

## REPORT OF THE 20<sup>th</sup> MEETING OF THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

*24-28 February 2025, Mikulov, Czech Republic*

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## Summary of TC20 Decisions and Action Points

AGENDA ITEM		DECISIONS AND ACTION POINTS
<b>Agenda item 3</b>	Adoption of the Agenda and Work Programme	The Meeting adopted the Agenda (document AEWA/TC20.2/Rev.1) and Work Programme (document AEWA/TC20.3/Rev.1) with the amendment that agenda items 15 and 23 would be addressed together and moved forward to day two.
<b>Agenda item 4</b>	Admission of Observers	The Committee agreed to admit the observers present and welcomed them to the meeting.
<b>Agenda item 5</b>	Report by the Chair	<p>The Report of TC19, document AEWA/TC20.4, was approved.</p> <p>The AEWA Secretariat, in consultation with the TC Chair, will prepare a draft of the TC report to MOP9 and upload this to the TC workspace for review and comments by the end of June 2025.</p>
<b>Agenda item 9</b>	Amendments to the Agreement and its Annexes	<p>The proposed amendments to Table 1 and the Action Plan in Annex 3 of AEWA, as presented in document AEWA/TC20.6/INS.1, <i>Draft Proposal to MOP9 for the Amendment of Table 1 of Annex 3 of the Agreement and other Pertinent Amendments to the Action Plan in Annex 3</i>, were approved, with the exception of the proposed changes to the categories of populations in Table 1, which would remain open for TC feedback until the end of March.</p> <p>The proposal and justification for amendment to paragraphs 7.4. and 7.5 of the AEWA Action Plan in Annex 3 of the Agreement, as presented in document AEWA/TC20.21, were approved.</p>
<b>Agenda item 10</b>	AEWA International Species Action Plans and Management Plans	<p>The <i>Evaluation Report on the Implementation of the Single Species Action Plan for the Conservation of the Taiga Bean Goose</i> as presented in document AEWA/TC20.10/INS.1 was approved for submission to the StC.</p> <p>The Secretariat will prepare draft amendments to AEWA's existing format and guidelines for species action and management planning – including to provide for update and revision processes – and will consult these with the Committee after TC20.</p> <p>The <i>Draft Conservation Brief for the AEWA International Single Species Action Plan for the Conservation of the Greenland White-fronted Goose</i> document AEWA/TC20.11/INS.1 was approved, subject to the correction of two minor typographical errors. The Secretariat will send a communication to all Greenland White-fronted Goose Range States,</p>

		<p>informing them that the document was approved by the TC and giving them the opportunity to make final comments.</p> <p>The <i>Draft Revised Generic Terms of Reference for AEWA International Species Working Groups</i> as presented in document AEWA/TC20.13/INS.1 was approved for further use.</p> <p>The <i>Draft Revised Generic Terms of Reference for AEWA International Species Expert Groups</i> as presented in document AEWA/TC20.14/INS.1 was approved for further use.</p>
<b>Agenda item 11</b>	Seabirds	Proposals regarding the draft document on <i>Implementation and Further Prioritisation of Seabird Related Activities Under AEWA</i> , document AEWA/TC20.15, will be sent in writing to the drafting group for consideration and incorporation into this document, where feasible. A revised draft will be shared with the TC via the workspace for review. A final version will be ready by July 2025.
<b>Agenda item 12</b>	Sea-level Rise Impact	The <i>Implications of Sea-level Rise for Migratory Waterbirds and Response Options</i> was approved as presented in document AEWA/TC20.16/INS.1, subject to the addition of two scientific references.
<b>Agenda item 13</b>	Socio-economic Importance of Waterbirds	The draft <i>Terms of Reference on the Socio-economic Importance of AEWA Waterbird Populations</i> were approved as presented in document AEWA/TC20.17/INS.1, subject to one minor edit.
<b>Agenda item 14</b>	Research and Monitoring	A drafting group will continue to work on developing a document on Strengthening AEWA's Science-policy Interface (building on document AEWA/TC20.19) with a view to submitting this to MOP9. A resolution on this topic may also be submitted to MOP9.
<b>Agenda item 15</b>	Communication, Education and Public awareness (CEPA)	The <i>Summary Report: TC Working Group 6 CEPA Online Workshop</i> as presented in document AEWA/TC20.20 will be developed further. Mr Rostron and Mr Keil will compile next steps and share these with the TC as soon as possible.
<b>Agenda item 16</b>	Guidance on Implementation of the Agreement	Documents AEWA/TC20.22, <i>Draft Revised Conservation Guidelines No. 4 on Management of Key Sites</i> and AEWA/TC20.23, <i>Draft Revised Conservation Guidelines No. 7 on Ecotourism</i> , were approved for submission to MOP9. Document AEWA/TC20.24, <i>AEWA Conservation Guidelines: 2024 Format (draft)</i> , was approved for further use.
<b>Agenda item 17</b>	National Reporting	The <i>Draft Format for the National Report Module on Population Status 2019-2024</i> as presented in document AEWA/TC20.25 was approved. The Secretariat will merge the breeding and non-breeding populations into one spreadsheet for submission to StC26 and MOP9. The <i>Draft Format for National Reports on the Implementation of AEWA 2025-2027</i> as presented in

		<p>document AEWA/TC20.26 was approved for submission to StC26 and MOP9.</p> <p>The <i>Draft Format for the National Report Module on the Implementation of the AEWA Plan of Action for Africa 2025-2027</i> as presented in document AEWA/TC20.27 was approved for submission to StC26 and MOP9.</p> <p>The <i>Draft Indicators on the Implementation of the AEWA Plan of Action for Africa as presented in document AEWA/TC20.28</i> were tentatively approved with the caveat that once the Secretariat proceeds with compiling the progress report it will solicit the TC's input again.</p> <p>The proposed addition of an indicator to Target 2.1 in the <i>Proposed Approach to Assessing the 22 Postponed Target Level Indicators of the Strategic Plan 2019-2027</i> as presented in document AEWA/TC20.30 was agreed to.</p>
<p><b>Agenda item 18</b>  <b>Agenda item 19</b>  <b>Agenda item 20</b>  <b>Agenda item 22</b>  <b>Agenda item 23</b>  <b>Agenda item 24</b>  <b>Agenda item 25</b></p>	<p>TC Working Group 1 (Field of Application)</p> <p>TC Working Group 2 (Species Conservation)</p> <p>TC Working Group 3 (Habitat Conservation)</p> <p>TC Working Group 4 (Management of Human Activities)</p> <p>TC Working Group 5 (Research and Monitoring)</p> <p>TC Working Group 6 (Education and Information)</p> <p>TC Working Group 7 (Implementation)</p> <p>TC Working Groups 8 (Strategic, Reporting, Emerging and other Issues)</p>	<p>The following tasks/sub-tasks will be delivered before MOP9:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2.1.4: Review of existing species action and management plans and recommendation to MOP9 regarding their treatment</li> <li>• 2.5: Priorities for seabird conservation</li> <li>• 6.1.2: Compile and agree on a CEPA workplan</li> <li>• 7.1: Conservation Status Review 9</li> <li>• 7.5.1: Compilation of overview of all AEWA Conservation Guidelines and other guidance</li> </ul> <p>The following tasks/sub-tasks will be carried over to the next triennium:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1.1: Taxonomy and nomenclature</li> <li>• 1.2.3: Review of the population delineation of the Greylag Goose (<i>Anser anser</i>)</li> <li>• 1.3: Review of Table 1 in Annex 3 to the Agreement</li> <li>• 1.4: Review of intended proposals for amendments to the Agreement</li> <li>• 1.6: Guidance on Favourable Reference Values</li> <li>• 2.4: Sustainable harvest and the socio-economic importance of waterbirds</li> <li>• 2.6: Guidance on adaptive harvest management</li> <li>• 3.1: Site inventory framework</li> <li>• 3.2: Site monitoring framework</li> <li>• 3.3: Status of principal waterbird habitats</li> <li>• 4.1: Tackling the four causes of unnecessary additional mortality and other threats</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4.6: Harvest data estimates from non-Party Range States</li> <li>• 4.7: Sustainability of harvest</li> <li>• 4.8: World Coastal Forum</li> <li>• 6.1: Communication Strategy implementation</li> <li>• 7.3.1 &amp; 7.3.4: Review and reformatting of Conservation Guidelines no. 3 (Site Inventories) and 8 (Reducing Crop Damage, Damage to Fisheries, Bird Strikes and other Forms of Conflict)</li> <li>• 7.4: Non-native species risk assessment</li> <li>• 7.5.2: Screening remaining Conservation Guidelines and other guidance</li> <li>• 7.6: Information supplementary to Conservation Guidelines</li> <li>• 8.4: Harmonisation of reporting</li> <li>• 8.7: Implementation</li> </ul> <p>The following tasks will be deleted/retired from the TC Work Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1.7: Shortening of population names in Table 1 of AEWA’s Annex 3</li> <li>• 3.4: Sea-level rise impact</li> <li>• 6.2: Experience sharing – AEWA priorities integration into NBSAPs</li> </ul> <p>Task 1.5 (Definition of the term “livelihood”) has partially been delivered. Mandates will be included in draft resolutions for MOP9 to (i) develop guidance on the interaction between sustainable livelihoods and the conservation of migratory waterbirds and their habitats, and (ii) review the sustainable use related provisions in AEWA’s legal text; and new tasks will be created for the 2026-2028 TC Work Plan based on these mandates.</p> <p>Regarding task 1.6, the TC will continue to coordinate with the European Commission with a view to ensuring that the respective European Union and AEWA guidance on favourable reference values is compatible. This guidance should be drafted in a manner that is also accessible to non-scientific audiences.</p> <p>For task 2.2 (Conservation and management guidance for AEWA populations), the TC agreed to recommend the use of BirdLife International’s species factsheets, with the caveat that users will be alerted that the factsheets might not always be specific to particular populations of waterbirds.</p>
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		<p>FACE will establish a budget for carrying out the work under task 4.6.</p> <p>Before retiring task 6.2, a notification will be sent to AEWA National, Technical and CEPA Focal Points, reminding them of the importance of integrating AEWA priorities into NBSAPs and of the document: <i>Opportunities for AEWA to Support the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework</i>. The Secretariat will also share this notification via the WhatsApp group for African Focal Points.</p> <p>Delivery of sub-task 7.3.4 will include involvement of the European Goose Management Platform.</p>
<b>Agenda item 26</b>	TC Workplan 2026-2028	The Secretariat will draft the TC Work Plan 2026-2028, which will be consulted with the TC through the TC workspace along with the associated draft resolution before being submitted to the StC for approval for submission to MOP9.
<b>Agenda item 27</b>	Draft Resolutions for Submission to MOP9	The list of proposed draft resolutions to be developed for MOP9 is tentatively accepted.

## **Agenda item 1. Opening**

1. Mr Mohammed Shobrak, Technical Committee (TC) Chair and regional representative for Southwestern Asia, opened the meeting by warmly welcoming everyone present. He was pleased to see so many familiar faces in person and not just virtually. He thanked the Czech Republic for hosting the meeting in the beautiful town of Mikulov.

2. Mr Jacques Trouvilliez, AEWA Executive Secretary, echoed what Mr Shobrak said and pointed out that this was the last TC meeting before the next AEWA Meeting of the Parties (MOP), scheduled to take place in November 2025 in Botswana, and that it had a packed agenda. He furthermore thanked the Czech Republic for organising various social events in the margins of TC20.

3. Mr Trouvilliez finally noted that he was officially due to retire in July 2025, but that his contract would be extended until the end of the year so that he could attend and guide his final MOP.

## **Agenda item 2. Welcome Addresses**

4. Mr Sergey Dereliev, Chief Programmatic Officer at the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat, welcomed everyone to Mikulov. He noted that 2025 was an important year, that there had been many changes over the last few years, and that further changes were yet to come. The AEWA Secretariat had increasingly been operating under conditions of decreasing financial flows and decreasing support for nature conservation. Those realities reflected on the way of working, delivering and achieving results.

5. During the next triennium the focus would be on taking stock of the work that had been done and planning for the coming years, as the AEWA Strategic Plan (SP) would be revised.

6. Ms Libuse Vlasakova, AEWA's National Focal Point (NFP) for the Czech Republic, warmly welcomed everyone to Mikulov. She highlighted that Mikulov was located in a region well-known for growing and producing wine as well as for one of the largest wetlands in Central Europe.

7. Mr Jiri Kmet, Nature Conservation Agency of the Czech Republic, gave a short presentation which highlighted some key points regarding the region around Mikulov. He wished everyone a nice stay in Mikulov and a fruitful meeting.

## **Agenda item 3. Adoption of the Agenda and Work Programme**

8. Mr Dereliev drew everyone's attention to documents AEWA/TC20.2/Rev.2, *Provisional Annotated Agenda*, and AEWA/TC20.3/Rev.1, *Provisional Work Programme*, and briefly explained the process for the coming four meeting days. There was one small amendment to the agenda in that agenda items 15 and 23 would be lumped together and moved forward to day two. Mr Chris Rostron, the Technical Committee's expert on Communication, Education and Public Awareness (CEPA), would lead on those items but was not present in person and would be connected to the meeting virtually.

9. In the absence of comments from the floor, the Agenda and Work Programme were approved as presented by Mr Dereliev.

**Decision:** The Meeting adopted the Agenda (document AEWA/TC20.2/Rev.1) and Work Programme (document AEWA/TC20.3/Rev.1) with the amendment that agenda items 15 and 23 would be addressed together and moved forward to day two.

#### **Agenda item 4. Admission of Observers**

10. Mr Dereliev referred to document AEWA/TC20/Inf.8, *Provisional List of Participants*, and introduced the observers present. These were the Chair and Vice-chair of AEWA's Standing Committee (StC), the Czech Republic, Denmark, Saudi Arabia, Zimbabwe and the permanent observer of the United Kingdom (UK). Three of the four permanent NGO observers to the TC were also present. These were BirdLife International, the Federation of Associations for Hunting and Conservation of the EU (FACE) and Migratory Birds of the Western Palearctic (OMPO).

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

#### **Agenda item 5. Report by the Chair**

11. Mr Shobrak noted that he would be very brief in presenting his report, as there had not been many updates since the last TC meeting in March 2024.

12. He appreciated the Czech Republic for hosting TC20 and the UK for its voluntary contribution towards the logistical arrangements for the meeting. Furthermore, Mr Shobrak thanked Germany, Switzerland and the UK for their contributions towards TC tasks that had been outsourced by the AEWA Secretariat.

13. Mr Dereliev asked the meeting to approve document AEWA/TC20.4, *Draft Report of the 19<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Technical Committee* and hoped that everyone had had the chance to review this document.

14. In the absence of comments, the Report of TC19 was approved.

15. The TC was then requested to discuss the timelines and process for compiling the TC report to the 9<sup>th</sup> Session of the AEWA MOP (MOP9). Mr Dereliev suggested that the Secretariat would start drafting the report for the Committee in consultation with the Chair over the coming months. Once a draft was ready it would be uploaded to the TC workspace for review and comments. The report would then be finalised and submitted to MOP9.

16. With respect to the timelines, Mr Dereliev explained that the StC would be asked to approve most documents to be submitted to MOP9 for adoption. The next StC meeting would probably be scheduled for the third week of August 2025, which was two weeks before the final deadline for submission of documents to MOP9. That would allow maximum time to produce documents.

17. However, there was a 30-day deadline for submission of documents to the StC for review. That meant that documents needed to be uploaded around the third week of July 2025. Therefore, the TC needed to deliver the documents going to the MOP through the StC by 4-11 July 2025 at the latest.

18. The above-mentioned timelines also applied to the TC report to MOP9. The AEWA Secretariat would therefore provide the draft report by the end of June 2025.

19. Mr Dereliev's proposal regarding the timelines and process for compiling the TC report to MOP9 was accepted.

**Decisions:**

The Report of TC19, document AEWA/TC20.4, was approved.

The AEWA Secretariat, in consultation with the TC Chair, will prepare a draft of the TC report to MOP9 and upload this to the TC workspace for review and comments by the end of June 2025.

**Agenda item 6. Reports by the Regional Representatives**

20. The attending regional representatives delivered progress reports on AEWA's implementation in their respective regions. These reports are available in Appendix I and include reports from the Central Europe, Eastern Europe, North and Southwestern Europe, Northern Africa, Western Africa, Southern Africa and Southwestern Asia regions.

**Agenda item 7. Reports by the Technical Committee representatives to other processes**

21. In the absence of Ms Ruth Cromie, the TC invited expert on waterbird health and prevention of waterbird poisoning and TC representative to the CMS Working Group on Preventing Bird Poisoning, Mr Dereliev gave a brief report on her behalf.

22. Explaining that the Working Group was not functioning, Mr Dereliev said that funding for the coordination of the group had not been available. Therefore, there had not been any meetings.

23. The only toxin on which work had been undertaken was lead in ammunition and fishing weights. Ms Cromie had provided several updates in this regard.

24. The ban on lead shot ammunition in wetlands in the European Union (EU) entered into force in February 2023. It was challenged in October 2024 by the Firearms United Network and a few individuals from Poland. However, these challenges were dismissed by the European Court of Justice supported by the European Commission (EC). Therefore, the regulation of the ban on lead shot in the EU was valid.

25. Ms Cromie, together with the AEWA Secretariat, had also been involved in the first step of producing the dossier of the European Chemical Agency on a further restriction beyond wetlands for lead in ammunition in general (aimed at hunting and sports shooting) as well as fishing.

26. The dossier had been completed in 2022 and had since then been awaiting its next step, which was the proposal of the EC on the actual restriction. Coincidentally, this proposal had just been released.

27. Additionally, Ms Cromie had provided a short note regarding the UK's REACH proposal, which had been released in December 2024 and was awaiting a political decision within the next few weeks.

28. Mr Nils Bunnefeld, the TC's expert on rural economics and one of the TC's representatives to the CMS Task Force to Address Illegal Killing, Taking and Trade of Migratory Birds in the Mediterranean, explained that so far, all scheduled meetings had been cancelled. A meeting had been scheduled to take place soon and Mr Bunnefeld was hopeful it would not be cancelled again.

29. Mr David Stroud, invited expert to the TC and the Secretariat's representative to the Ramsar Convention's Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP), reported that its 27<sup>th</sup> meeting had been held in December 2024 and that it was the last of the triennium. Thus, the meeting had signed off on papers that would go forward to the 15<sup>th</sup> Session of the Convention's Conference of the Parties (COP15).

