efforts are also done to do the monitoring in Lake Nasser although non-protected but it's one of the important wetlands. A regular census program was established in 2010 for Lake Nasser with the support of The French National Office for Hunting and Wildlife (ONCFS).
- A new regional project is being implemented under the framework of the AEWA African Initiative, the RESSOURCE project. That project aims at strengthening expertise in sub-Saharan Africa on birds and their rational use for communities and their environment to achieve the integrated management of migratory water birds and wetland resources in Africa.

Libya

- The mission team has surveyed the coastal area for birds census and identification of IBA's. Finally, a National Wetland Inventory project coordinated by MedWet is under preparation.
- Wintering waterbirds census 2005-2017.
- PhD. study on Ecology and conservation of the Lesser Crested Tern at the eastern part of Libya.

Morocco

- Waterbirds census coordinated by The Scientific Institute of Rabat and BirdLife Morocco.
- Cherkaoui I; Selmi S & Hanane S. 2018 Assessment of the effectiveness of wetland protection in improving waterbird diversity in a Moroccan wetland system. *Environmental Monitoring and Assessment*.
- Cherkaoui I & Hanane S. 2018. Evidence for a geographical gradient selection in the distribution of breeding Podicipedidae and Rallidae in the southwestern Mediterranean. *Journal of Natural History*.

Tunisia

- Hamza & Selmi 2018, Diversity of waterbirds wintering in Douz wetlands (south Tunisia): factors affecting wetland occupancy and species richness. *Ecological Research*.

New or major ongoing education and information activities on waterbirds, waterbird habitats and the Agreement

Algeria

The development of environmental education, information and awareness programs by national parks include the creation and opening education and awareness centers in the following National parks and wetlands:

- Réghaia, Guerbes-sanhadja wetlands,
- Theniet El Had National Park,
- Gouraya National Park,
- Chrea National Park,
- Cynegetic center of Zeralda.

Celebration of World Migratory Bird Day, trainings in field ornithology by the department of the Forests department as part of the Human Capacity Building and Technical Assistance Program.

Egypt

Awareness about AEWA constitute a component of the general biodiversity awareness programs.

- Many awareness events are carried out but not in the framework of specific program or strategy.
- World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD).

Libya

In the last years the WMBD was celebrated in some sites in Libya.

Morocco

- Higher college of Technology Khénifra- Sultane Moulay Slimane University graduating young laureates in nature education and animation techniques with a focus on waterbirds and wetlands monitoring. A unique university education of its kind in North Africa, the school is celebrating each year the WMBD
- Several NGO in Morocco throughout are leading regional programs of environmental education and advocacy for the protection of waterbvirds and wetlands

Tunisia

- World Migratory Bird Day 2018

Problematic cases threatening waterbirds or their habitats (e.g. infrastructural development, ..)

Morocco

- Three wetlands are subject to extensive habitat loss and degradation due to urbanization, Local NGO are organizing at monthly basis sittings for their protection: Oued Saquiat Al Hamra, Dar Bouazza and a lake near Rabat. The 3 lakes are homing significant number of breeding waterbirds including Marbled teals, Ferruginous Duck.

Any other information

Algeria
Ongoing actions for Ferruginous duck carried out by hunting center, that include nasal marking of 4 individuals that were released east of the country in Graat Hadj Taher wetlands which is part of the wetland complex of Sanhadja Guerrillas classified as Ramsar.

Egypt
- Reducing illegal bird killing along Egypt's Mediterranean coast.
- Towards an integrated management of migratory waterbirds and wetlands in Egypt and sub-Saharan Africa "RESSOURCE Project".

South-Western Asia – Mr Laith El-Moghrabi

Activities to implement the AEWA International Single Species Action Plans

- Implementation of ISSAP has been limited.

- There are no national action plans for any of the species, but some actions were carried out (mainly in Israel) for several species.

Habitat and Species Assessment

- IWC is carried out regularly in three parties:
  - Israel, Jordan and Uzbekistan

- Habitat assessment and rehabilitation
  - Limited in general with regular work mainly carried out in Israel and Jordan

More is implemented but very little is reported.

Short and long-term steps to be taken

Steps – short-term
- Re-establish communication with focal points and technical focal points
- Assign technical focal points for Jordan and Syria

Steps – long-term
- Communicate with non-signatory parties
- Rapid review of relevant actions in range states, including IWC and habitat conservation

Central Europe – Mr Taulant Bino

Activities to implement the AEWA International Single Species Action Plans relevant to the region

There are no National Action Plans for the species, but some actions have been implemented for the following:

1. Eurasian Curlew (*Numenius a. arquata, N.a. orientalis* and *N. a. suschkini*)
2. Black-tailed Godwit (*Limosa l. limosa* and *L. l. islandica*)
3. Lesser White-fronted Goose (*Anser erythropus*)
4. Eurasian Spoonbill (*Platalea leucorodia*)
5. Great Snipe (*Gallinago media*)
6. Ferruginous Duck (*Aythya nyroca*)
7. White-headed Duck (*Oxyura leucocephala*)
8. Corncrake (*Crex crex*)
9. Bewick's Swan (*Cygnus columbianus bewickii*)
10. Red-breasted Goose (*Branta ruficollis*)

Emergency situations (extreme cold, draught, toxic or oil spills, etc.) that have occurred and have affected waterbirds and/or their habitats since the last TC meeting and response to them.

