

PRESS RELEASE

European Commission and Norway : Champions of Waterbird Conservation

Durban, 7 December 2018 – Today Norway and the European Commission will be declared ‘Champions’ of waterbird conservation.

The ceremony will take place during the Gala Dinner kindly offered by the Government of South Africa in the margins of the Seventh Meeting of the Parties to the African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement (AEWA) currently underway in Durban.

The awards recognize the contributions made by Norway and the EU in supporting two of the main AEWA conservation initiatives in Europe and Africa. The two new Champions will be honoured for their support of the European Goose Management Platform and the AEWA African Initiative.

Executive Secretary of AEWA Jacques Trouvilliez, said: “I would like to express my sincerest gratitude to our Champions. Their financial support, political leadership and advocacy efforts ensure that our aspirations result in decisions which in turn are put into actions! And I invite more governments and institutions to follow the example set by the Champions honoured tonight.”

The **Government of Norway** will be recognized as *Champion Plus* for its generous support and commitment towards the **European Goose Management Platform** for the period 2016-2018.

Established in May 2016, the [European Goose Management Platform](#) aims to ensure the sustainable use and management of goose populations in Europe, through maintaining them at a favourable conservation status, while taking into account concerns of relevant stakeholders.

Øystein Størkersen, Principal Adviser at the Norwegian Environment Agency, said: “Norway has been a long-standing supporter of AEWA’s work with threatened species and of its role in coordinating the management programme for more common geese species. We recognize that AEWA is a professional and competent partner and that proper funding is crucial for achieving positive results and can make the difference between succeeding or not.”

The **European Commission** will be rewarded with *Champion Plus* status for its generous support and commitment towards the **AEWA African Initiative** for the period 2017-2020.

The [AEWA African Initiative](#) is a package of support which aims to promote the implementation of AEWA in Africa and thus help conserve migratory waterbird populations under threat. The generous EU grant for the period 2017-2020, through the Global Public Goods and Challenges (GPGC) Cooperation Agreements with the United Nations Environment Programme, focuses on the conservation of iconic species such as the White-winged Flufftail and the Grey-Crowned Crane as well as by promoting effective flyway conservation for francophone countries.

Micheál O’Brian, Deputy Head of Nature Unit, Directorate General for Environment at the European Commission and Head of the EU Delegation at AEWA MOP7 said: “The EU Birds Directive is the main instrument that protects all bird species in Europe. However migratory birds need to be protected across their entire flyway. Actions for waterbird conservation in Africa are critically important element of AEWA’s

work, and a priority for EU grant to the Agreement. The Commission is therefore delighted to receive this Award for our support to the AEWA African Initiative.”

Launched in 2014, the Migratory Species Champion Programme has recognized several institutions. It is open to governments, companies, organizations and individuals willing to make a financial commitment of at least three years for one or more specific initiatives that fall under AEWA and the CMS Family umbrella. It offers a portfolio of initiatives that contribute to the implementation of a large programme targeting a species, a group of species or a cross-cutting issue.

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Links:

[Migratory Species Champion Programme](#)

[AEWA MOP7 Newsroom](#)

Social Media: @unep_aewa , #aewamop7

Notes for Editors

About the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement (AEWA)

The Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (AEWA) is an intergovernmental treaty dedicated to the conservation of migratory waterbirds that migrate along the African-Eurasian Flyway. The Agreement covers 254 species of birds ecologically dependent on wetlands for at least part of their annual cycle. The treaty covers 119 Range States from Europe, parts of Asia and Canada, the Middle East and Africa. Currently 77 countries and the European Union (EU) have become a Contracting Party to AEWA (as of 1 October 2018).

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