30. He gave a brief run-through of some of the titles of draft resolutions that had recently been considered by the Ramsar StC. These included draft resolutions on:

- strengthening action on culture and wetlands;
- restoration of degraded freshwater ecosystems to support biodiversity and ecosystem services;
- incorporating frontier technology and traditional ecological knowledge in wetland conservation;
- achieving equitable and effective conservation of wetlands as protected areas;
- rights of nature for wetlands;
- youth empowerment and integration;
- education and participation as a basis of management of urban and peri-urban wetlands;
- assessing wetland vulnerability;
- revised guidance for Ramsar criteria 5 and 6; and
- establishment of a global partnership for waterbird monitoring.

31. Mr Stroud finally noted that a major task that had been requested of the STRP was to review the Ramsar wetland classification. This task would go into the next triennium. The work undertaken so far had been a scoping of issues.

### **Agenda item 8. Report by the Secretariat**

32. Referring to document AEWA/TC20.5, *Report of the Secretariat*, Mr Trouvilliez noted that the report covered the work of the AEWA Secretariat for the period from April 2023 to February 2025 and went on to highlight several key points.

33. Regarding organisation and staffing, Mr Trouvilliez explained that all positions within the Secretariat had been filled.

34. Mr Trouvilliez moved on to provide an overview of the recruitment of Parties. He was pleased to have been able to welcome two additional Parties over the past two years, namely: Greece and Saudi Arabia. This brought the total number of Contracting Parties to AEWA to 85. Mr Trouvilliez and Mr Dereliev had visited Kazakhstan, Oman and Austria in 2024 and had met with relevant officials to explain the benefits of joining AEWA and to promote accession to the Agreement.

35. Mr Trouvilliez continued by pointing out some key activities that had happened under the framework of the African Initiative. For example, the first Meeting of the AEWA Slaty Egret International Working Group (IWG) was held in Maun, Botswana, in September 2023 with the aim to bring together the principal Range States of this species and to take stock of the conservation work that had been done in each country since the Plan's adoption. Furthermore, a training workshop on AEWA National Reporting for National Respondents in African Anglophone AEWA Parties was organised by the AEWA Secretariat and took place in November 2024 in Bonn, Germany. Fifteen Designated National Respondents/representatives from 13 out of the 18 African Anglophone AEWA Contracting Parties were trained on National Reporting in the framework of AEWA.

36. Regarding Communications, Information Management and Outreach, Mr Trouvilliez reminded everyone that World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD) was a global campaign that educated and promoted conservation efforts for migratory birds and their journeys across borders. The theme for the 2025 WMBD campaign would be "Shared Spaces: Creating Bird-Friendly Cities and Communities" and would help to raise awareness about the many challenges migratory birds face due to human activities and expanding urban development.

## Agenda item 9. Amendments to the Agreement and its Annexes

37. Mr Dereliev introduced documents AEWA/TC20.6, *Draft Proposal to MOP9 for the Amendment of Table 1 of Annex 3 of the Agreement and other Pertinent Amendments to the Action Plan in Annex 3*, and AEWA/TC20.21, *Proposal and Justification for Amendment of Paragraph 7.4 and 7.5 of AEWA Annex 3 (Action Plan)*, explaining that the TC would be requested to review and endorse the recommended amendments to Table 1 of the AEWA Action Plan and other pertinent amendments to the Action Plan in Annex 3 to be submitted to MOP9 with a submission deadline of 150 days prior to the meeting.

38. Before running through the proposed amendments set out in document AEWA/TC20.6, Mr Dereliev informed everyone that, sadly, the first AEWA-listed species would be declared extinct at the end of 2025 – namely, the Slender-billed Curlew (*Numenius tenuirostris*). The species had been last observed 30 years ago. There would be a wake and a eulogy for it in the margins of MOP9.

39. Since there would potentially be more extinct species in the coming years, there was a proposal to establish a new category 0 under Column A of Table 1, which would include those species and populations that had become extinct or extinct in the wild after they had been listed in Table 1.

40. Further proposed amendments to Table 1 included, amongst others, the addition of a new sub-category (g) to categories A3 and B2 to recognise depleted populations that had not yet recovered to a more favourable conservation status, changes to the definition of geographic areas, changes to the scientific and English names of species, and the addition of new populations.

41. Mr Dereliev proposed going through the changes one by one, having a discussion, gathering the Committee's feedback, and determining whether the feedback was acceptable or required further work.

42. Following some extensive discussions, Mr Dereliev concluded that the Committee had approved the following proposed amendments to Table 1:

- The addition of the new category 0 to Column A (proposed for maintaining populations on Table 1 which had become extinct after their listing on Table 1).
- Changes to the definition of geographic areas.
- Changes to the scientific and English names of species following the latest version of the Handbook of the Birds of the World and BirdLife International checklist of the birds of the world.
- Changes to population names following the principles laid out in document AEWA/TC19.9.
- The addition of the following new populations: the S Asia (nbr) population of the Black Stork (*Ciconia nigra*) and the C Asia (br) population of the White Stork (*Ciconia ciconia*).
- The reinstatement of a population that had previously been deleted from Table 1 on the grounds of extinction (the Türkiye (br) population of the Demoiselle Crane, which will be listed under category 0 of Column A following the proposed addition of this new category).

43. Much of the discussion regarding the proposed addition of the new sub-category (g) to categories A3 and B2 of Table 1 concerned the appropriate baseline for determining population depletion. Mr Dereliev explained that the first option was to use a baseline of 1980 because it was aligned with the EU's template for data collection under Article 12. The second option was to use a baseline of 2000 so as to link the baseline with AEWA's entry into force.

44. Several TC members and observers expressed their preference for a 1980 baseline, highlighting, inter alia, that this would result in consistency between the approach applied in EU assessments and flyway-level

assessments and that this baseline was also closer to the entry into force of the Ramsar Convention and the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS).

45. Mr Matt Ellis, representative of the International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation (CIC), raised the question of how to deal with Adaptive Harvest Management (AHM) Programmes where population sizes were being reduced. Mr Szabolcs Nagy, representative of Wetlands International, responded that that a caveat could be added to the document in respect of AHM with damage control objectives. Mr Dereliev agreed with that suggestion.

46. Mr Dereliev concluded that the TC had agreed on the following formulation, which would be included in an in-session version of the document:

Depleted if the best available data, information or assessments indicate that the current population level is at least 20% below a 1980 baseline or the closest available baseline to this date.

47. In addition, the rationale for using a population level of at least 20% below the baseline would be further elaborated after the meeting.

48. Regarding the proposed changes to the categories of populations in Table 1 of AEWA's Annex 3, it was agreed that the TC would be given until the end of March 2025 to provide feedback. Accordingly, Mr Nagy would produce a revised version of the table, which would be posted on the TC workspace.

49. Mr Dereliev then continued to highlight two proposed amendments to the AEWA Action Plan in Annex 3 of the Agreement, which were proposed in document AEWA/TC20.6 and necessitated by the addition of the new category 0 to Column A. These were agreed to as presented in the document.

50. Ms Melissa Lewis, Species Officer at the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat, explained that the Secretariat had identified two additional aspects of the Action Plan in respect of which amendments were desirable: the first concerned several provisions which used the term 'single species action plan' and thus failed to reflect the potential for multi-species action plans; while the second concerned paragraph 2.5.3's application in respect of non-native species that have been introduced in the territory of one country and naturally spread to the territory of another. It was suggested that proposed amendments to these provisions be added to the in-session version of AEWA/TC20.6.

51. Later in the meeting, the TC considered and approved AEWA/TC20.6/INS.1.

52. Ms Lewis briefly introduced document AEWA/TC20.21, explaining that it presented a proposal and justification for amendments to paragraphs 7.4 and 7.5 of the AEWA Action Plan in Annex 3 of the Agreement.

53. The TC was requested to review the proposed amendments and their justifications and approve them for submission to MOP9.

454. In the absence of comments, the document was approved.

#### **Decisions:**

The proposed amendments to Table 1 and the Action Plan in Annex 3 of AEWA, as presented in document AEWA/TC20.6/INS.1, *Draft Proposal to MOP9 for the Amendment of Table 1 of Annex 3 of the Agreement and other Pertinent Amendments to the Action Plan in Annex 3*, were approved, with the exception of the proposed changes to the categories of populations in Table 1, which would remain open for TC feedback until the end of March.

The proposal and justification for amendment to paragraphs 7.4. and 7.5 of the AEWA Action Plan in Annex 3 of the Agreement, as presented in document AEWA/TC20.21, were approved.

#### **Agenda item 10. AEWA International Species Action Plans and Management Plans**

55. Several documents were to be reviewed and approved under this agenda item.

56. Ms Lewis first introduced document AEWA/TC20.10, *Draft Evaluation Report on the Implementation of the Single Species Action Plan for the Conservation of the Taiga Bean Goose*, explaining that the TC was requested to review the evaluation report and to approve the report and its recommendations for submission to the StC.

57. Ms Lewis informed meeting participants that the Taiga Bean Goose International Species Action Plan (ISAP) had first been adopted at MOP6 in 2015 with a lifespan of 10 years and gave an update on plans for its revision.

58. Following some brief interventions, Ms Lewis said that minor edits proposed by Denmark and the UK would be included in an in-session version of the document.

Later in the meeting, Ms Lewis introduced the changes made in document AEWA/TC20.10/INS.1. The TC agreed to these. Therefore, the document was approved for submission to the StC.

59. In respect of AEWA's international species action and management planning processes in general, Ms Lewis explained that the Secretariat intended to prepare revised formats and guidelines, based on the lessons learned this triennium in the processes to evaluate and revise plans for the Taiga Bean Goose (*Anser fabalis fabalis*) and Pink-footed Goose (*Anser brachyrhynchus*). She flagged in particular that AEWA's current format and guidelines did not explicitly describe a process for revising plans, but only for developing them. The Secretariat therefore suggested that the guidance be made more explicit regarding the revision process and that it additionally included a simplified process for instances in which only an update to a plan's background sections is necessary, as opposed to a full revision. The Secretariat would prepare draft amendments to the existing format and guidelines and consult these with the TC after this meeting.

60. Mr Stroud introduced the next document, AEWA/TC20.11, *Draft Conservation Brief for the AEWA International Single Species Action Plan for the Conservation of the Greenland White-fronted Goose (Anser albifrons flavirostris)*, by summarising some of the key issues, including the Brief's conclusion that three of the alert thresholds that had been identified in the international species action plan have been breached, resulting in the need for an emergency review meeting. The Brief recommended more systematic implementation and action to ensure that those geese that were born had the best chances of survival and breeding.

61. Following further discussion during the course of the meeting, an in-session version of the Brief was prepared and presented to the TC as document AEWA/TC20.11/INS.1. The TC approved this document, subject to the correction of two minor typographical errors.

62. It was additionally clarified by Ms Lewis that a formal communication would be sent to all Greenland White-fronted Goose Range States to inform them that the document had been approved by the TC and give them an opportunity to make final comments. The document would be posted on the TC workspace should that result in any major changes.

63. Document AEWA/TC20.13, *Draft Revised Generic Terms of Reference for AEWA International Species Working Groups*, was then presented, again by Ms Lewis. She emphasised what a critical role the IWGs played in catalysing and coordinating implementation of AEWA's ISAPs.

64. Ms Lewis explained that the document proposed various additions, updates and clarifications to the existing generic terms of reference (ToR) for IWGs. The amendments were proposed in response to queries the Secretariat commonly received from IWG coordinators and members, and additionally reflected various practices that have evolved under AEWA in the period since the first version of the ToR was approved by the TC in 2009.

65. Following some additional proposals for changes from the floor, Mr Dereliev suggested to add those to an in-session version of the document and come back to it for approval at a later stage of the meeting. The TC agreed to that suggestion.

66. Later in the meeting Ms Lewis informed the meeting participants of the changes made, as reflected in document AEWA/TC20.13/INS.1 and this document was approved by the TC.

67. Ms Lewis continued by introducing document AEWA/TC20.14, *Draft Revised Generic Terms of Reference for AEWA International Species Expert Groups*, and explained that, similarly to the previous document, the TC was invited to review the document, make suggestions and amendments, as appropriate, and to approve the revised ToR for further use as a model for International Species Expert Groups.

68. Following some comments and proposals for further changes, Mr Dereliev concluded that the Secretariat would produce an in-session version of the document including the proposed amendments.

69. These changes were presented later in the meeting, in document AEWA/TC20.14/INS.1, which was approved by the TC.

70. Finally, Mr Matt Parsons, representative of the United Kingdom, introduced document AEWA/TC20.12, *Update on the Development of a Single Species Action Plan for the Iceland/UK & Ireland Population of the Greylag Goose*, the last document to be considered under this agenda item.

71. Mr Parsons explained that the principal Range States had established a working group to plan and develop a draft ISAP for the Iceland/UK & Ireland Population of the Greylag Goose (*Anser anser*). As a first step, the group had reviewed the available data and had considered how to best address the significant gaps and uncertainties that existed. The TC was requested to consider the implications of these gaps and uncertainties - particularly with respect to population status and its implications for AEWA's species planning processes - and to advise on appropriate action.

72. After some deliberations, Mr Dereliev concluded that the working group would continue with their effort to establish the suspected biases in population estimate and eventually re-evaluate the population estimate and trend. Based on that outcome, the group would decide whether they would work on the development of a species action plan.

73. Mr Parsons estimated to gain more clarity on the biases over the next few months, hoping to be able to present an update at the next meeting of the TC in early 2026.

**Decisions:**

The *Evaluation Report on the Implementation of the Single Species Action Plan for the Conservation of the Taiga Bean Goose* as presented in document AEWA/TC20.10/INS.1 was approved for submission to the StC.

The Secretariat will prepare draft amendments to AEWA's existing format and guidelines for species action and management planning – including to provide for update and revision processes – and will consult these with the Committee after TC20.

The *Draft Conservation Brief for the AEWA International Single Species Action Plan for the Conservation of the Greenland White-fronted Goose* document AEWA/TC20.11/INS.1 was approved, subject to the correction of two minor typographical errors. The Secretariat will send a communication to all Greenland White-fronted Goose Range States, informing them that the document was approved by the TC and giving them the opportunity to make final comments.

The *Draft Revised Generic Terms of Reference for AEWA International Species Working Groups* as presented in document AEWA/TC20.13/INS.1 was approved for further use.

The *Draft Revised Generic Terms of Reference for AEWA International Species Expert Groups* as presented in document AEWA/TC20.14/INS.1 was approved for further use.

**Agenda item 11. Seabirds**

74. Mr Parsons introduced this agenda item by briefly running through the main elements of document AEWA/TC 20.15, *Implementation and Further Prioritisation of Seabird Related Activities under AEWA (draft)*. These included:

- A review and refinement of the seabird priorities that had previously been adopted through Resolution 7.6.
- A discussion of the state of implementation of the previously adopted seabird priorities, as assessed from Parties' National Reports to MOP8.
- Barriers to implementation.
- Recommendations to help Parties' future implementation.

75. The TC was requested to consider the document on implementation and further prioritisation of seabird related activities under AEWA.

76. Following some discussions and proposals on the document from the floor and the Secretariat, Mr Dereliev concluded that those should be forwarded in writing to the drafting group for consideration to incorporate them into the document, where feasible. A revised draft would then be shared with the TC for review via the TC workspace. A final version should be ready by July 2025 for submission to MOP9.

77. Finally, Mr Parsons provided a brief update on the scope and progress of work of the Seabird sub-group under the Flyways Working Group of the Scientific Council of the Convention on Migratory Species.

**Decision:** Proposals regarding the draft document on *Implementation and Further Prioritisation of Seabird Related Activities Under AEWA*, document AEWA/TC20.15, will be sent in writing to the drafting group for consideration and incorporation into this document, where feasible. A revised draft will be shared with the TC via the workspace for review. A final version will be ready by July 2025.

## Agenda item 12. Sea-level Rise Impact

78. Document AEWA/TC20.16, *Implications of Sea-level Rise for Migratory Waterbirds and Response Options (draft)*, was introduced by Mr Stroud. He explained that the document aimed at bringing together information on the implications of sea-level rise for migratory waterbirds and possible solutions.

79. The TC was requested to review the draft document on implications of sea-level rise for migratory waterbirds and response options, and to approve it for submission to MOP9.

80. Following some feedback on the document, Mr Stroud agreed to produce an in-session version and come back to this later during the meeting.

81. Later in the meeting, Mr Stroud presented the changes that had been included in document AEWA/TC20.16/INS.1 and the TC approved this document, subject to the addition of two scientific references.

**Decisions:** The *Implications of Sea-level Rise for Migratory Waterbirds and Response Options* was approved as presented in document AEWA/TC20.16/INS.1, subject to the addition of two scientific references.

## Agenda item 13. Socio-economic Importance of Waterbirds

82. Mr Bunnefeld introduced the agenda item by referring to document AEWA/TC20.17, *Draft Terms of Reference on the Socio-economic Importance of AEWA Waterbird Populations*. He pointed out that it was important to agree on a format going forward.

83. The TC was requested to review and approve the draft ToR on compiling case studies and communication products related to socio-economic importance of waterbirds.

84. Following some constructive comments from the floor, Mr Bunnefeld agreed to incorporate those into an in-session version of the document.

85. Later in the meeting, Mr Bunnefeld introduced the changes that had been included in AEWA/TC20.17/INS.1, and the TC approved this document subject to one minor edit.

**Decisions:** The draft *Terms of Reference on the Socio-economic Importance of AEWA Waterbird Populations* were approved as presented in document AEWA/TC20.17/INS.1, subject to one minor edit.

## Agenda item 14. Research and Monitoring

86. Under this agenda item the TC was requested to review draft documents AEWA/TC20.18, *Knowledge Gaps and Needs Relevant for AEWA Implementation (draft)*, and AEWA/TC20.19, *Strengthening AEWA's Science-policy Interface (SPI)*.

87. Mr Stroud proceeded to introduce document AEWA/TC20.18 by briefly summarising it and highlighting some of the key issues.

88. Following some reflections, Mr Dereliev encouraged everyone to think further and outside the box about how to prioritise AEWA's knowledge gaps and needs, and how this could be transformed into something much more

central for the work of the Agreement. Without improved monitoring and harvest data, improved knowledge on drivers of population change and other relevant information, Mr Dereliev feared that the work was not focused very well. This needed to be addressed as a matter of priority.