Extreme weather events occurred in January 2017

- Extreme low temperatures
- Heavy snow storms

Recommended measures given by AEWA during that extreme situation

- Monitoring of the situation
- Temporary hunting ban
- Reduction of disturbance

New or major ongoing waterbird species re-establishment (reintroduction, supplementation) initiatives

Italy

The idea of the re-establishement of Marbled Teal *Marmaronetta angustirostris*) is being discussed.

Activities on eradication and other type of action regarding alien species

Activities in Italy

- Control or eradication of Ruddy Duck *(Oxyura jamaicensis)*
- Control or eradication of African Sacred Ibis *(Threskiornis aethiopicus)*

Activities in Romania

- Eradication of invasive species *Ailanthus altissima* and *Amorpha fruticosa*
- A framework for eradication of invasive American Mink and other invasive species

Activities in Slovenia

- National Action Plan for Invasive Species being developed

New or major ongoing activities on habitat inventory, conservation or restoration and rehabilitation of waterbird habitats

Activities undertaken in Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republik, Hungary, Italy, Romania, Montenegro, Northern Macedonia, Slovakia and Slovenia include:

- Partial identification of sites of international and national importance for waterbirds
- Habitat inventory for the potential Natura 2000 sites for Albania, Montenegro

Phasing out the use of lead shot hunting in wetlands and progress in the region

Information regaring Albania, Montenegro, Romania, Slovenia
Preliminary efforts blocked due to the existence of the hunting ban

Information regarding Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republik, Hungary, Northern Macedonia, Slovakia
Fully phased out

Italy
Partially phased out

New or major ongoing research and monitoring activities on waterbirds and waterbird habitats

Activities in Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republik, Hungary, Italy, Romania, Montenegro, Northern Macedonia, Slovakia and Slovenia

- Partial coverage of breeding and wintering waterbirds
- Wintering waterbirds better covered

New or major ongoing education and information activities on waterbirds, waterbird habitats and the Agreement

Activities in Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Italy, Montenegro, Northern Macedonia, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia

- Several events for the World Migratory Bird Day
- Substantial education and information activities in Hungary.

Problematic cases threatening waterbirds or their habitats (e.g. infrastructural developments, changes in legislation, etc.).

The regional representative is of the opinion that problematic cases exist but are not reported!!!

Extent of use of the AEWA Conservation Guidelines by the parties

There is a partial use of AEWA guidelines or similar ones developed by other international institutions/organizations.

North and South-Western Europe – Ms Ruth Cromie

Activities to implement the Single Species Action Plans relevant to the region

France

- Heavy involvement in launch and work of EGMP
    - Including significant work on the Greylag Goose management plan – implementation to begin next June.
- 1st Meeting of the AEWA Eurasian Curlew International Working Group, Scotland, September 2018:
- France will develop an adaptive harvest management plan for curlew in 2019

Netherlands

- Continued coordination of the ISSAP for Black-tailed Godwit, based on the MOU signed between the AEWA Secretariat, Sovon Dutch Centre for Field Ornithology and the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality.

Norway

- Draft plan for seabirds' activities – revised and updated - for completion 2019
    - include priorities, continuation of existing activities, and relationships to relevant MEAs.
- Continuation of SEAPOP monitoring programme, includes e.g. Steller's Eider
- Continued activities for ISSAP for Lesser White-fronted Goose, other relevant goose species and efforts within European Goose Management Platform (EGMP) and for the ISSAPs for relevant geese species.

Sweden

- Reviewing national plan for Lesser White-fronted Goose
- Work has begun with the development of a national management plan for large birds (geese, swans and cranes).

United Kingdom

- Eurasian curlew is *the* top bird species priority in the UK
    - UK supports ~25% of world breeding population, similar in winter
    - UK breeding population in rapid decline
- Delivery of AEWA Action Plan:
    - UK & Ireland Curlew Action Group / Curlew Forum
    - All major national NGO's (RSPB, BTO, WWT, GWCT) have curlew projects
    - Curlew Conferences in England 2017, Wales and Scotland 2018
    - National partnerships for curlew recovery in Wales and Scotland
    - Major on-the-ground actions:
        - Predominantly on breeding populations
        - Trial management actions to increase productivity
            - by reducing predation and mortality from agricultural machinery

    - By headstarting small, isolated populations
- Policy discussions on how to deliver through agri-env

Emergency situations (extreme cold, draught, toxic or oil spills, etc.) that have occurred and affected waterbirds and/or their habitats since the last TC meeting and response to them

Netherlands

- Extreme drought in 2018 – impacts on migratory and local breeding waterbirds not quantified: both breeding (food availability) and migratory birds (habitat, dried up wetlands, low water tables) may have been affected.
  (see https://cdn.knmi.nl/system/readmore_links/files/000/001/101/original/droogterapport.pdf?1543246174).