89. Mr Dereliev proposed to proceed with discussing the next document, as he thought the two were interlinked and required further discussion.

90. Therefore, Mr Bunnefeld introduced document AEWA/TC20.19 and explained that the TC was requested to consider the proposed direction of work on SPI, modify it as necessary, and discuss, modify and agree on the structure and content of the MOP9 document on this topic, should such a document be considered necessary and appropriate.

91. Following Mr Bunnefeld's brief introduction, Mr Dereliev drew everyone's attention to AEWA's current SPI model, explaining that Figure 3 in the document reflected AEWA's implementation workflow at the international level and that SPI elements needed to be more clearly identified across this diagram.

92. Mr Simon Mackown, Chair of the AEWA Standing Committee, noted that the document was very science-based and compiled from a scientific perspective. He questioned how one translates/communicates such a document to policymakers to get them to make the decisions that the science and the evidence support.

93. Mr Dereliev concluded that a drafting group would further develop and improve the structure of the document. He would also plan a resolution on this topic for possible submission to the upcoming MOP.

94. Later in the meeting, an SPI drafting/discussion group was convened under agenda item 21, which subsequently reported back to plenary. In the report-back session, Mr Bunnefeld explained that the group had discussed how AEWA's SPI could be improved. The group proposed that a document on this topic be submitted to MOP9, which would give a background on SPI (including existing models), illustrate how SPI works under AEWA, and try to analyse and pinpoint areas where there are breaking points between the science and the policy.

95. Mr Dereliev added that the group agreed to meet again in April/May to review the first draft of the proposed document.

**Decisions:** A drafting group will continue to work on developing a document on Strengthening AEWA's Science-policy Interface (building on document AEWA/TC20.19) with a view to submitting this to MOP9. A resolution on this topic may also be submitted to MOP9.

#### **Agenda item 15. Communication, Education and Public awareness (CEPA)**

83. Mr Florian Keil, AEWA's Information Officer, introduced the agenda item and noted that Mr Chris Rostron, CEPA Expert, would be connected to the meeting remotely to guide participants through the discussion on the approach to CEPA.

84. Mr Rostron introduced document AEWA/TC20.20, *Summary Report: TC Working Group 6 CEPA Online Workshop*, explaining that there had been a dedicated CEPA Online Workshop on 12 December 2024 to kick-start the development of a dedicated four-year CEPA work plan.

85. He summarised the discussions during the workshop, saying that participants underscored the need to focus on practical, tailored CEPA activities to support AEWA's strategic objectives. They had further emphasised the

importance of youth engagement, the integration of CEPA into capacity-building on the national level, and the development of accessible resources.

86. Discussions at the workshop had also highlighted the need for stronger collaboration with external partners, including other MEAs and hunting communities. Establishing a CEPA Working Group, engaging focal points more effectively, and increasing investment in ongoing capacity-building were also seen as crucial for ensuring long-term success.

87. The TC was requested to consider the proposed direction of further work to develop the AEWA CEPA work plan and agree on the structure and content of the MOP9 document on this topic.

88. Comments from meeting participants included some regarding the AEWA website and how its visibility and usage could be improved. Also, the website's purpose should be defined in more detail. They further emphasised the need to more carefully define AEWA's target audience and not be overambitious in this regard.

89. Participants highlighted that the CEPA work plan should include a section on how it linked to and supported the implementation of AEWA's Strategic Plan.

90. Another important point was that most of AEWA's communication products were published only in English, despite the Agreement operating across Africa and Eurasia. Although it was recognised that document translation has associated costs, this factor should nevertheless be taken into consideration.

91. Mr Rostron concluded that the discussions were very useful and that many valid points were raised. It was important that the right representatives were invited to future meetings of the Working Group on CEPA to make sure the CEPA work plan would become a tool for usage across the entire Agreement.

92. It was clear that the document needed to be developed further, including a clearer idea about short- and long-term goals. Mr Rostron and Mr Keil would work together on compiling the next steps in that regard and would share those as soon as possible.

**Decision:** The *Summary Report: TC Working Group 6 CEPA Online Workshop* as presented in document AEWA/TC20.20 will be developed further. Mr Rostron and Mr Keil will compile next steps and share these with the TC as soon as possible.

## **Agenda item 16. Guidance on Implementation of the Agreement**

93. Under this agenda item the TC was requested to review and approve three draft documents. These were AEWA/TC20.22, *Draft Revised Conservation Guidelines No. 4 on Management of Key Sites*, AEWA/TC20.23, *Draft Revised Conservation Guidelines No. 7 on Ecotourism*, and AEWA/TC20.24, *AEWA Conservation Guidelines: 2024 Format (draft)*.

94. Mr Stroud began with the introduction of document AEWA/TC20.22 by briefly outlining its format and content.

95. In the absence of comments, the document was approved for submission to MOP9.

96. Mr Stroud continued by introducing document AEWA/TC20.23, explaining that it had the same format as the previous meeting document.

97. Again, there were no comments from the floor. Therefore, the document was also approved for submission to MOP9.

98. Moving to document AEWA/TC20.24, the TC approved this document for further use in the formatting of AEWA's Conservation Guidelines (CG).

**Decisions:** Documents AEWA/TC20.22, *Draft Revised Conservation Guidelines No. 4 on Management of Key Sites* and AEWA/TC20.23, *Draft Revised Conservation Guidelines No. 7 on Ecotourism*, were approved for submission to MOP9. Document AEWA/TC20.24, *AEWA Conservation Guidelines: 2024 Format (draft)*, was approved for further use.

### **Agenda item 17. National Reporting**

99. As an introduction to the agenda item Mr Dereliev emphasised the importance of national reporting since it was an essential part of the monitoring mechanism of the implementation of the Agreement and the attainment of its objectives.

100. Mr Dereliev informed everyone that five documents were to be reviewed and approved under the agenda item.

102. The first was document AEWA/TC20.25, *Draft Format for the National Report Module on Population Status 2019-2024*.

103. Mr Dereliev explained that the TC was requested to review and amend, as necessary, the draft format for the National Report module on the status of populations of native (AEWA-listed) and non-native waterbird species for the period 2019-2024 and approve it for submission to StC26 and MOP9.

104. Following a brief discussion on the draft format for the National Report module on the status of populations of native species, Mr Dereliev concluded that the TC agreed with the proposed data types. The Secretariat would merge the breeding and non-breeding populations into one spreadsheet.

105. Regarding the module on the status of populations of non-native species, the template was approved as presented in the document.

106. Mr Dereliev proceeded with introducing document AEWA/TC20.26, *Draft Format for National Reports on the Implementation of AEWA 2025-2027*, by explaining that the TC was requested to review and amend, as necessary, the draft format for National Reports on the implementation of AEWA 2025-2027 and approve it for submission to StC26 and MOP9.

107. In the absence of comments, Mr Dereliev concluded that the document was approved.

108. Continuing with document AEWA/TC20.27, *Draft Format for the National Report Module on the Implementation of the AEWA Plan of Action for Africa 2025-2027*, Mr Dereliev explained that the TC was again requested to review and amend, as necessary, the draft format for reporting on the implementation of the AEWA Plan of Action for Africa (PoAA) for the period 2025-2027 and approve it for submission to StC26 and MOP9.

109. Everyone agreed with the format as presented in the document.

110. Moving to document AEWA/TC20.28, *Draft Indicators on the Implementation of the AEWA Plan of Action for Africa*, the TC was requested to review and amend, as necessary, the draft PoAA action-level indicators and approve them for submission to StC26.

111. The TC tentatively agreed to the draft format with the caveat that once the Secretariat proceeded with compiling the progress report it would solicit the TC's input again.

112. Finally, Mr Dereliev introduced document AEWA/TC20.30, *Proposed Approach to Assessing the 22 Postponed Target Level Indicators of the Strategic Plan 2019-2027*. The document was a revision of one that had been approved by TC19 and was just proposing the addition of an indicator to Target 2.1.

113. The TC was requested to review the proposed addition, modify, as necessary, and approve for submission to the StC for their consideration.

114. Following an extensive discussion there were no objections to the proposed addition of an indicator to Target 2.1. Therefore, the document was approved for submission to the StC.

#### **Decisions:**

The *Draft Format for the National Report Module on Population Status 2019-2024* as presented in document AEWA/TC20.25 was approved. The Secretariat will merge the breeding and non-breeding populations into one spreadsheet for submission to StC26 and MOP9.

The *Draft Format for National Reports on the Implementation of AEWA 2025-2027* as presented in document AEWA/TC20.26 was approved for submission to StC26 and MOP9.

The *Draft Format for the National Report Module on the Implementation of the AEWA Plan of Action for Africa 2025-2027* as presented in document AEWA/TC20.27 was approved for submission to StC26 and MOP9.

The *Draft Indicators on the Implementation of the AEWA Plan of Action for Africa* as presented in document AEWA/TC20.28 were tentatively approved with the caveat that once the Secretariat proceeds with compiling the progress report it will solicit the TC's input again.

The proposed addition of an indicator to Target 2.1 in the *Proposed Approach to Assessing the 22 Postponed Target Level Indicators of the Strategic Plan 2019-2027* as presented in document AEWA/TC20.30 was agreed to.

#### **Agenda items 18-25. Working Groups**

115. Mr Dereliev explained that some of that some tasks within the TC Work Plan 2023-2025 had already been completed, but that some were still open. During the session, the TC needed to identify the status of each task under each Working Group, i. e. which tasks could be deleted, which tasks have been completed, which tasks could still be delivered before MOP9, and which tasks should be carried over to the next triennium.

116. Based on these discussions, the Secretariat would compile the draft TC Work Plan for the next triennium (2026-2028).

117. The outcome of the discussions in the eight Working Groups under agenda items 18 to 25 only includes records on those agenda items/tasks which required a decision to be taken (delete/retire, deliver for MOP9, or carry over to next triennium). Those Work Plan tasks, and associated sub-tasks, on which the TC had previously taken decisions (either before this meeting or under earlier agenda items) are not outlined in this section of the report.

## **Agenda item 18. TC Working Group 1 (Field of Application)**

118. Discussion of the tasks under this Working Group was facilitated by Mr Dereliev. While most tasks had been completed, several were rolling tasks, which would therefore be carried over to the next triennium. These included the following tasks:

- 1.1: Taxonomy and nomenclature
- 1.3: Review of Table 1 in Annex 3 to the Agreement
- 1.4: Review of intended proposals for amendments to the Agreement

119. Sub-task 1.2.3, regarding the review of the population delineation of the Greylag Goose, was deferred at the last TC meeting due to lack of information and would also be carried over to the next triennium.

120. Regarding task 1.5., definition of the term “livelihood” in the context of paragraph 2.1.2 of the AEWA Action Plan, and its sub-task 1.5.1 to develop a definition proposal internally within the TC, Ms Lewis explained that at the last task group meeting the group thought it may make more sense to propose the establishment of a broader mandate to develop guidance on the interaction between sustainable livelihoods and the conservation of migratory waterbirds and their habitats. Secondly, a mandate needed to perhaps be created through a resolution to review the sustainable use related provisions in AEWA’s legal text.

121. Ms Lewis said that by MOP9 resolution text could be drafted to establish the above-mentioned mandates.

122. Mr Dereliev suggested to mark the task as partially delivered, since some work had been done but the expected output of a written document containing the definition has not fully been delivered. A new task would be created for the 2026-2028 Work Plan based on the new mandates emerging from MOP9.

123. In the absence of comments Mr Dereliev’s suggestion was approved.

124. Regarding task 1.6, on developing more detailed guidance on the interpretation and establishment of favourable reference values (FRVs), Mr Stroud reminded meeting participants that Resolution 8.4 had called on the TC to do this working jointly with other international frameworks. He explained that this work has been taken forward with the European Commission (EC), which in parallel is working to consolidate its own guidance on this topic with a view to making this guidance more user-friendly following feedback from EU Member States. Since last summer, there had been a joint exercise between the EC and AEWA to develop two FRV guidance documents which, while not identical, also do not contradict one another.

125. Although the aim had been to try and conclude the drafting of this guidance in advance of TC20, the task turned out to be more complex than had been anticipated. By January, it had become clear that several major structural issues still needed to be agreed for the EU guidance. Rather than rushing the drafting of the AEWA guidance and risking misalignment, it was therefore decided to pause the development of AEWA’s FRV guidance until such time as there is greater clarity on the structure of the EU guidance. AEWA’s guidance can then be developed as complementary to the EU guidance.

126. Finally, Mr Stroud highlighted that he had been acting in a consultancy role, funded by the EC, and that this funding had covered work on both the EU and the AEWA drafts, thereby enabling work to progress on this task. He suggested that the TC convey its thanks to the EU for this support and express its desire to continue to work together with the EC on this activity. Lastly, it would be helpful to reflect that any guidance that is developed should take into account that its audiences will not all be scientists. The TC agreed with Mr Stroud on all of these points.

127. Following Mr Stroud's update on task 1.6, Mr Dereliev concluded that this should also be marked as partially delivered and carried over to the next triennium, possibly with some rephrasing.

128. Task 1.7, on compiling a proposal for shortening of population names in Table 1 of AEWA's Annex 3, was delivered and would be retired from the Work Plan.

#### **Decisions:**

The following tasks/sub-tasks will be carried over to the next triennium:

- 1.1: Taxonomy and nomenclature
- 1.2.3: Review of the population delineation of the Greylag Goose (*Anser anser*)
- 1.3: Review of Table 1 in Annex 3 to the Agreement
- 1.4: Review of intended proposals for amendments to the Agreement
- 1.6: Guidance on Favourable Reference Values

The following task will be retired from the TC Work Plan:

- 1.7: Shortening of population names in Table 1 of AEWA's Annex 3

Task 1.5 (Definition of the term "livelihood") has partially been delivered. Mandates will be included in draft resolutions for MOP9 to (i) develop guidance on the interaction between sustainable livelihoods and the conservation of migratory waterbirds and their habitats, and (ii) review the sustainable use related provisions in AEWA's legal text; and a new task will be created for the 2026-2028 TC Work Plan based on these mandates.

Regarding task 1.6, the TC will continue to coordinate with the European Commission with a view to ensuring that the respective European Union and AEWA guidance on favourable reference values is compatible. This guidance should be drafted in a manner that is also accessible to non-scientific audiences.

#### **Agenda item 19. TC Working Group 2 (Species Conservation)**

129. As Chair of this WG, Ms Maria Dias, Regional Representative for the North and South-western Europe Region, facilitated the discussion on its tasks.

130. Regarding sub-task 2.1.4, on reviewing existing species action and management plans and agreeing on recommendations regarding their retirement, continuation, update or revision, Ms Lewis explained that it related to the production of CSR9 and would be completed before MOP9.

131. Moving on to task 2.2, on conservation and management guidance for priority AEWA populations with no action or management plans in place, the TC agreed that, in the absence of resources to develop new guidance, it would recommend the use of BirdLife International's species factsheets for this purpose, with the caveat that users needed to be alerted to the fact that the factsheets might not always be specific to particular populations.

132. Mr Dereliev explained that, although ToR had been developed under tasks 2.4 (on increasing knowledge and understanding of the extent of waterbird harvest and its socio-economic importance) and 2.6 (on the preparation of guidance on adaptive harvest management), these tasks had not been outsourced and would be carried over to next triennium.

133. Regarding task 2.5, on reviewing the seabird priorities approved by MOP7 and providing guidance on their delivery, Mr Parsons explained that the guidance had been compiled and would be finalised in time for submission to MOP9.

**Decisions:**

The following tasks/sub-tasks will be delivered before MOP9:

- 2.1.4: Review of existing species action and management plans and recommendation to MOP9 regarding their treatment
- 2.5: Priorities for seabird conservation

The following tasks/sub-tasks will be carried over to the next triennium:

- 2.4: Sustainable harvest and the socio-economic importance of waterbirds
- 2.6: Guidance on adaptive harvest management

For task 2.2 (Conservation and management guidance for AEWAs populations), the TC agreed to recommend the use of BirdLife International's species factsheets, with the caveat that users will be alerted that the factsheets might not always be specific to particular populations of waterbirds.

**Agenda item 20. TC Working Group 3 (Habitat Conservation)**

134. As Chair of this WG, Mr Nagy facilitated the discussion on its tasks.

135. Regarding task 3.1, on the site inventory framework, and its sub-task 3.1.1 on the review of submitted national inventories, Mr Dereliev explained that the task had been delivered only partially due to capacity constraints within the Secretariat and the TC and would be carried over to the next triennium.

136. In relation to task 3.2, on developing the monitoring protocol set out in the site monitoring framework, Mr Dereliev said that its sub-tasks had partially been delivered insofar as ToR were approved for outsourcing the task. However, since then no progress had been made in the absence of funding. Therefore, the task would be carried over to the next triennium and it was critical to deliver it for MOP10. Task 3.3, which involved conducting an Agreement-level assessment of the status of principal waterbird habitats in the wider environment, would similarly need to be carried over to the next triennium for delivery to MOP10.

137. Task 3.4, on increasing understanding of the consequences of sea-level rise on waterbird populations, has been delivered and would be retired from the Work Plan.

**Decisions:**

The following tasks will be carried over to the next triennium:

- 3.1: Site inventory framework
- 3.2: Site monitoring framework
- 3.3: Status of principal waterbird habitats

The following task will be retired from the TC Work Plan:

- 3.4: Sea-level rise impact

**Agenda item 21. TC Working Group 4 (Management of Human Resources)**

138. As Chair of this WG, Mr Taulant Bino, Regional Representative for the Central Europe Region, facilitated the discussion on its tasks.

139. The various sub-tasks under task 4.1, on tackling causes of unnecessary additional mortality and other threats, still required further work and this task would be carried over to the next triennium.

140. Moving on to task 4.6, on establishing harvest data estimates from non-Party Range States, ToR had been agreed for outsourcing the compilation of a guidance on methods and tools for harvest data collection. However, the work had not yet been budgeted. FACE agreed to take on the task. Since the guidance also had not yet been outsourced, the task would be carried over to the next triennium.

141. Similarly, for task 4.7, on undertaking a rapid assessment of sustainability of harvest of declining quarry populations, ToR had been agreed but the task had not been outsourced and would be carried over to the next triennium.

142. Task 4.8 on the World Coastal Forum, and its sub-task 4.8.1 involving BirdLife International bringing appropriate knowledge products to the attention of the TC, was a rolling one and would be carried over to the next triennium.

**Decisions:**

The following tasks/sub-tasks will be carried over to the next triennium:

- 4.1: Tackling the four causes of unnecessary additional mortality and other threats
- 4.6: Harvest data estimates from non-Party Range States
- 4.7: Sustainability of harvest
- 4.8: World Coastal Forum

FACE will establish a budget for carrying out the work under task 4.6.

**Agenda item 22. TC Working Group 5 (Research and Monitoring)**

*See discussion under agenda items 14a and 14b.*

**Agenda item 23. TC Working Group 6 (Education and Information)**

143. As Chair of WG6, Mr Rostron provided an update on task 6.1 on the provision of advice and prioritisation on ongoing implementation of the AEWA Communication Strategy. He said that progress had been made on sub-task 6.1.2 and that a CEPA workplan could be delivered in time for MOP9.

144. Task 6.1 would be carried over to the next triennium, with sub-tasks still to be defined.

145. The TC discussed task 6.2, on experience sharing regarding the integration of AEWA priorities into national biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs) and ultimately decided not to invest capacity in developing dedicated guidance on this topic for AEWA Focal Points, as it was already too late in the process for many Contracting Parties. Instead, a notification would be issued on this topic, which would remind Parties of the existing document: [\*Opportunities for AEWA to Support the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework\*](#). This document had been drafted by Mr Stroud and adopted by MOP8, with an updated version having been approved by the StC. It addressed in detail the contribution that AEWA implementation makes to delivering the Global Biodiversity Framework.

146. Later in the meeting, a drafting group further discussed, and subsequently reported back to plenary regarding, how the above-mentioned notification should be framed and disseminated. It was agreed that the notification should be sent not only to NFPs, but also to Technical and CEPA Focal Points and be shared via the WhatsApp group for African Focal Points. Thereafter, task 6.2 would be retired from the TC Work Plan.

**Decisions:**

The following sub-task will be delivered before MOP9:

- 6.1.2: Compilation and agreement on a CEPA workplan

The following task will be carried over to the next triennium:

- 6.1: Communication Strategy implementation

The following task will be retired from the TC Work Plan:

- 6.2: Experience sharing – AEWA priorities integration into NBSAPs

Before retiring task 6.2, a notification will be sent to AEWA National, Technical and CEPA Focal Points, reminding them of the importance of integrating AEWA priorities into NBSAPs and of the document: *Opportunities for AEWA to Support the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework*. The Secretariat will also share this notification via the WhatsApp group for African Focal Points.

**Agenda item 24. TC Working Group 7 (Implementation)**

147. Mr Dereliev facilitated discussion on the tasks under this WG.

148. Mr Nagy gave an update on the status of the production of the 9<sup>th</sup> edition of the Conservation Status Report, task 7.1., and confirmed that it would be delivered before MOP9.

149. Moving along to task 7.3, on the review and reformatting of existing Conservation Guidelines, Mr Nagy said that sub-task 7.3.1 on reviewing CG no.3 (Site Inventories) had not progressed and would be carried over to the next triennium.

150. Mr Stroud, leading on sub-task 7.3.4, on reviewing CG no. 8 (Reducing Crop Damage, Damage to Fisheries, Bird Strikes and other Forms of Conflict), said it had similarly not advanced and would be carried over to the next triennium, including the European Goose Management Platform's (EGMP's) involvement.

151. Task 7.4, on contributing to the development of internationally agreed standards and guidance for risk assessment with respect to non-native waterbirds, was a rolling one and would be carried over to the next triennium.

152. Regarding task 7.5, on the revision and update of Conservation Guidelines, and its sub-task 7.5.1, on compiling an overview of all AEWA CGs and other guidance approved by governing and subsidiary bodies with dates of adoption/update/revision, Ms Lewis and Mr Stroud said that they would attempt to deliver it before MOP9.

153. Sub-task 7.5.2, on undertaking screening of all remaining CGs and other guidance, was linked to the previous task and was partially delivered. It did, however, require some more attention and would be carried over to the next triennium.

154. Task 7.6, on disseminating relevant information supplementary to Conservation Guidelines, was a rolling task and would be carried over to the next triennium.

**Decisions:**

The following tasks/sub-tasks will be delivered before MOP9:

- 7.1: Conservation Status Review 9

- 7.5.1: Compilation of overview of all AEWA Conservation Guidelines and other guidance

The following tasks/sub-tasks will be carried over to the next triennium:

- 7.3.1 & 7.3.4: Review and reformatting of Conservation Guidelines no. 3 (Site Inventories) and 8 (Reducing Crop Damage, Damage to Fisheries, Bird Strikes and other Forms of Conflict)
- 7.4: Non-native species risk assessment
- 7.5.2: Screening remaining Conservation Guidelines and other guidance
- 7.6: Information supplementary to Conservation Guidelines

Delivery of sub-task 7.3.4 will include involvement of the European Goose Management Platform.

## **Agenda item 25. TC Working Group 8 (Strategic, Reporting, Emerging and other Issues)**

155. As Chair of this WG, Mr Hichem Azafzaf, Regional Representative for the Northern Africa Region, facilitated the discussion on its tasks.

156. Regarding task 8.4, *Harmonisation of reporting*, and its sub-task 8.4.1, on aligning reporting templates and timing of reporting cycles on site network and population status with the EU Birds Directive reporting processes, Mr Dereliev explained that the task had been partially delivered. What was delivered was the alignment of the reporting templates with the EU Birds Directive reporting processes. However, that would still need to be done with regards to the timing of reporting cycles on site network and population status. Protocols still needed to be developed for this. The task would be carried over to the next triennium.

157. Moving on to task 8.7, *Implementation*, Mr Dereliev reported that there had not been much action on the Implementation Review Process (IRP) during the triennium. He explained that there was an intention to develop a guidance on how the IRP operated including the TC's role in it.

158. Since no action had been taken on sub-tasks 8.7.1 and 8.7.2 these would be carried over to the next triennium.

### **Decisions:**

The following tasks will be carried over to the next triennium:

- 8.4: Harmonisation of reporting
- 8.7: Implementation

## **Agenda item 26. TC Workplan 2026-2028**

159. Mr Shobrak explained that the TC was requested to discuss the timelines and process for compiling the draft TC Workplan for 2026-2028 for submission to MOP9.

160. He handed over to Mr Dereliev, who said that the new TC Workplan was needed ideally by 4 July/latest 11 July for submission to the StC.

161. That also applied to the draft resolution, which will include the draft TC Workplan for the next triennium as an annex.

162. Mr Dereliev suggested that the Secretariat would start drafting the workplan based on the discussions during this meeting. The draft would be submitted for consultation through the TC workspace. After consultation with

the TC, the draft workplan and draft resolution would be submitted to the StC for approval for submission to MOP9.

163. The TC agreed to Mr Dereliev's proposal.

**Decision:** The Secretariat will draft the TC Work Plan 2026-2028, which will be consulted with the TC through the TC workspace along with the associated draft resolution before being submitted to the StC for approval for submission to MOP9.

### **Agenda item 27. Draft Resolutions for Submission to MOP9**

164. Mr Shobrak explained that the TC was requested to consider the necessary draft resolutions to be compiled for submission to MOP9, as well as to agree on the timelines and responsibilities for drafting those resolutions.

165. Mr Dereliev took over and noted that the Secretariat had compiled a list of seven possible draft resolutions, which could result from the work of the TC or were relevant for the TC. Tentative leads for the drafting of those resolutions had also been indicated.

166. The list included the following draft resolutions (DRs):

1. DR on the Amendments to the Legal Text – lead: Secretariat
2. DR on the Institutional Arrangements of the Technical Committee – lead: Secretariat
3. DR on the Strategic Plan and National Reporting – lead: Secretariat
4. DR on Seabirds and Sea-level Rise – lead: Matt Parsons, David Stroud, Nicola Crockford, Maria Dias
5. DR on Species Action and Management Plans – lead: Secretariat
6. DR on Guidance for the Implementation of the Agreement – lead: Secretariat, David Stroud
7. DR on Strengthening AEWA's Science-policy Interface – lead: SPI drafting group

167. The TC tentatively accepted the list of DRs, noting that it was not set in stone and could still be changed.

**Decision:** The list of proposed draft resolutions to be developed for MOP9 is tentatively accepted.

### **Agenda item 28. Drafting Groups**

168. The following drafting/discussion groups were established by the Secretariat:

- Seabirds document / Seabirds and sea-level rise resolution
- Convening a meeting on Species Action Planning / Updates to the format and guidelines on AEWA species action and management plans
- Science-policy Interface (paper + DR)
- Communication to NFPs on the integration of AEWA priorities into NBSAPs

Feedback from the first two of these drafting groups is summarised under the next agenda item, while output from the third and fourth drafting groups fed into the conclusion of agenda items 14b and 23 and has therefore been summarised under those agenda items.

## **Agenda item 29. Feedback from Drafting Groups**

### Seabirds document / Seabirds and sea-level rise resolution

169. Mr Parsons and Ms Lewis gave meeting participants feedback regarding this discussion group.

170. The group had recognised that the seabird document still needed to be revised. It was therefore difficult to finalise the respective resolution beforehand.

171. In relation to the seabird document the group had reviewed its Annex V, which was the section on operational guidance. The group had agreed to add start and end dates to the timeframe sections to make the relative priority in terms of time for particular activities clearer.

172. In addition, the group had identified under the resource needs section the types of actors that would be called upon to provide the resources for delivery.

173. Ms Lewis continued to say that there had been some discussion regarding there already being three resolutions on seabirds. Some members of the group had raised the question whether the resolutions could possibly be merged. This resulted in a more general discussion on how the clutter of resolutions could be addressed in the future.

174. For the seabirds resolution, the group concluded that it would make sense to add an annex including excerpts of operative paragraphs from previous resolutions.

175. Mr Parsons went on to talk about some of the generic issues in relation to the resolution that came up during the discussion. The preambular paragraphs were generally in a poor status. That AEWA can bring added value to seabird conservation and its unique role in terms of artisanal fisheries needed to be included in the resolution. In addition, the operative paragraphs needed to be better aligned with existing AEWA processes and, lastly, a section on impacts of sea-level rise on AEWA species need to be integrated into the seabird resolution.

### Convening a meeting on Species Action Planning / Updates to the ISAP / ISMP guidelines

176. Ms Lewis gave the meeting participants brief feedback regarding this discussion group.

177. The group discussed concerns regarding what the group felt what the impediments were to the implementation of ISAPs and what possible strategies were for its enhancement. Ms Lewis said she planned to summarise that discussion in writing and share it on the TC workspace.

178. Regarding the need for convening a meeting dedicated to Species Action Planning, that would probably not be feasible in the current triennium. There was scope, however, to lay the groundwork early next triennium for such a discussion and to ensure that it would be as well-informed as possible.

179. The idea of holding an inter-active side event at MOP9 was also discussed as an opportunity to directly elicit more input especially from National Focal Points on their views and experiences. Following that, a dedicated questionnaire could be sent to stakeholders.

### Science-policy Interface document and resolution

*See discussion under agenda item 14b.*

## Communication to NFPs on the integration of AEWA priorities into NBSAPs

*See discussion under agenda item 23.*

### **Agenda item 30. Date and Venue of the next Technical Committee Meeting**

180. Mr Dereliev reminded everyone that the TC met three times per triennium. The first and last meetings were being held in-person, the second online. The first TC meeting of the triennium was usually held as soon as possible after the MOP.

181. Since MOP9 was going to take place in November 2025, the intention was to schedule TC21 in April 2026, since some time was needed for planning and fundraising, which could only begin after MOP9.

182. The exact dates would be confirmed in due course. The meeting would most likely take place at AEWA's headquarters in Bonn, Germany.

### **Agenda item 31. Any other Business**

183. Mr Dereliev announced that some of the current TC members would be leaving the Committee after the triennium and would be replaced by new members. The Committee was bidding farewell to Mr Taulant Bino (Central Europe), Ms Maria Dias (North and Southwestern Europe), Mr Peter Njoroge (Eastern Africa), Ms Khady Gueye (Western Africa) and Mr Emmanuel Kasimbazi (Environmental Law Expert).

184. Mr Dereliev thanked them all for their time spent on the Committee and appreciated working with them. He asked them and the other members to consider and nominate successors for their positions. A notification on the matter had already been sent to the Contracting Parties, and the TC members would receive the same after the meeting has concluded.

### **Agenda item 32. Closure**

185. Mr Shobrak thanked everyone for their hard work during the last four days and the Czech Republic for hosting TC20 and for their fantastic hospitality. He also thanked the United Kingdom for their generous contribution, which made the in-person meeting possible.

186. Mr Trouvilliez echoed Mr Shobrak's words and pointed out that a lot of work was still to be done in the run-up to MOP9, taking place in less than 10 months. He emphasised that the TC was at the heart of AEWA as most of AEWA's efforts came out of its work. Finally, he thanked Mr Shobrak for his fantastic work as Chair and the AEWA Secretariat's staff members for a well-organised meeting.

187. Mr Dereliev also thanked everyone present for their contributions over the last few days and promised to soon share some of the outcomes of the meeting that were necessary to continue the TC's work.

188. With that, the Chair declared the meeting closed.

## Annex I: Reports by the Regional Representatives

### Regional Report – Central Europe (Taulant Bino)

1. Number of Contracting Parties in the region / number of Range States in the region. New accessions since the previous TC meeting. Actions by the regional representative to encourage non-party Range States to accede the Agreement.

13 Contracting Parties

18 Range States

- Albania
- Bulgaria
- Croatia
- Czech Republik
- Greece
- Hungary
- Italy
- Montenegro
- North Macedonia
- Romania
- Serbia
- Slovakia
- Slovenia

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

Species

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

#### **Eurasian Curlew (*Numenius arquata*)**

- No National Action Plans for the species in Central Europe and no species-specific conservation actions
- Nevertheless, the key sites for the species are known, and protected by national and international legislation
- Several key sites are part of the network of Natura 2000 sites
- Conservation actions involve habitat protection, implementation of research and monitoring programs, improvement of legislative framework (Croatia, Serbia, Greece, North Macedonia, Slovenia, Albania)
- **Overall, conservation actions in key sites benefit all waterbirds, including the Eurasian Curlew**

#### **Black-tailed Godwit (*Limosa l. limosa* and *L. l. islandica*)**

- No National Action Plans for the species in Central Europe and no species-specific conservation actions
- Nevertheless, the key sites for the species are known, and protected by national and international legislation

- Several key sites are part of the network of Natura 2000 sites
- Conservation actions involve habitat protection, implementation of research and monitoring programs, improvement of legislative framework (Croatia, Serbia, Greece, North Macedonia, Slovenia, Albania)
- **Restoration of habitats, Cascina Oschiena in Italy, Great Plains in Hungary, Lowland Stepe habitats in Slovakia**

#### **Lesser white-fronted Goose (*Anser erythropus*)**

- No National Action Plans for the species in Central Europe and no species-specific conservation actions
- Nevertheless, the key sites for the species are known, and protected by national and international legislation
- Conservation actions involve habitat protection, implementation of research and monitoring programs, improvement of legislative framework (Croatia, Serbia, Greece, North Macedonia, Slovenia, Albania)
- **Increasing the availability of suitable habitats through restoration, improving knowledge on migration routes, enhancing climate resilience of key sites, tackling IKB, management plans for key sites in Greece, Hungary etc.**

#### **Eurasian Spoonbill (*Platalea leucorodia*)**

- No National Action Plans for the species in Central Europe and no species-specific conservation actions
- Nevertheless, the key sites for the species are known, and protected by national and international legislation
- Conservation actions involve habitat protection, implementation of research and monitoring programs, improvement of legislative framework (Croatia, Serbia, Greece, North Macedonia, Slovenia, Albania)
- **Overall, conservation actions in key sites, including habitat protection and management, monitoring and tracking of breeding birds, benefit all waterbirds, including the Eurasian Spoonbill**

#### **Great Snipe (*Gallinago media*)**

- No National Action Plans for the species in Central Europe and no species-specific conservation actions
- Nevertheless, the key sites for the species are known, and protected by national and international legislation
- Conservation actions involve habitat protection, implementation of research and monitoring programs, improvement of legislative framework (Croatia, Serbia, Greece, North Macedonia, Slovenia, Albania)
- **Population in Central Europe is rather small and no specific conservation measures being undertaken**

#### **Ferruginous Duck (*Aythya nyroca*)**

- No National Action Plans for the species in Central Europe and no species-specific conservation actions
- Nevertheless, the key sites for the species are known, and protected by national and international legislation
- Conservation actions involve habitat protection, implementation of research and monitoring programs, improvement of legislative framework (Croatia, Serbia, Greece, North Macedonia, Slovenia, Albania)
- **In some key areas, there are efforts (not species specific) for habitat restoration, improved water regime and population monitoring (Hungary, Czechia, Slovakia)**

#### **White-headed Duck (*Oxyura leucocephala*)**

- No National Action Plans for the species in Central Europe and no species-specific conservation actions
- Nevertheless, the key sites for the species are known, and protected by national and international legislation
- Conservation actions involve habitat protection, implementation of research and monitoring programs, improvement of legislative framework (Croatia, Serbia, Greece, North Macedonia, Slovenia, Albania)
- **In some key range states (Bulgaria and Romania), there is targeted habitat management, water regime regulation, and research to address threats like hybridization**

#### **Corncrake (*Crex crex*) and BEWICK'S SWAN (*Cygnus columbianus bewickii*)**

- No National Action Plans for the species in Central Europe and no species-specific conservation actions
- **The conservation of the Corncrake relies on the effectiveness of general farmland management and habitat protection strategies rather than on a dedicated, species-specific action plan.**
- **Apart from Greece with c. 10,000 birds in 2023, the Bewick's Swan remains a scarce wintering and**

passage species, safeguarded primarily through broad waterbird and wetland conservation measures rather than focused, species-specific action.