Highly pathogenic avian influenza:

- Winter 2018/19 was 'quiet'
- Rest of the world still multiple subtypes (incl H5N1) in poultry, wild birds and zoos

New or major ongoing waterbird species re-establishment (reintroduction, supplementation) initiatives

Netherlands

- Continued coordination of the ISSAP for Black-tailed Godwit, based on the MOU signed between AEWA Secretariat, Sovon Dutch Centre for Field Ornithology and Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality.

Sweden

- Lesser White-fronted Goose reinforcement programme.
- White Stork re-establishment project.

United Kingdom

- Curlew: Following success at godwit (and spoon-billed sandpiper) head-starting – replicating for curlew in UK.

Activities on eradication or other type of action regarding alien species

France

- Life Project *Oxyura* (2018-2023). Includes 4 staff (70% part time) supporting ONCFS on control at key sites (including Grandlieu Lake in winter) and throughout France. The operational mode follows that of the DEFRA (UK) with which ONCFS collaborates.
- Control of the captive birds promoted by the ONCFS police and departmental services as part of the new regulatory provisions on IAS and captive wildlife.

Netherlands

- Ongoing activities to eradicate Ruddy Duck
- Increasing activities (ongoing and starting) by provincial fauna management units (responsible for implementation of fauna management) to reduce the population of Egyptian Goose (estimated winter population 2013-2015 32-45.000, data Sovon).

Norway

- Continued mink eradication and control against reestablishment at designated sites and seabird colonies.

Sweden

- The only species in question so far is ruddy duck, of which there have been no observations since 2008. Additionally, there is open season on the species.

New or major ongoing activities on habitat (site) inventory, conservation or restoration and rehabilitation of waterbird habitats

France

- Life+ ENVOLL - long term protection of colonial Charadriiforms completed early 2019. 9 organisations involved all along French Mediterranean coastline resulting in significant increase in colonial Charadriiforms breeding sites and breeding numbers. http://www.life-envoll.eu
- Follow-up project under development by The Mediterranean waterbird network at Tour du Valat

Netherlands

- 2018 - several projects to reestablish tidal regimes again in formerly embanked estuaries: implemented in the Haringvliet estuary autumn 2018, to create spawning opportunity for migratory fish populations and restoring salt-fresh water gradients – of benefit to fish eating birds.
- A similar project in the barrier dam of Lake IJsselmeer, connecting the Wadden Sea with the area of Lake IJsselmeer.

Sweden

- During 2018 wetlands have been classified through satellite images. This will be now be used in an analysis to develop the programme area.
- In 2018, the government invested 200 million SEK to create and restore wetlands around Sweden. The initiative will result in approximately 2,000 hectares of restored wetlands that contribute to the habitats for birds in addition to better water management in the landscape.

Progress of the region in phasing out the use of lead shot for hunting in wetlands

EU: Current important policy initiative under REACH (Regulation, Evaluation, Authorisation & Restriction of Chemicals)

- 2017 European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) – restriction proposal for wetlands. Using Ramsar definition of wetlands and restricting 'possession' and use of lead in wetlands
- Proposal passed intact from ECHA to Commission – now with REACH committee/Member States
- Wider restriction likely to follow, to include fishing weights.

France

- The use of lead shot for hunting in wetlands is forbidden since 1st June 2006 (https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=LEGITEXT000006074845&dateTexte=20110208).

Norway

- Fulfilled – NGOs recently requested total ban on lead

New or major ongoing research and monitoring activities on waterbirds and waterbird habitats

France

- France plans to run a national monitoring update of breeding ducks and waders in 2020.
- The RESSOURCE Project funded by the French Facility for Global Environment, EU and FAO was run for the third year in cooperation with the relevant Governments authorities in Chad, Egypt, Mali, Senegal and Sudan. Activities include waterbird monitoring, waterbird harvest and socio-economic surveys, conservation of pilot wetlands, and capacity building.
- Hunting community using a smartphone application for harvesting monitoring:
  - *https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.fnc.hunter&hl=fr*
  - *https://www.chasse59.fr/chassadapt-application-nationale-officielle-gratuite-pour-declarer-ses-prelevement/*
- Adaptive management procedures being designed for 3 waterbird species.