#### **Red-breasted Goose (*Branta ruficollis*)**

- Several key sites protected in key range states (Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary)
- **Monitoring and research including satellite tracking and color-ringing in Bulgaria**
- **Public awareness on the conservation of the species and its critical habitats in Bulgaria**
- **A National Action Plan in Romania**
- **Management prescriptions incorporated into the adopted management plans for six Special Protection Areas (SPAs) in Romania.**

#### 3. 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.

- Harsh wintering conditions and outbreaks of avian influenza in wild birds in previous years
- **Summer drought**, combined with ongoing agricultural intensification, the major issue in recent years in Central Europe including Hungary, Serbia, Albania, Greece, Czech Republic etc.
- Drought has led to a marked reduction in water levels in wetlands and riverine habitats and declines in breeding success and increased mortality.
- Low incidence of avian influenza. Cases managed through enhanced surveillance and detection of isolated cases

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

- In several Central European countries (Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Hungary), conservation effort such as agri-environment and extensive, traditional farming has contributed to natural recoveries of species like the Corncrake (*Crex crex*).
- No major efforts in the reintroduction or habitat rehabilitation for AEWA species despite discussions for the re-establishment of the Marbled Teal (*Marmaronetta angustirostris*) in Italy

#### 5. Activities on eradication or other type of action regarding alien species.

- **Localized Management and Control** (Muscovy Duck, Ruddy Duck, African Sacred Ibis in Italy)
- **Ongoing monitoring and control measures** as part of their overall wetland and biodiversity programs. Alien waterbirds are managed incidentally through habitat management, rather than through targeted eradication campaigns (Bulgaria, Romania, etc.)
- Focus is on **preventing new introductions and managing populations** in sensitive habitats through monitoring, public awareness, and site-specific control measures rather than on comprehensive eradication (Hungary, Czech Republic, etc.)
- **National Strategies or Action Plans for Invasive Species** in place in Slovenia, Italy, Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary, Slovakia and Czech Republic,

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

- The use of lead shot for hunting in wetlands prohibited in all EU countries (Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Italy, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and Greece)
- Still in place in Albania, Montenegro, Northern Macedonia and Serbia.
- The amendment of the Hunting Law in Albania, include the phasing out the use of lead shot for hunting in wetlands. The draft law in the process of being discussed and adopted.

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

- Research and monitoring activities for AEWA species are in place in all the range countries of Central Europe.
- Monitoring of wintering and breeding waterbirds is regularly conducted and reported in scientific papers and national reports.
- Education and information activities on waterbirds and their critical habitats occurring in all the range countries

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

- Vlora International Airport in Vjose-Narta, an IBA, KBA and Candidate Emerald site.
- Two lawsuits against the airport by national NGOs. The matter is still in courts.
- Based in the findings of a joint appraisal mission of AEWA, CMS and Bern Convention in August 2022, the Standing Committee of Bern Convention have urged the Albanian authorities
- To halt construction works and re-examine the project's ecological impacts and implement robust mitigation, with progress reports due to the Standing Committee
- Until the Standing Committee is satisfied with Albania's measures, the complaint remains **open** under the Bern Convention's monitoring procedures.

## Regional Report – Eastern Europe (Zurab Javakhishvili)

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

Common Eider: Monitoring breeding populations.

Long-tailed duck: Inventories and monitoring. Offshore seabird census in the Spring of 2024.

Great Snipe: Habitat studies, monitoring breeding populations, maintenance of floodplain meadows.

Velvet Scoter: Inventories and monitoring. Monitoring breeding populations. Offshore seabird census in the Spring of 2024.

Lesser White-fronted Goose: Preparation of the species action plan, monitoring, maintenance of coastal meadows.

Geese including Bean Goose, Barnacle Goose: monitoring.

Black-tailed Godwit: Monitoring breeding populations, restoration of wetland habitats, maintenance of coastal meadows.

Eurasian Curlew: Monitoring breeding populations, restoration of wetland habitats.

GE: Velvet scoter monitoring, Mid-winter counts, Waterfowl ringing, Waterbird GPS tracking, AIV monitoring in waterfowl.

### 2. Emergency situations (extreme cold, draught, toxic or oil spills, etc.) that have occurred and have affected waterbirds and/or their habitats since 2022 and response to them.

There have been a few oil spills on the coast of Hiiumaa island. They were responded to according to an oil spill response plan. There was no mass death of birds.

GE: Die off Great crested grebe caused by HPAI AIV February 2024, Oil spill by Russian tankers in the black sea winter 2024 -2025.

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

Has not occurred.

#### 4. Activities on eradication or other type of action regarding alien species.

We have a pilot project (LIFE IP For Est&FarmLand) to reduce wader mortality on west coast, where before the bird breeding period there is a dedicated effort to cull small carnivores. In 2022/23 and 2023/24 winters all together 69 foxes, 22 jackals and **154 raccoon dogs** were shot. Project continues this winter, but the results have not been collected and combined. Project is implemented on the 5 very important coastal meadows and there are control sites with no culling. Unfortunately, the results are not that clear, in some meadows it seems to be very helpful and on some there seems to be no difference.

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

1. LIFE IP ForEst&FarmLand (LIFE18IPE/EE/000007). The project will take place in 2020-2029. The project's activities also partially support waterbirds and their habitats.
2. Offshore seabird census in the Spring of 2024.

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

Estonia made a reservation concerning the phasing out of lead shots for hunting in wetlands. According to the above-mentioned reservation phasing out of lead shots for waterfowl hunting will not be applied in Estonia until 01.01.2013. 01.06.2013 the new Hunting Act entered into force and according to the § 26 (7) the use of lead pellets when hunting waterfowl is prohibited in Estonia.

Public discussions are ongoing regarding a complete ban on lead shot.

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

1. Offshore seabird census in the Spring of 2024.
  2. The fifth whole autumn (21.06.-30.11.2024) bird migration count at Cape Põdsaspea in West-Estonia. The previous ones were conducted in 2004, 2009, 2014 and 2019. Cape Põdsaspea is probably the best place to see autumn Arctic migration in Europe.
  3. Habitat studies of the Great Snipe.
- GE: Velvet scoter monitoring, Mid winter counts, Waterfowl ringing, Waterbird GPS tracking, AIV monitoring in waterfowl.

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

Explaining to the public, that (winter) feeding of waterfowl is detrimental to birds and can pose some health risk to people is still valid and actual. Environmental Board (state env. protection agency), municipality authorities and Birdlife Estonia are doing that on regular basis. As people continue to feed birds in many places, the regular repeated action to avoid it is still of high importance.

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

Has not occurred.

GE: Road project on the shore of the Paliastomi Lake, Planned wind farm Rioni riv delta.

## 10. Extent of use of the AEWA Conservation Guidelines by the Parties

Was used as one of the base materials in the banning of huntable species.

### Regional Report – North- and South-western Europe (Maria Dias)

#### 1. Number of Contracting Parties and Range States in the region

#### 2. Number of Range States that provided feedback for this report

#### 16 contracting parties + EU

**Belgium, Denmark (incl. Greenland), European Union, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Luxembourg, Monaco, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland**

Non-parties Range States: Andorra, Canada and Liechtenstein

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

- Feedback from all parties (that responded)
- 17 species
- Eurasian Curlew and Black-tailed Godwit (BTG); mostly breeding
  
- **Black-tailed Godwit** (Belgium; Finland; Germany; Netherlands; Norway; Portugal; UK)
- **Eurasian Curlew** (Belgium; Finland; Germany; Ireland; Norway; UK)
- **Great Snipe** (Finland; Ireland; Norway)
- **Barnacle Goose** (Finland; Ireland; Norway; UK)
- **Greylag Goose** (Finland; Iceland; Norway)
- **Pink-footed Goose** (Belgium; Norway)
- **Taiga Bean Goose** (Finland; Norway)
- **Greenland White-fronted Goose** (Ireland)
- **Bewick's Swan** (Germany)
- **Lesser white-fronted Goose** (Norway; Sweden)
- **Common Eider** (Finland; Norway; UK)
- **Velvet Scoter** (Finland; Norway; UK)
- **Long-tailed Duck** (Finland; Norway; UK)
- **White-headed Duck** (Belgium; Spain)
- **Ferruginous Duck** (Spain)
- **Corncrake** (Norway)
  
- Regional, national and multi-country projects (incl. LIFE projects)
- National/Regional Action Plans (Curlew, BTG)
- Finland: impact of incr. pop or white-tailed eagle on several species (ducks)

#### 4. 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

- 9 parties (82%) provided info
- Avian influenza
  - Often mentioned (6 parties) but with less severity compared with previous report
  - Most affected species: Sandwich Tern, Black-headed Gull, Northern Gannet, Kittiwake, Whooper Swan
  - Monitoring in place for most countries
- Spain and Portugal: Major mortality events of seabirds in winter (guillemots, razorbills, puffins)
- Oil spills reported by Ireland and Sweden
- Extreme weather events (droughts / cold) reported by Netherlands, Spain and UK

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

- 6 parties (55%) provided info
- Mostly ongoing initiatives, few new
- Headstarting of Curlews (Ireland), Black-tailed Godwits (UK, planning in Netherlands) and exploring feasibility in Dunlins (Ireland)
- Marbled Duck in Spain: 1200 released in 2023-24; pop 2024: 120 bp (highest in 20 years)

#### 6. Activities on eradication or other type of action regarding alien species

- Almost all parties (10) provided info
- Ruddy Duck: measures in place in Belgium, Germany, Netherlands, Spain, UK
- Sacred Ibis: establishment prevented in Belgium, Germany
- Egyptian Goose: Germany, Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden, UK
- Invasive mammals (mostly American mink and Chinese racoon dog): control reported in Finland (new law allowing the use of drones), Ireland, Norway, Spain, Sweden
- (seabirds never mentioned...)

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

- Almost all parties (10) some info
- Several ongoing projects, mostly **restoration** (Finland, Iceland, Ireland, Portugal, UK), but also **flood** risk management (Belgium), **disturbance** control (Germany), **ecosystem services** (Ireland), landscape **management** (Ireland, Portugal), **inventory** updates (Netherlands, Sweden, UK)

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

- Almost all parties (10) provided info
- EU decision to ban the use of lead shot in wetlands: entered in force on 15 Feb 2023
- UK regulation already prohibits the use of lead ammunition in many wetlands; new restrictions are currently being evaluated

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

- 9 parties (82%) provided info
- New research on species and habitats status, trends and threats (scientific papers, monitoring reports)
- IWC counts often mentioned

- Some on new methods (e.g. drones, thermal imagery, GPS tracking)

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

- 5 parties (45%) provided info
- Festivals and campaigns often mentioned (bird festival, migratory bird days)
- Specific activities with the hunters (Finland)

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

- 7 parties (64%) provided info
- Windfarm development mentioned often
- Cumulative impacts (includ. w/ climate change)
- Spain: water availability in Doñana
- Portugal: Lisbon airport will be near Tagus estuary (but not in the center, as planned before)

12. Extent of use of the AEWA Conservation Guidelines by the parties

- Only 4 parties responded (36%)
- Almost all mentioned recommendations of EU Birds Directive

13. Any other information

- Finland: use of thermal cameras for monitoring Great Snipes
- Ireland: Engagement in EU Taskforce for the Recovery of Bird Species and establishment of a Stakeholder Process; removal of four species (pochard, pintail, goldeneye and scaup) from Open Seasons Order in 2023 due to low/declining numbers
- UK: in 2024 sandeel fishing in UK waters was banned (benefiting several seabird species); ISSAP for the Iceland/UK & Ireland pop of Greylag Goose

## Regional Report – Northern Africa (Hichem Azafzaf)

1. Number of Contracting Parties in the region / number of Range States in the region. New accessions since the previous TC meeting. Actions by the regional representative to encourage non-party Range States to accede the Agreement.

The **Northern Africa region** of AEWA consists of seven signatory parties namely **Algeria** (1), **Madeira** (Portugal) (2), **Canary Islands** (Spain) (3), **Egypt** (4), **Libya** (5), **Morocco** (6) and **Tunisia** (7).

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

The majority of the **countries in the region** monitor migratory waterbirds. In most of these countries, particularly Globally Threatened and Near Threatened species are monitored, such as **Marbled Duck** *Marmaronetta angustirostris*, **Audouin's Gull** *Larus audouinii*, **White-headed Duck** *Oxyura leucocephala*, **Ferruginous Duck** *Aythya nyroca*, **Black-tailed Godwit** *Limosa limosa*, **Eurasian Spoonbill** *Platalea leucorodia* and **Northern Bald Ibis** *Geronticus eremita*.

**Tunisia** and **Morocco** are monitoring of the *Marbled Duck Marmaronetta angustirostris*, especially the reproduction, as part of the LIFE Cerceta Pardilla project (LIFE19NAT/ES/000906) ‘Coordinated actions for the recovery of the Marbled Teal (*Marmaronetta angustirostris*) in Spain’.

**Morocco** in collaboration with Tour du Vala (TDV) have launched a Thesis on “Movement ecology of the Marbled Teal”(marking and tracking of some *Marbled Duck* using GPS is underway).

**Canary Islands** (Spain) Report the approval and official publication of a national strategy for the conservation of Marbled Teal, White-Headed Duck, Red-knobbed Coot and Ferruginous Duck.

**Libya** Report census of the nesting **Lesser Crested Tern**. Furthermore, over **200 individuals have been ringed** under the supervision of the Ministry of Environment and in collaboration with non-governmental organizations.

**Tunisia’s** national birds red list was launched on 19 September 2023. This red list project was led by the Ministry of the Environment and funded by IUCN. The list shows that out of 191 breeding bird species assessed 74 species are redlisted: 10 species are Extinct (ET), 13 are Critically Endangered (CR), 22 species are Endangered (EN) and 29 species are Vulnerable (VU). Which is more than 40% of the threatened species.

**31 of these species are waterbirds**

The **3rd Mediterranean Symposium on the Ecology and Conservation of Marine and Coastal Bird Species**, organized by SPA RAC, AAO/BirdLife in Tunisia, TDV, ISPRA and UICN took place in **Djerba, Tunisia, from 13 to 15 February 2024**. This symposium provided an opportunity to present and share new monitoring results and research of several species listed in the AEWA appendix including Greater Flamingo *Phoenicopterus roseus*, Kentish Plover *Charadrius alexandrinus*, etc. **All territories belonging to the AEWA Northern Africa region were represented at this symposium.**

3. 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.

In recent years, recurrent dryness has been a major challenge for almost all North-African countries and **Canary Islands** (Spain). It hit the conservation and integrity of inland wetlands and their birds, and the human population, suffering from lack of drinking water and failure of agricultural production. Several lakes, the majority of which are Ramsar sites and/or IBAs, have been affected but to different degrees.

In **Tunisia** during January 2024, **30% of the natural and artificial wetlands visited in the northern and central part of the country were dry**, which has led waterbirds to concentrate on the few areas where there is water or to go to the coast.

**Several countries in the region report intense bird mortality, some caused by avian flu.** Species affected Guillemots, Razorbills, Puffins and other marine birds

In **Libya**, the impact of Hurricane Daniel remains evident in key bird areas of eastern Libya, particularly in coastal wetlands.

4. Activities on eradication or other type of action regarding alien species.

**Canary Islands** (Spain) Spanish authorities continue the control program of the Ruddy duck, aiming at eradicating this invasive species affecting the white-headed duck. In 2023 and 2024, no ruddy ducks were detected in the Canary Islands.

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

**Canary Islands (Spain)** - During 2023 and 2024, Spanish authorities approved and implemented budgets for different restoration projects of wetlands, within the framework of the UE Next Generation funds.

- The protection of wetlands and peatlands from agricultural use as part of the new Strategic Plan for the Common Agricultural Policy 2023-2027

**Libya** The Ministry of Environment has designated the Al-Manqoub Reserve (Mellaha of Zuwara) as an important wetland for migratory birds near the Libya-Tunisia border.

**Tunisia** on 27 September 2024 the first, National Wetlands Strategy was launched by the Ministry of Agriculture, Water resources and Fisheries, Directorate General of Forestry and WWF North Africa.

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

**Canary Islands (Spain)**- Spanish national legislation includes, since 2007, the ban of use of lead shot ammunition in different wetlands (Ramsar sites, Natura 2000 sites and protected areas). This has allowed the coverage of more than 80% of all wetlands in Spain, including the Canary Islands.

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

Most countries (**Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt and Canary Islands (Spain)**) reported mid-winter waterbird counts (IWC) and monitoring of waterbird species in SPAs, IBAs and KBAs.

North African countries and Tour du Valat (TDV, France) are working on **synthesis report of waterbird data for 2019 to 2023**.

Several publications on waterbirds or wetlands was published between 2023-2025.

- Results of the eighteenth winter waterbird census in **Libya** in 2022 (Etayeb & all 2023)
- Exposure of wetlands important for non breeding waterbirds to sea-level rise in the **Mediterranean** (Verniest & all 2024),
- Nouvelle observation du Gravelot de Leschenault (*Charadrius leschenaultii*) en **Tunisie** (Azafzaf & all 2024),
- Enterobacteriaceae Antibiotic Resistance Identification in Slender-billed Gull Species Migrating to **Libya** (Mansour & all 2024)
- Ecological importance of Al-Gara Marine Protected Area (MPA) in the eastern part of Sirte Gulf, **Libya** (Shakman & all 2024)
- Effect of the environmental factors on the aquatic birds in Al Mallaha/ Tripoli (Taboun & Etayeb 2023)
- Wintering population of White-headed Duck in **Tunisia and Algeria** (Azafzaf & all 2025),

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

**Several countries** organized events and awareness raising activities dedicated to waterbirds and wetlands during World Migratory Bird Day, World Wetlands Day and other celebrations in 2023, 2024 and 2025.

- In January 2023, 2024, and 2025 AAO/BirdLife in Tunisia and Tour du Valat organized 3 regional training courses on waterbird census
- **Libya** also reported the organization of training sessions on bird identification and census techniques for local associations and community members
- During summer 2024 **Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Libya** took part in the 8th International White Stork Census coordinated by NABU (Germany).

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

**Canary Islands (Spain)** The main issue regarding the conservation of important wetlands in Spain corresponds to the lack of water availability due to droughts.

In **Tunisia** a potential threat to migratory waterbirds is emerging with plans to enhance the use of alternative energies such as wind, solar power, and the increase in the length of the high and medium voltage electricity network (HT/MT).

The number of wintering waterbirds in Ichkeul National Park has hit a record low, likely due to increased lake salinity from dam construction and climate change. During the IWC 2025 less than 6,000 waterbirds.

Illegal waterbird hunting is increasing and underestimated, at least in the eastern part of **Libya** and in **Tunisia**, where growing bird traffic is also putting waterbirds under threat.

Civil society and environmental NGOs continue to think that Sebket Sejoumi, designated as a Wetland of International Importance (Ramsar Site) No. 1712 but threatened by the embankment of the water body and by an unsuitable development plan (Plan d'Aménagement et de Valorisation), is in strong need of an MCR and IRP AEWA mission. The site hosts large numbers of wintering waterbirds and is an important nesting site for globally threatened species such as the White-headed Duck and the Marbled Duck.

## Regional Report – Southern Africa (Doug Harebottle)

1. Number of Contracting Parties in the region / number of Range States in the region. New accessions since the previous TC meeting. Actions by the regional representative to encourage non-party Range States to accede the Agreement.

7 Contracting Parties / 14 Range States (plus Ascension Island and St Helena, with the United Kingdom being a Contracting Party).

No further accessions in this region since the previous TC meeting.

2. Number of Range States (Parties and non-party Range States) that provided feedback for this report.

7 – Malawi, Mauritius, and South Africa (contributors included Technical and National Focal Points for several countries as well as other useful contacts<sup>1</sup>).

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

### **ISSAP for the Conservation of the Grey Crowned Crane South**

#### **Africa**

Activities to implement this ISSAP include, *inter alia*, the following:

- Grey Crowned Crane nest monitoring has been ongoing and new monitoring protocols are being developed in line with research related using drones for monitoring Grey Crowned Cranes.
- Grey Crowned Crane tracking has been delayed due to resource restrictions but it is hoped that this work will get underway in 2025.
- Rehabilitation centres are actively encouraged to submit data on the poisoning of cranes to the poison incident database. Lead testing at the rehabilitation centers is ongoing but new cases have been seen in 2024.

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<sup>1</sup>The following organizations contributed to the compilation of this report: BirdLife South Africa; Endangered Wildlife Trust; Gauteng Department of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment; International Crane Foundation; Rural Development and Environment; Mauritian Wildlife Foundation; Wildlife and Environment Society of Malawi.

- Cranes and Agriculture book has been summarised to allow more accessible information for the public. <https://savingcranes.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/Cranes-and-Agriculture-Summary-FINAL.pdf>EWT/ICF has secured funding to understand the breeding characteristics of Grey Crowned Cranes. Out of this will come Grey Crowned Crane custodian guidelines for farmers and landowners that will describe guidelines to enable them to protect the cranes on their lands.

## **Malawi**

- A request was made through the atlasing projects to report all sightings of Grey Crowned Crane. Very few reports were received which may reflect on the low number of observers or limited coverage during the atlasing surveys.
- There is a need for a country-wide survey in known historic sites of occurrence.

## **ISSAP for the Conservation of the Lesser Flamingo**

BirdLife South Africa (BLSA) continues to take on the role of coordinator of the Lesser Flamingo International Working Group and is collaborating with the AEWA Secretariat to resuscitate this forum. Discussions are also underway regarding the potential for a coordinated census for this species (possibly for early 2026).

### **South Africa**

- Following the initial establishment of a Local Conservation Group for Kamfers Dam, it has been decided to expand this group into a South African Flamingo Research and Conservation Group, Terms of Reference have now been finalized. The group's activities will include, *inter alia*, monitoring population numbers and distribution, assessment of threats and developing strategies to mitigate these, implementing conservation action and safeguarding important sites. The group's founding members are representatives from Ekapa (the BirdLife Species Guardian for the Lesser Flamingo), BLSA, and Sol Plaatje University. Given the recent deterioration in water quality at Kamfers Dam and the absence of breeding flamingoes in recent years, there is a need for further stakeholder engagement to identify and monitor other sites important for breeding flamingos, including Lake Natron in Kenya where there are threats from soda ash mining
- BLSA continues to work on developing a method of deriving accurate population estimates of flamingos from drone and satellite imagery. This product is still being refined and an ongoing hurdle, however, is the cost of satellite imagery at the resolution needed (spatial resolution of ca. 50cm).
- Using a combination of field data, water tests/analysis and satellite imagery, BLSA has additionally developed, and aims to refine, a habitat tool that can map the presence and state of suitable foraging habitat for Lesser Flamingos (namely, water bodies with appropriate food sources - i.e., cyanobacteria). A collaborative effort between the environmental specialist at Ekapa Minerals and BLSA has begun to analyse historical and contemporary flamingo populations at several sites, including Kamfers Dam, in conjunction with water quality and other ecological covariates.

## **ISSAP for the Conservation of the Madagascar Pond Heron**

No report was received from Madagascar

## **Malawi**

Efforts were made during the Lengwe National Park game count and the Elephant Marsh bird counts to report sightings of Madagascar Pond Heron. All records were documented and reported to the relevant authorities.

There is, however, an urgent need to do a targeted population census during the October - November periods in order to establish better estimates of the species' population and occurrence in these two localities, and other known sites in Malawi.

### **ISSAP for the Conservation of the Slaty Egret**

The first meeting of the International Working Group for the Slaty Egret took place in Maun, Botswana from 13-15 September 2023. Six range states were invited to the meeting: Angola, Zambia, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Namibia and Botswana; only Angola was not able to attend. Botswana was elected as the first country Chair of the working group and which will be led by the Department of Wildlife and National Parks. The main purpose of the meeting was to adopt the Terms of Reference for the WG and develop and agree on an implementation plan. These objectives were met and all range states and AEWA member states were strongly encouraged to find ways to implement the developed plan at a national level.

### **ISSAP for the Conservation of the White-winged Flufftail**

#### **South Africa**

The White-winged Flufftail National Working Group meets annually to coordinate the measures of various governmental and non-governmental stakeholders towards implementing the International Single Species Action Plan for the species. Significant progress has been made in the current reporting period, including, inter alia, the following:

##### *a. Management*

- Developed Best Practice Guidelines for High-Elevation Wetland and Peatland Management in Southern Africa with several wetland specialists, including detailed illustrations, to equip landowners and other management authorities with the knowledge and tools needed to steward these complex ecosystems sustainably. The majority of wetlands are situated on private and communal (traditional) land. Therefore, the future of wetland conservation rests with the public responsible for managing these threatened ecosystems. However, many published wetland resources in southern Africa are technical reports targeted at wetland ecologists, making them less accessible to the broader public. These guidelines bridge the gap between academic and wetland users, stewards and managers by presenting specialised information about wetlands in a manner that is easy to understand and practical. The guidelines can also be referenced in existing and newly declared state and private protected area management plans. The Best Practice Guidelines cover topics related to wetland ecology, wetland management, wetland conservation, and wetland support.
- Designed the first wildlife-friendly fence suitable for South African cattle farms with local farmers to control livestock grazing while allowing wildlife to move freely through catchments. Many high-elevation wetlands are overgrazed and trampled by livestock, destroying the sensitive vegetation understorey used by wetland species during the wet season. A solution to this issue is to erect fencing between wetlands and the surrounding grasslands. However, fencing also fragments and obstructs the movement of wildlife and the associated ecosystem processes that they initiate and sustain (e.g., nutrient influxes, seed dispersal, natural levels of disturbance, predator-prey interactions, etc.). This is especially true for wetlands, which act as biodiversity hotspots in the landscape, hosting many species moving in and out of the wetland ecosystems for foraged resources. Thus, the wildlife-friendly fence design minimizes the risk of entanglements and snags for wildlife while effectively excluding livestock and keeping them in their designated grazing camp. Over 4 km of wildlife-friendly fencing was erected at the Middelpunt Nature Reserve and Ramsar Site, and the effectiveness of the design was evaluated over 15 months.

b. Rehabilitation

- Reported annually to South African national and provincial governments at the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE) White-winged Flufftail National Working Group about priority sites that require rehabilitation. This platform gives access to stakeholders responsible for regulating and enforcing laws governing land-use activities that affect wetlands. It provides opportunities to jointly discuss and mobilise authorities to address issues that a single party cannot solve alone. As a result of these meetings, directives have been issued to non-compliant landowners, particularly mining companies, that have not rehabilitated sites adjacent to White-winged Flufftail wetlands. Expert advice has been provided on minimising impacts on White-winged Flufftail breeding behaviour and habitat for both government (e.g., Verloren Valei Nature Reserve and Ramsar Site) and company offset (e.g., Middelpunt Nature Reserve and Ramsar Site, and Greater Lakenvlei Protected Environment) wetland rehabilitation projects.

c. Protection

- Declared Middelpunt Nature Reserve, the first confirmed White-winged Flufftail breeding site in southern Africa, with private landowners and provincial government, and assisted with its designation as a Ramsar Site (527 ha). Protected area declarations provide a platform to build stewardship projects by safeguarding the site from external developments and gaining long-term landowner commitment to conserving the site for biodiversity. BLSA subsequently entered into a co-management agreement with the landowners of Middelpunt Nature Reserve to help steward the site. This involved developing the reserve's management plan, which includes key wetland concepts, annual plan of operations, annual reports, and organising quarterly meetings. This way, best practice guidelines are implemented for the wetland to maintain this important site for the White-winged Flufftail and the downstream farming community. Middelpunt Nature Reserve has become a bastion of modern-day nature-based conservation, where multiple stakeholders (public, NGO, and government) work together to achieve a common goal outside of state parks.
- Assisted with expanding the Greater Lakenvlei Protected Environment surrounding Middelpunt Nature Reserve to contribute 7,400 ha of farmland in northern Mpumalanga Province. Totalling 21,400 ha, the Greater Lakenvlei Protected Environment safeguards many high-elevation, vegetated wetlands on private cattle farms. Landowners are required to adhere to sustainable management practices by minimising and mitigating the impacts of land-use activities. No new lands can be converted/transformed, thus maintaining the quality and quantity of wetland inputs and outputs in the catchments. Many of the properties within the Greater Lakenvlei Protected Environment have recent records of the White-winged Flufftail and other threatened species.
- Ingula Nature Reserve, comprising the Bedford Wetland, was designated a Ramsar site.

d. Stewardship

- Improved the intrinsic value of wetland biodiversity by developing user-friendly “how-to” infographics for citizen science applications (e.g., iNaturalist and BirdLasser) and awareness material. Encouraging the established philosophies of adults to be more conservation-orientated is challenging, especially in a country as diverse as South Africa with many distinct cultural groups. People are generally more likely to conserve wetlands if they form a personal connection through experience, especially if they can name/identify the species they see in these habitats. BLSA is encouraging landowners and the public to use existing citizen science applications to document and

help identify the species they encounter. This fosters a sense of environmental “ownership and pride” among those responsible for managing wetlands and contributes to databases that can aid research, spatial priority planning, and other conservation outcomes. In a society overloaded with information, awareness infographics succinctly communicate conservation topics in a way that is pleasant to read and interpret.

- Improved the extrinsic value of wetland biodiversity by establishing the Steenkampsberg Birding Routes in a core White-winged Flufftail area (<https://www.birdlife.org.za/what-we-do/landscape-conservation/protecting-ecosystems/steenkampsberg-birding-routes/>). Ecotourism offers a sustainable means for deriving income from biodiversity with little to no negative impacts on the environment while offering a financial incentive for conservation. Ecotourism also provides an opportunity for local upskilling and social upliftment through guiding and hospitality. To this end, BLSA with the Escarpment Bird Club established birding routes to encourage the public to visit wetlands in and surrounding Verloren Valei Nature Reserve and Ramsar Site and the Greater Lakenvlei Protected Environment where the White-winged Flufftail is present. Previously, there was no resource linking the various ecotourism-based entities along these farm roads. A dedicated website provides the public with GPS tracks, recommended accommodations, species lists, awareness materials, and emergency contact details, giving them the surety they need to explore rural areas. The website provides information about not only birds but also dragonflies, butterflies, frogs, wildflowers, geology, and human history – all aspects of this wetland-dominated landscape that can appeal to a broad audience. Signboards were erected in the central town of Dullstroom along each route with a QR code that directs visitors to the website. Since the project's establishment in January 2023 to December 2024, the QR code has been scanned 1 130 times, likely by individuals accompanied by family or friends visiting the area. The project was entirely funded by local businesses who expressed a keen desire for the project.
- Initiated a community project at Ntsikeni Nature Reserve and Ramsar Site with neighbouring isiZulu Traditional Authorities and Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife (EKZNW) to improve eco-tourism and biosecurity after discovering this new White-winged Flufftail hotspot (<https://www.birdlife.org.za/what-we-do/landscape-conservation/protecting-ecosystems/ntsikeni-nature-reserve-community-project/>). Ntsikeni Nature Reserve and Ramsar Site in KwaZulu-Natal Province protects an area of 9,200 ha and one of the most extensive high-elevation wetlands in South Africa. The reserve spans an entire local catchment and supplies water resources to many downstream users. The reserve is bordered by many villages of the Umzimkhulu Local Municipality. The Umzimkhulu Local Municipality has a high unemployment rate, creating socio-economic pressures that contribute to environmental challenges in the area. Ntsikeni Nature Reserve provides a means to alleviate poverty and develop skills in the area through community-based projects, including two community lodges in the reserve for tourism ventures. Ntsikeni Nature Reserve faces many threats, such as community cattle being herded into the reserve, annual arson fires causing damage to the wetland and surrounding catchment, and declining profitability of its community-run lodges, reducing local incentives to protect the reserve. BLSA is implementing projects related to eco-tourism development, habitat restoration, and reserve infrastructure. The primary achievement has been the contractual employment of a community bird guide since December 2022 who guides and hosts visitors at Ntsikeni Lodge, manages the facility, and provides biosecurity for the remote wetland that park rangers cannot regularly patrol. The lodge has been adequately maintained through the community bird guide and Ntsikeni Community Trust to receive guests and generate income. A phased approach over several years will ensure that project objectives are accomplished with the best possible results.

e. Policy and advocacy

- Halted and mitigated developments that could negatively impact wetlands by commenting on development applications and engaging with developers as an Interested and Affected Party. The Eastern Escarpment of South Africa hosts many high-elevation wetlands but these areas are also attractive to developers for the establishment of mines (mainly coal), wind energy facilities, land transformation and other land-use activities (e.g., dams, forestry, housing). BLSA supports the economic development of the country and endeavours to provide developers with expert advice to help minimise their environmental impacts. This may involve relocating developments to less sensitive areas or implementing other low-risk measures during operations. BLSA has recommended avifaunal consultants to Environmental Assessment Practitioners (EAPs) conducting Scoping Reports and Environmental Impact Assessments for developers, and promoted the use of Habitat Suitability Models that help to identify potential White-winged Flufftail wetlands and methods for adequately surveying cryptic and secretive wetland bird communities (i.e., passive monitoring techniques). This has taken the form of guidelines, workshop webinars, meetings, infographics, and online data repositories.
- BLSA has Position Statements about birding and, specifically, birding in wetlands. These discourage harmful methods of viewing waterbirds such as flushing, rope-dragging, and playbacks. The assigned Management Authority of sites with the White-winged Flufftail is responsible for developing and implementing visitation protocols, guided by the Position Statements and context-specific inputs from BLSA where possible. BLSA developed a list of rules for birding at Ntsikeni Nature Reserve with approval from EKZNW which are distributed at Ntsikeni Lodge for visitors.

f. Awareness

- Developed two children's books with volunteer authors, illustrators, and graphic designers to raise awareness about the White-winged Flufftail and wetlands. Conservation values are more likely to be instilled in youth who are still forming opinions than in adults. Thus, developing educational and awareness resources for children will help establish lifelong behaviours that appreciate wetlands. Storytelling and art are engaging ways of achieving this. The book titled Run Until You Can Fly is targeted at ages 4-6 and follows the adventures of a young White-winged Flufftail, Saro, and his animal friends as he learns to fly. Along the journey, he comes across threats to the wetland that conservationists are trying to remedy. The book includes a glossary to expand on basic wetland concepts like ecosystem services and rehabilitation. The book titled Piffy and Zenzi Go Birding is targeted at ages 7-9 and follows the adventures of two dogs birding with their owner at an open-water and a vegetated wetland. More complex wetland concepts are discussed, as well as the identification and behaviour of wetland birds. The book has a field guide format with information pages about some of the species encountered. Birding is portrayed as a fun and exciting hobby, with the wetlands hosting many special species.
- Developed short films (e.g., <https://youtu.be/URxZcRT8biI>) and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2IXM7DN4xfU>), presented webinars (e.g., <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nv07ur-br8I>), and hosted school events (<https://www.birdlife.org.za/support-us/events/flufftail-festival/>) to communicate the above outcomes to a diverse audience. Conservation awareness in South Africa has historically been directed at wealthy, older, minority demographic groups, even though the majority of the public are economically disadvantaged and located in rural areas. Alternative and engaging awareness methods that appeal to a broader audience (both in age and culture) are needed to effectively change societal views and practices. BLSA has communicated the plight of wetlands and waterbirds to the public,

especially through the annual Flufftail Festival (since 2015) led by the BLSA Empowering People Programme.

- Through the Ngesolenyoni Environmental Education & Awareness initiative, BirdLife South Africa's Empowering People Programme promotes awareness about waterbirds and wetlands among children and hosts relevant events like the Flufftail Festival. The Flufftail Festival is aimed to engage and educate the youth of Gauteng Province about the importance of protecting water resources, conserving wetlands, and preserving waterbirds. Students from various schools and Boys and Girls Clubs of South Africa participate in this event, where they engage in various activities related to wetlands, including wetland experiments and Mini SASS.
- Additional educational resources focusing on waterbirds have been created. These resources are aligned with the CAPS curriculum for specific grade levels. The book "Be a Wetland Warrior" was produced in collaboration with Water Wise, People n Planet, Joburg, Joburg Zoo, Joburg City Parks, and Pick n Pay School Club to promote awareness about the Critically Endangered White-winged Flufftail. This book is intended for students in grades 4 to 6 and instructs them on how they can contribute to becoming a Wetland Warrior.

g. Research

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### **IMSAP for the Conservation of the Benguela Upwelling System Coastal Seabirds**

The first meeting of the AEWA Benguela Coastal Seabirds International Working Group took place in March 2021. The meeting developed a Rolling Work Plan for the period 2021-2025. Unfortunately, however, lack of capacity (both funding and human capacity) has hampered the coordinated implementation of this work plan.