Netherlands

- Multi-partner (WEnR, NIOO, Sovon) population modelling for Barnacle Geese to support EGMP.
- Coordination Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative, report with Assessment East-Atlantic Flyway 2017 is about to be published;
- National waterbird census, annual report 2016/17 was published *(see www.sovon.nl/sites/default/files/doc/rap_2019-01_wavorap16-17-lr.pdf)*
- National bird atlas was published November 2018, covering 369 species of breeding and wintering birds. Extensive accounts on all major waterbird species, including non-native species. Extensive accounts on all major waterbird species, including non-native species. See vogelatlas.nl for overview of species, distribution maps and trends in numbers.

Norway

- None, but see above and activities under relevant agreement such as CAFF and AMBI.

Sweden

- BirdLife Sweden running 'Threatened Coastal Birds' project – mapping coastal birds with aim to designated e.g. as IBAs and KBAs. There is a focus on those colonial birds which forage far (at least 10 km) from colonies. So far, the project has focused on Caspian Tern (*Hydroprogne caspia*) and Lesser Black-backed Gull (*Larus fuscus fuscus*) - about half of the most important colonies have been covered to date. Birdlife Sweden have also started to monitor Common Guillemot (*Uria aalge*) and Razorbill (*Alca torda*) and will eventually also include Black Guillemot (*Cephus grylle*). The mapping will result in sensitivity maps that BirdLife Sweden will create together with Lund University, which will be provided to authorities. The most important areas will most likely qualify as Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas (IBA) and Key Biodiversity Areas (KBA), and the aim is to gain legal protection. Other possible species/subspecies to work with in the future are Kittiwake (*Rissa tridactyla*), European Shag

(*Phalacrocorax aristoteles*), Great Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo sinensis*), and Lesser Black-backed Gull (*Larus fuscus intermedius*).

- BirdLife Sweden is performing a thorough update of their IBA system. So far, they have updated data of breeding birds in 46 (out of 84) IBAs, to be fully completed in 2019. An important part of the project is to adjust the GIS maps according to importance for the birds occurring within the IBA. Several new IBAs have also been proposed, and more are to be expected (partly from project presented above).
- BirdLife Sweden and Lund University (Swedish Bird Monitoring Programme) are administrating surveys to monitor wetland birds within a specific monitoring programme (”Sjöfågelrutter”): http://www.fageltaxering.lu.se/.
- Swedish Wildlife Damage Centre and Kristianstad University running joint multiplayer project on:
    - goose management – from the field to the flyway.
    - crane and conflict management: the main objective is to improve the knowledge of the interactions between cranes, agricultural production and wetland bird diversity and the consequences it may have for stakeholder conflicts and successful management strategies.
- Research on impacts of releasing mallards on wild populations.
- Swedish Hunters Association is involved in genetics studies of Taiga and Tundra Bean Geese: By collecting heads, the main objective is to determine the proportion of each shot.

United Kingdom

- As part of UK’s Article 12 reporting to European Commission, the UK has completed a full assessment of the pressures, threats and conservation measures for all AEWA species which occur in the UK. It is hoped to undertake further analysis of this data so as to inform further conservation actions on the ground.
- Publication of new waterbird population estimates – paper in British Birds. Highlights include
    - new approaches for estimations of species using smaller water bodies
    - call for collation of commercially collected data on marine species – but this is not nationally available for wider conservation purposes.

New or major ongoing education and information activities on waterbirds, waterbird habitats and the Agreement

World Migratory Bird Day 2019

- Wetland Link International (WLI) running a partnership project with wetland centres along the East Atlantic Flyway and their local schools.

France

- RESSOURCE program: ‘training of trainers’ course specially designed for lecturers in 3 major wildlife colleges in Africa was delivered by TSU with support from the Fondation François Sommer. France advocates for an international support to be provided to the network of African wildlife colleges, which was advertised at the last MOP.
- The Mediterranean waterbird network at Tour du Valat developed and fund-raised for a project with 7 countries from South and East Mediterranean aiming at raising awareness and building capacity for 10, and then 20 further, NGOs advocating wetlands conservation and waterbird

monitoring. This project is co-funded by Agence Française de Développement and Fond Français pour l'Environnement Mondial.

Problematic cases threatening waterbirds or their habitats (e.g. infrastructural developments, changes in legislation, etc.)

France

- Prevention of development of a wind farm at Rion-des-Landes in an area overlapping a staging site designated for the conservation of Eurasian Crane.

Norway

- Pink-footed goose roost site is still under threat from landfill with objections raised to the ministry from NGO. International support is likely to be necessary.

Any other information

Switzerland

- National hunting and wildlife protection law, which also includes the conservation of all birds, their habitats and protected areas, is currently under revision in parliament.
    - Possible changes to huntable waterbird species.
    - To come into force from 2021 at earliest.

APPENDIX II – TC15 List of Participants

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