#### **South Africa**

A variety of research and conservation activities regarding the Benguela coastal seabirds continue in South Africa. These include, *inter alia*, the following:

- A draft African Penguin Biodiversity Management plan has been through several rounds of comment and revision but a final version has yet to be gazetted.
- A report of the International Review Panel regarding fishing closures adjacent to South Africa's African Penguin breeding colonies and declines in the penguin population was submitted to DFFE in July 2023. Based on the results of the Island Closure Experiment the Panel concluded that purse-seine

fishing restrictions around key penguin colonies would have a demographically meaningful impact on this species and recommended the implementation of long-term closures around major colonies throughout the South African range of this species. The Panel provided a trade-off mechanism to facilitate the delineation of closures that would maximise benefits to penguins while minimising costs to the fishing industry. Following the publication of this report the Minister of DFFE announced the implementation of fishing closures around six colonies, Dassen, Robben, Dyer, St Croix, Bird islands and around Stony Point, for 10 years but deferred the delineation of these closures to the conservation and fisheries stakeholder groups. In 2024 after another round of failed stakeholder consultations to realise mutually beneficial closure extents the Minister implemented long-term closures based on the interim closure extents that were implemented in September 2022. Additionally, work has continued to identify ecosystem thresholds to be included in the models used to set sardine and anchovy quotas, as an effort towards improving the implementation of an Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management.

- Efforts are underway to establish a new, land-based African Penguin colony at De Hoop Nature Reserve.
- Automated Penguin Monitoring Systems continue to be used at four colonies to monitor the weights of African Penguins in real time, which will be linked to environmental conditions to facilitate mitigating at-sea threats.
- Marine Important Bird Areas for the Endangered African Penguin (8 sites), Cape Gannet (2 sites) and Cape Cormorant (4 sites) have been included in the Critical Biodiversity Area map that the South African government will use to expand South Africa’s Marine Protected Area network.
- Research on non-breeding distributions of African Penguins and Cape Gannets is ongoing by BLSA, in collaboration with Nelson Mandela University and the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment.
- SANCCOB’s Chick Bolstering Project (which officially commenced in 2006) continues. This has led to over 9,500 African Penguin chicks being admitted to the Chick Rearing Unit in Cape Town, with 81% being successfully released back into the wild.

4. 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.

## **Malawi**

Cyclone Freddy was a powerful tropical cyclone that impacted large parts of southern Africa over a five-week period from 4 February – 14 March 2023 and reached Malawi on March 12. It resulted in the country receiving six-months’ worth of rainfall over a one-week period. This had a huge impact on the Elephant Marsh area causing water levels in the marshes to rise to extremely high levels. During this time, one key observation was that more Allen’s Gallinule were recorded during the AfWC counts and were mainly recorded on land since the vegetation was largely submerged. It is unknown if any major mortalities occurred. [Note: it should be noted that although this event occurred in 2023 it was not reported in the TC19 technical report. It is reported here to ensure this event is included as part of AEWa recording requirements]

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

## **Mauritius**

- The Mauritian Wildlife Foundation (MWF) is working to attract seabirds onto Ile aux Aigrettes and Round Island (here, in collaboration with Durrell). Ile aux Aigrettes lost its seabird population over a century ago due to poaching and invasive species, such as cats and rats. Between 2009 and 2017, 620 chicks of six seabird species were translocated to Ile aux Aigrettes, of which 87% fledged to survival. Species translocated included the following AWEA species: Red-tailed Tropicbird, White-tailed Tropicbird, Sooty Tern, Lesser Noddy, and Brown Noddy. Additional activities aimed at increasing the likelihood of seabirds re-establishing on the island include: plastic seabird decoys, playback of seabird calls, creation of seabird-friendly habitat to attract prospecting and returning seabirds, and measures to prevent animal predators from reaching the island and to protect seabirds from poaching.
- The MWF also continues to rear stranded seabirds ourselves and release the birds once they have recovered or advise community members to take care of these birds.
- On Round Island, decoys of Masked Boobies and calls playback equipment have been installed, in an attempt to attract birds from the small but stable breeding colony on Sepent Island, 2 kms away.
- Seabirds are monitored on several offshore islets, especially on Round Island, but also estimates or observations on pressures are made during trips.

### **South Africa**

BLSA, CapeNature and SANCCOB have been working to re-establish an African Penguin colony at De Hoop Nature Reserve. This project aims to create resilience in the penguin population by increasing the number of colonies and bridging the gap between South Africa's east and west populations. In 2018, a predator-proof fence was constructed, and penguin decoys and a speaker playing penguin calls were installed. Since 2021, over 230 juvenile African Penguins have been released at the colony site to encourage them to imprint on the colony and return in future when they are ready to breed. One pair of penguins successfully bred in 2022 and four pairs in 2023 (raising six chicks). One pair bred successfully in 2024, due to other penguins which had been prospecting at the colony being killed by a honey badger which got through the fence in March 2024. Penguins have still been seen at the colony since the predation, including moulting birds. Additional predator defenses have been installed.

## **6. Activities on eradication or other type of action regarding alien species.**

### **South Africa**

- The Gauteng Department of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment (GDARDE) has compiled a draft risk analysis for the Black Swan as part of the requirement to list the species under the national Alien and Invasive Species (A&IS) Regulations. This went through a series of reviews and was accepted into the A&I list. The proposed listing of this species under these regulations will create a legal basis for setting minimum keeping requirements which is currently lacking.
- Invasive alien plant (IAP) clearing continues at the Verlorenvlei Ramsar site and in its catchment, focusing on the central catchment area (the 9,000 ha Moutonshoek Protected Environment).
- BLSA co-funds the IAP clearing team at the Berg River estuary; one of the country's most important estuaries for conservation. This team was trained and equipped by BLSA and is now employed (on rolling contract) by West Coast District Municipality, resulting in improved habitat for waterbirds.
- BLSA finalised IAP Management Unit Clearing Plans for developing protected areas (nature reserves and protected environments) at the Klein River estuary, a priority estuary for conservation on South Africa's Cape Whale Coast, co-funding their implementation, and improving the quality of the estuarine

habitat for waterbirds. However, there are still areas and other important wetland habitats that are infested. There is consequently a need to expand on the current interventions by identifying and mapping all possible sources and infested areas and initiating control measures.

- BLSA coordinated with Working for Water and Upper Wilge Protected Environment landowners to determine priority areas for alien clearing within the Harrismith region.
- BLSA is a co-coordinator for the newly formed Cape Floristic Region Partnership (CFRP), a partnership of 40 plus government and non-government organisations from across the CFR, which has, amongst other priorities, the identification, mapping, prioritization and resourcing of key areas for IAP clearing, including the coordination of the CFR Integrated Fire and IAP Clearing, and Invasive Alien Animals Working Groups.

## **Zambia**

- Since 2017, the Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT) and the International Crane Foundation (ICF) have been controlling *Mimosa pigra* in on the Kafue Flats to restore the habitat for cranes and wildlife species. Native vegetation has been restored to be able to support cranes and other species. BirdWatch Zambia is also removing *Mimosa pigra* in Liuwa/Barotse floodplains to restore native vegetation for Grey Crowned Cranes and other wildlife species.

On the Kafue Flats, we have provided seasonal employment to the local communities by engaging them in the removal of *Mimosa pigra* to restore critical habitat for Grey Crowned Cranes and other wildlife species. In Western Zambia on the Barotse floodplain, another Grey Crowned Crane stronghold, BirdWatch Zambia has engaged local communities in the removal of *Mimosa pigra* as an alternative livelihood to reduce pressure on the Grey Crowned Crane habitats.

The extent of IAPs in the Kafue Flats is not known, only the extent of *Mimosa pigra* has been documented (approximately 3000ha) of which about 2400ha have been cleared and restored as evidenced by the return of cranes and other wildlife and regeneration of native vegetation. However, the work was only undertaken in Lochinvar NP and as such *Mimosa pigra* has continued to spread outside the park. Last year between November and December, we undertook follow-up action with herbicides on *Mimosa* regrowth in Lochinvar and restored 130ha. On the Barotse Floodplains, which is another stronghold for Grey Crowned Crane, BirdWatch Zambia is undertaking the removal of *Mimosa pigra* to restore the habitat for Grey Crowned Cranes and other wildlife, the work is still ongoing.

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

### **South Africa**

- For biodiversity stewardship please refer to section 3 (d) above.
- CapeNature and BLSA produced a strategy outlining the agreed approach to safeguarding priority estuaries for conservation in the Western Cape. This document has now been approved recommendations from the strategy included in the relevant Estuary Management Plans. The strategy focuses on coastal estuarine waters (coastal public property) and the project is working with CapeNature, other government partners and the local communities to facilitate the declaration of formal protected areas over large areas of the Olifants River, Verlorenvlei, Berg River, Bot River-Kleinmond and Klein River estuaries, including the open water, mudflats and large areas of endangered, highly valuable salt marsh. In 2024, progress was made at the most threatened sites, the Olifants River estuary and Verlorenvlei, with the intention of seeing them fully declared by 2026.
- A 7,000 ha protected environment on the north bank of the Berg River estuary, at Velddrif on the

West Coast (which consistently ranks within the top three estuaries for conservation in South Africa) is entering the last phase of the declaration process. It is planned that it will be fully declared before the end of 2025, with the accompanying environmental management plan. It includes more than 1,000 ha of estuarine functional zone and will be the first estuarine protected environment in South Africa. At the Klein River estuary (ranked 5<sup>th</sup> in the country for its conservation importance), a further two nature reserves and a protected environment (currently, totaling around 1,500 ha) have completed the initial phase of the declaration process.

- The Ingula Nature Reserve and Berg River estuary have been declared as Ramsar Sites, and phase two of the declaration of the Bot River-Kleinmond estuarine system Ramsar site is underway.
- BLSA is leading avifaunal-, mortality event-, and habitat monitoring on Ingula Nature Reserve.
- BLSA is leading on biodiversity stewardship coordination in the Eastern Free State, which includes avifaunal monitoring of the broader landscape.
- The Western Cape Other Effective area-based Conservation Measures (OECM) project (2021-2023) developed a framework for identifying and recognising OECMs in the province, including resource requirements. It provided the basis for the rollout of an OECM, phase two project, which launched in 2024, looking at the implementation of OECMs across South Africa, including the supporting legal framework. This project includes objectives exploring marine and estuarine OECMs, which could offer additional protections for marine and coastal waterbirds.
- BLSA is leading work aimed at the active restoration of blue and teal carbon habitats, specifically salt marsh, sedge marsh, and reed marsh habitats along South Africa's West Coast. BLSA looks to improve the Berg's conservation through increased formal protection and better management, including actions to restore degraded or lost estuarine habitat, while creating a greater awareness of the estuary's importance. Specific projects (2023-) focus on actively protecting and restoring its key, threatened estuarine habitats, like salt marsh, one of South Africa's most important 'blue carbon' habitats (blue carbon refers to the carbon captured and stored by aquatic, "blue" habitats, specifically coastal and marine ecosystems, such as mangroves, salt marshes, and seagrasses). This includes investigating soft-engineering, environmentally-sound bank erosion control interventions (e.g., reed marsh planting; landscaped, re-vegetated banks, etc.). The approach to estuarine habitat protection and restoration is multifaceted. At the Berg it currently includes the following core actions: 1) mapping and understanding the drivers behind ongoing estuarine habitat degradation, including accelerated bank erosion, supported by water, soil, bathymetric, and vegetation condition monitoring; 2) restoration through re-seeding and re-vegetation (planting) in both degraded reed and salt marshes, enabled by the active propagation of key, indigenous species, in partnership with a local nursery; 3) protection of threatened estuarine habitats through the development of instructional signage (linked to the recreational-use by-laws for the estuary) and informational signage around the importance of these habitats, 4) improvement of grazing practices in the estuarine floodplain, and 5) ongoing efforts to increase formal protection of the estuary through biodiversity stewardship and other means. These projects provide an ideal platform for the upscaling of estuarine habitat and bank restoration efforts for greater impact at the Berg and at other estuaries facing similar pressures, with positive benefits for the associated waterbirds. This work has already been expanded to include the Olifants River estuary as a secondary site.
- In Gauteng Province, there has been a revision of the Conservation Plan for the province (Desmet et al. 2024) and the following notable wetland-associated species have been included in the plan: African Finfoot, African Grass Owl, African Marsh Harrier, Black Stork, Blue Crane, Half-collared Kingfisher, Maccoa Duck, White-backed Night Heron, and Yellow-billed Stork. Although not all are AEW listed species it is important to note that the role of the conservation plan includes species that are considered important or significant from an ecosystem. The plan includes CBA (Critical

Biodiversity Area) maps which prioritize spatial ecological sustainability. This is a quote from Desmet et al. (2024): ‘In addition to providing a blue-print for the conservation of biodiversity in the province, the areas earmarked in the conservation plan are also important ecological infrastructure that deliver a range of ecosystem services to society. These have significant benefits to the residents of the province and underpin sustainable development in the province. The benefits of these ecosystems are numerous including climate change mitigation, cultural value, sense of place, quality of life, job creation, and more. CBA maps are spatial plans for ecological sustainability. They are a form of strategic planning for the natural environment, providing a coherent and systematically identified set of geographic priorities to inform planning, action and decision-making in support of sustainable development’ (Desmet, P.G., Kani, L. and Hawley, G. 2024. Revision of the Gauteng Province C-Plan (v4.0, 2023) Technical Report. Report prepared for Gauteng Department of Environment (GDEnv), Johannesburg. September 2024.)

- The EWT/ICF has been involved with the proclamation of nine biodiversity stewardship sites in the last 10 years protecting a total of 138 260 hectares that Grey Crowned Crane live on since 2014.

The Ongeluksnek wetland complex is a huge system, estimated to be around 40,000 hectares in extent, and feeds into the Umzimvubu River. It consists of a variety of wetland types, which play a significant role in providing a habitat to a variety of rare and endangered water and terrestrial bird species including all three crane species in South Africa. It is also an important system from an anthropogenic perspective, in terms of the water services and security it provides. The proposal for this area to be a Ramsar site is underway. Ongeluksnek Nature Reserve is the first phase going to enter Ramsar delegation. The Ramsar Information sheet needs to be boosted for the number of species. The Department of Forestry, Fisheries and Environment has organised a bioblitz on the 1st May. Following this it is expected that designation will be implemented towards the end of the year or beginning of 2026. This will be the first phase of the project. A number of NGOs have been collaborating to raise awareness with the local communities surrounding the wetland.

In 2024 two new sites were brought into the Biodiversity Stewardship Scheme process that places protection on private lands. The Vulture’s Peak Nature Reserve (297 hectares) was published in the government gazette in January 2025 and the phase 2 of the Kiepersol Protected Environment was published in December 2024 (849 hectares), protecting a further 1 146 ha of threatened irreplaceable grassland habitats that Grey Crowned Crane occupy.

## **Zambia**

- The EWT/ICF have engaged the Ramsar focal point as well as the CEPA and STRP in Zambia have and now are involved in some of the work relating to wetland restoration on the Kafue Flats and other areas where cranes are present.

## **Zimbabwe**

- The EWT/ICF have identified at least 10 key wetlands in Driefontein, some already disturbed by agricultural activities. These were restored with active participation of the local communities. Community mobilisation was done, awareness on wetland restoration raised and fencing materials (barbed wire) were provided to the communities who took a lead in protecting the core parts of the wetlands (seeps). This was successful and Grey Crowned Crane have recolonised most of these restored sites for breeding and foraging.

## **8. Progress of the region in phasing out the use of lead shot for hunting in wetlands.**

### **Regional progress**

There have been no major updates since the last report which highlighted the workshop around lead-advocacy and vulture conservation, but which also highlighted AEWA requirements.

## **Malawi**

The Wildlife and Environmental Society of Malawi (WESM) with funding from BirdLife International convened a workshop with the Department of National Parks and Wildlife (DNPW) and other stakeholders to discuss the issue of lead shot. This engagement is expected to continue this year. The DNPW are willing to look at changing their ammunition type, however they source them from the Malawi Defense force and thus there is need to engage them as well. This will be done this year.

### **9. New or major ongoing research and monitoring activities on waterbirds and waterbird habitats.**

## **Malawi**

- The Wildlife and Environmental Society of Malawi (WESM) with funding from the Darwin Initiative has been implementing a project on Chia Lagoon to conserve bird habitats. The project aimed to formalize the bird hunters in the community and to also build their capacity to conserve breeding areas. Bird sanctuaries have been established around the lagoon and are currently being assessed for KBA status

## **South Africa**

- The Coordinated Waterbird Counts (CWAC) project consists of a programme of regular mid-summer and mid-winter censuses at many of South Africa's most important wetlands.
- In Gauteng, GDARDE continues to conduct summer and winter waterbird counts at sites across the province. They are still challenged with safety concerns at several historical CWAC sites that are counted by volunteers or GDARDE staff which may impact on continuation of counts in the future.
- BLSA coordinated the Northern and Western Cape's response to the 2022/2023 summer International Waterbird Census (IWC), Total Count of the East Atlantic Flyway. This involves the inclusion of additional coastal wetland sites to the national CWAC registrar. BLSA also coordinated the 2023/ 2024 summer IWC, and is currently engaged in the 2024/ 2025 census.
- BLSA continues to institute additional bird monitoring as part of the CWAC at estuarine IBAs and KBAs (i.e., doing additional biannual counts), allowing for a better understanding of bird movement in response to seasonal changes and management, such as artificial breaching of river mouths.
- As part of its Memorandum of Understanding with the Western Cape environmental agency, CapeNature, BLSA conducts analyses of waterbird trends at priority estuaries, contributing to Estuary Management Plan reporting frameworks. BLSA also provides training in CWAC and waterbird identification to government officials, NGOs and local community members, with multiple training events held in 2023 and 2024 at sites along the West and South coasts.
- There needs to be follow up with the SA Hunters and Game Conservation Association and their Wild Harvest Survey, in which its members voluntarily report on birds hunted every year.
- BLSA maintains a database of bird fatalities recorded at wind energy facilities (a summary report

to be released early 2025).

- BLSA Avifaunal monitoring within the broader Eastern Free State stewardship landscape
- The EWT/ICF have developed a deeper research project to identify the needs of cranes in wetlands using desktop-based information and drones to guide management of these wetlands. This work aims to then use this information to better guide farmers and landowners on how to best manage Grey Crowned Crane breeding sites and to establish a Grey Crowned Crane Crane Custodian program.

A master's student studying Grey Crowned Crans has conducted research on nest survival, and this showed a 38.4% hatch rate which is exacerbated under heavy rainfall (Demmer CR, Demmer S, McIntyre T 2025. Environmental correlates of breeding outcomes in Endangered Grey Crowned Cranes *Balearica regulorum* in agricultural areas of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. *Bird Conservation International*, 35, e2, 1–13 <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0959270924000376>)

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

### South Africa

- Annual media campaigns continue to be run around World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD), and the BirdLasser migratory bird challenge has also been linked to WMBD during this period.
- The Spring Alive event celebrates the arrival of migrants during the South African spring.
- The annual Flufftail Festival seeks to enhance awareness about the importance of water and the biodiversity that wetlands support. An interactive 'Be a Wetland Warrior' activity book (designed around the Grade 6 curriculum) is available at the following link: <https://www.birdlife.org.za/support-us/events/flufftail-festival/>
- The EWT/ICF approach to raising awareness in crane sensitive areas is to support and educate on the best practice for natural land resource management. The reach this year has been to 1641 men and 1903 women and 231 youth. General school engagement around wetlands and cranes was 112 ranging from preschool to grade 5.

### Malawi

- Malawi has continued its participation in the International Waterbird Census with support from the IWC secretariat and a growing number of volunteers throughout the country. About 8 sites are monitored each year and this year 12 sites were covered.
- The Wildlife and Environmental Society of Malawi (WESM) with funding from the Darwin Initiative has been implementing a project on Chia Lagoon to conserve bird habitats. This project has been monitoring birds on a more regular basis at Chia to understand the diversity of waterbirds. The Shire Valley Transformation project in the Lower Shire continues to conduct regular waterbird counts on the Elephant Marsh Ramsar site.

### Mauritius

To raise awareness on shorebirds, the Mauritian Wildlife Foundation organised two activities for members of the public on 27th January (Friends of Mauritian Wildlife Foundation activity) and 12th October (World Bird Migratory Bird Day). There was much interest from attendees, and we hope to run such activities annually (see: <https://www.facebook.com/profile/100064522697119/search/?q=shorebird>)

### Zambia

- The EWT/ICF have established conservation clubs in 20 schools on the Kafue Flats which we are

using as the platform for raising awareness among learners and local communities about their impacts on cranes, habitats and other wildlife species. Community members have been participating in crane habitat restoration through the removal of invasive species and by so doing raising awareness in their households and general community.

- The EWT/ICF have also supported sports for conservation activities. Sports being crowd pullers in local communities have been used to convey messages about cranes and their habitats. We have involved schools in commemorating world environmental focus days such as biodiversity day that comprise radio and tv campaign programs. They are supporting local community structures which in turn have provided community members as eco rangers to protect the rich biodiversity including cranes. In other Grey Crowned Crane strongholds, the EWT/ICF are working through partnerships with African Parks and the Department of National Parks and Wildlife (DNPW) to continue raising awareness to the communities.

## **Zimbabwe**

- The EWT/ICF raised awareness on the conservation of cranes in the Driefontein Grasslands and the areas in the Midlands Province (Somabula, Meadows, and Lower Gwelo) where Grey Crowned Cranes exist and were recorded. The communities were told about the conservation status of Grey Crowned Cranes, and human impact on their conservation. However, more still needs to be done especially in the Midlands area.

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

### **South Africa**

#### *a. Legal compliance and enforcement*

Since October 2019 efficacy of assessment of threats posed by development activities, regulated through the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations in terms of s24 of the National Environmental Management Act 107 of 1998 (NEMA), has been enhanced by the requirement for assessment practitioners to apply mandatory Screening Tool. This assists in the identification of species and environmental sensitivities at a site, including areas of special interest, such as protected areas and critical biodiversity areas. Potentially affected areas that the Tool designates as being sensitive must be considered for specialist investigation. The *Terrestrial Plant Species and Terrestrial Animal Species Protocols* have been gazetted for the purpose of providing minimum information requirements for species specialist studies, thereby standardising species-level aspects of EIAs and the reporting of potential impacts from proposed developments on species of conservation concern (SCC). The requirement to include the Screening Tool Report in the EIA Application improves transparency and accountability and the Protocols drive a higher standard of specialist report. Despite these improvements to the legislation, environmental assessment practitioners do not always comply or find reasons to avoid undertaking specialist studies based on superficial site inspections. The introduction of 'alternative instruments' allowed for in NEMA, is becoming prevalent – effectively replacing the need for detailed assessments with a 'registration' process, in order to facilitate faster approvals and roll out of certain types of development.

Ongoing concerns relate to the retrospective authorisation of unlawful activities (in terms of section 24G of NEMA) – a provision which is often abused and the consequences of which is negatively

affected the Verlorenvlei where the ‘rectification’ of the illegal damming of water has had serious and adverse environmental impacts on surface waterflow and waterbird habitats.

*b. Wind energy*

Grid constraints in the western half of South Africa have seen an increasing number of proposed wind energy developments in Mpumalanga’s high-altitude grasslands. While proposed infrastructure generally avoids wetlands, there is a concern about habitat degradation and collision risk, including for the critically endangered White-winged Flufftail. South Africa may see the development of offshore wind in the medium term (5-10 years) - presenting a risk of collisions, disturbance, displacement and habitat alteration. The first environmental impact assessment for an offshore wind energy facility was initiated and the CSIR is developing an offshore wind roadmap. BirdLife South Africa is advocating for robust strategic planning.

*c. Mining:*

There has been a significant increase in prospecting and mining applications those pose a threat to waterbird habitat. Many such applications are in proximity (and sometimes within Protected Areas). For example, a developer is currently asking the courts to withdraw the Protected Area status of the Moutonshoek Protected Environment with the intention of establishing a tungsten mine. This would have a detrimental effect on the headwaters of Krom Antonies that drains into the Verlorenvlei Ramsar site. Mining also affects estuarine and waterbird habitats along the West Coast of South Africa, specifically extensive sand, diamond and heavy mineral mining. The lack of formal protection status for some of these estuaries, like the Olifants River estuary, make it more difficult to exclude mining companies.

Inland wetlands and waterbird habitats are under increasing pressure from coal mining applications, particularly in eastern parts of Mpumalanga, northern KZN and Free State. These applications are mainly for small, open cast mines and are often backed by junior miners who lack experience and funds to undertake the required rehabilitation of mining pits. The result is the destruction of valuable mesic grasslands and the threat of water pollution. Cumulative impacts in this regard also pose a serious concern.

*d. Marine noise, disturbance and pollution:*

The impacts of noise, marine pollution and increasing levels of general disturbance generated by marine traffic poses a serious and growing risk to diving seabirds and African Penguins in particular. The species was recently (in November 2024) been listed by the IUCN as Critically Endangered with noise and disturbance, as well as oil spills and food shortages, identified as key drivers of the decline in population number. A recent study of the African Penguin colony at St Croix Island (in Algoa Bay) found a strong correlation between an exponential increase in vessel-derived noise associated with ship-to-ship bunkering activities (i.e., offshore fuel transfers) in proximity to St Croix Island and the decrease in the African Penguin population (Pichegru et al., 2022). In 2023 712 pairs occupied this colony (i.e. a 91% decline since 2015 prior to bunkering activities commenced in 2016). An Environmental Risk Assessment for ship-to-ship bunkering in Algoa Bay was completed in 2024 which included specialist input into the potential risks associated with vessel-derived noise. The

authors of the noise assessment concluded that there was a high level of risk associated with noise pollution on marine fauna, especially African Penguins, with a low probability of mitigation. Bunkering was suspended in Algoa Bay in October 2023 due to South African tax compliance issues; subsequently the population increased to 1350 pairs in 2024. However, with bunkering likely to resume before the end of February 2024, the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and Environment are intending to introduce stricter regulations to decrease the risk of bunkering to seabirds and mammals.

The following research is currently underway:

- i. No updates on the ‘Acoustic Foraging Network of African Penguins’ (AFNAP) were received but the project continues to collect hydrophonic and accelerometric data from African Penguins in Algoa Bay
- ii. BLSA and SANCCOB installed an Automated Penguin Monitoring System (APMS) on Bird Island, Algoa Bay in October 2022 and data collection on penguin activity budgets and penguin condition is ongoing.
- iii. NMU and AFNAP researchers are in the process of applying for permission to conduct experiments on captive African Penguins to understand the underwater noise level thresholds that induce avoidance behaviour. This data will be crucial to inform management of marine noise levels including those associated with bunkering activities.
- iv. South Africa is participating in the international IMO Glonoise Partnership Project which aims to investigate and address the environmental impacts of Underwater Radiated Noise (URN) from commercial ships on marine ecosystems. while contributing to the reduction of Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions from global shipping. The first workshop for this Project took place in Cape Town on 25 January 2025.

*e. Threats identified at waterbird monitoring sites in Gauteng:*

GDARDE continues to gather information on threats to wetlands and waterbirds from each of their monitoring sites in Gauteng that are surveyed by GDARDE staff. Reed encroachment, eutrophication and spread of alien invasive aquatic plants remain the most widespread threats.

*f. Permitting issues to keep wild caught indigenous cranes in captivity in Gauteng:*

Keeping of indigenous cranes is regulated by means of provincial permits. Permits will only be issued for the keeping of cranes where there is DNA evidence (parent testing) confirming captive-bred origin and it seems, but requires confirmation, that this has become a national standard. GDARD reports that this is an ongoing issue and is working towards a solution where this practice is prevented in the province.

## **Malawi**

The proposed Eastern Backbone powerline passes through a number of important wetland areas along the Lake Malawi and has the potential for impacting waterbirds in these areas. The ESIA processes for the project has recently started and further engagements are expected to take place with the team.

## **Mauritius**

The Mauritius Wildlife Foundation has raised alarm bells on a site where a hotel has obtained an EIA for

construction, and which is being used by migratory species, highlighting that the EIA conditions should be reviewed, if not cancelled.

## **Zimbabwe**

Activities from the EWT/ICF have shown preliminary observations on the impacts of climate change in Driefontein and the Midlands area identified the drying up of some small dams and wetland areas. In Driefontein Grasslands some water bodies such as the Widgeon Pan had below 20% of their water capacity. Over the past four years, this pan has not reached its full capacity and has been drying up quicker than before. These were attributed to climate change. However, further studies are required to ascertain the impacts of climate change on wetlands in Grey Crowned Crane-dominated landscapes.

## 12. Extent of use of the AEWA Conservation Guidelines by the Parties

### **Malawi**

- The Chia project is using the guidelines on hunting to draft the hunting protocols for the new bird hunting clubs at Chia Lagoon.
- This was the only response received to this question. The comment from the previous report (TC19) is again noted here : “...considerably more effort is needed to raise awareness regarding, and promote the use of, AEWA’s Conservation Guidelines in this region.”

## 13. Any other information

### **South Africa**

- The Regional Red List for birds is in the process of being updated, with over 180 species formally assessed by species experts. Many of the additional species over the 132 species appearing in the 2015 Red Data Book are water and wetland bird species, as well as migratory waterbird species. The final assessments will be publicly available in May 2025.

The Grey Crowned Crane has been downlisted from Endangered to Vulnerable as per the Red Listing guidelines. This is primarily due to the increasing counts of flocks within KwaZulu-Natal province determined by the annual aerial surveys conducted by EWT/ICF and Ezemvelo KwaZulu-Natal Wildlife. Meanwhile other provinces are thought to be in decline.

- The National AEWA Implementation Plan has been written and has been sent to the Ministerial approval as it has been presented to the intergovernmental structures.

### **Malawi**

- There is a suggestion for the development of a regional prioritized plan for research activities for key species such as the Grey Crowned Crane that occurs across a number of countries. This is also echoed by the EWT/ICF.

## Regional Report – Western Africa (Kady Gueye)

- Contacted NFPs by email and phone
- Some of them are retired

07 of 13 Contracting Parties provided feedback for this report: Benin, Ghana, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal and Togo.

### Species Conservation

The western African region has not specifically undertaken activities towards implementation of relevant AEWA ISSAP's. However, there has been the implementation of general conservation actions including Wildlife Resources Management, which ensures the general protection of AEWA species along the flyway and their wintering and breeding habitat.

In line with AEWA guidelines, some countries have collaborated in developing action plans for threatened species, such as the spoonbill and the flamingo (Mauritania). BTG (Senegal). These plans aim to identify specific threats and implement appropriate conservation measures.

### Habitat Conservation

There were no records of emergencies situations, however subtle variations have been observed in some countries.

**Nigeria:** subtle variations in dry season and rainfall regime have been observed. In some cases, extreme flooding driven by climate change has been observed, the Hadeija-Nguru Wetland which is a RAMSAR site, a KBA and an important area for livelihood activities has experienced extreme flooding, thus, altering habitat conditions.

**Togo** has experienced are prolonged droughts affecting habitats. The same is true of the discharges of water from the Nangbéto dam which washed away more than 10 ha of Lake Elia, which is very popular with migratory birds.

**Senegal:** Degradation and fragmentation of habitats, water pollution due to pesticide discharge, the presence of invasive species in water plants (ex PNOD).

### Management of Human Activities

#### Building capacity, development AGR

- The hunting law clearly prohibits the use of lead shot. And among the actions implemented to monitor hunting activity, we can note: The existence of a mobile surveillance brigade to eradicate hunting.
- The hunting code regulates hunting including hunting zones.
- There is limited information in this regard, there is no legislation on this even though hunting of waterbirds using lead in dane guns is still recorded.
- Environmental education programs.

### Research and Monitoring

- Collaboration with University.
- Biodiversity research units maintain awareness-raising activities on the preservation of wetlands and their biodiversity are carried out in parallel with the field missions carried out by these research teams.
- For example, the Biodiversity and Sustainable Development Education Research Unit (UR-EBDD) often presents its research in high school classes to promote ecosystems and their biodiversity, particularly

plant, ichthyological and ornithological. It thus fights against illegal hunting.

- Training in Ornithology and monitoring of waterbirds
  - Integrated water resource management project in 8 municipalities bordering the Mono and Littoral basins
  - Shared governance in these 8 municipalities
- Students support
- Projects implemented
- Radio broadcasts to raise awareness among stakeholders about the importance of habitats
- Habitat monitoring
- Species monitoring

## **Regional Report – South-western Asia (Mohammed Shobrak)**

### **Threats**

- Hunting
  - IKB working group was established and meet in Saudi Arabia early January 2024, and South-West Asia Task force was approved during CMS/COP14
  - The Task Force will be meeting during 20-22 of May
- Habitat distraction
- Unsustainable coastal developments
  - Seagrass Initiative (GCC)
  - World Costal Forum (BirdLife International ME)
  - Seabirds Monitoring (PERSGA)
  - Barr Al Hekman (Wetland International (Oman)
- Energy Infrastructures
- Illegal Trade
- Pollution
- Invasive Species
- Diseases
- Climate Change

### **Implementation Measures Species Action plan Sociable Lapwing**

- A yearly monitoring program for the SL at breeding and wintering countries and more cooperation expected on the coming years between them.
- Satellite tracking showed the important of Iran for the wintering SL and decrease of western migration and increase of eastern Migration
- New Important Areas for the species was established in Saudi Arabia
- Legislation and Implementation through establish Special Forces For Environmental Security at started patrolling within the protected areas where most of the wintering sociable lapwing observed (Started September to March).
- Insulate the dangerous Powerline around farms for protection of other species
- NCW work with AEWA secretariate to develop cooperate in the conservation
- of Sociable Lapwing

### Implementation Measures Alien Species House Crow in the coastal and islands

- The GCC countries consider the alien species in their strategies (training workshops & establish eradication at Qatar, Oman and Saudi Arabia. Approximately one million Invasive species were eradicated from Oman & 1,600 from Saudi Arabia
- National Strategies and Action Plan was developed in Saudi Arabia and now under approval from the Ministry.

### Implementation Measures Site Inventory

2016		End of 2023		2025		2030	
Terrestrial	Marian	Terrestrial	Marian	Terrestrial	Marian	Terrestrial	Marian
4.3%	3.5%	18.1%	6.48%	22%	24%	30%	30%

### Challenges

- Capacity Building
- Lack of Baseline work
- Lack of Monitoring programs
- Lack of Coordination
- Economy vs Nature

## Annex II: List of Participants

<b>TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS - REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES</b>		
<b>Representative</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Organisation/Institution</b>
<b>CENTRAL EUROPE</b>		
Mr Taulant BINO (TC Vice-Chair)	President/Head	Albanian Ornithological Society (AOS)
<b>EASTERN EUROPE</b>		
Mr Zurab JAVAKHISHVILI	Associate Professor	Ilia State University
<b>NORTH AND SOUTH-WESTERN EUROPE</b>		
Ms Maria DIAS	Assistant Professor	Faculdade de Ciências da Universidade de Lisboa
<b>NORTHERN AFRICA</b>		
Mr Hichem AZAFZAF	Scientific Program Coordinator	Association "Les Amis des Oiseaux" (AAO/BirdLife en Tunisie)
<b>WESTERN AFRICA</b>		
Ms Khady GUEYE	Biodiversity Manager	Wetlands International Afrique

<b>SOUTH-WESTERN ASIA</b>		
Mr Mohammed SHOBRAK (TC Chair)	Consultant	Prince Saud Al Faisal Wildlife Research Center National Center for Wildlife

<b>TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS - REPRESENTATIVES OF ORGANISATIONS</b>		
<b>Representative</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Organisation/Institution</b>
<b>WETLANDS INTERNATIONAL</b>		
Mr Szabolcs NAGY	Biodiversity Programme Manager	Wetlands International European Association
<b>INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL FOR GAME AND WILDLIFE CONSERVATION (CIC)</b>		
Mr Matt ELLIS	Deputy Director of Conservation	British Association for Shooting and Conservation (BASC)

<b>TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS - THEMATIC EXPERTS</b>		
<b>Representative</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Organisation/Institution</b>
<b>ENVIRONMENTAL LAW</b>		
Mr Emmanuel KASIMBAZI	Director	School of Law, Makerere University
<b>RURAL ECONOMICS</b>		
Mr Nils BUNNEFELD	Professor Biological and Environmental Sciences	University of Stirling

**INVITED EXPERTS**

<b>Representative</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Organisation/Institution</b>
Mr David STROUD	Emeritus Senior Advisor	Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC)
Mr Chris ROSTRON	Coordinator	MedWet (Ramsar Regional Initiative for the Mediterranean)

**OBSERVERS FROM THE AEWAS STANDING COMMITTEE**

<b>Representative</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Organisation/Institution</b>
<b>UNITED KINGDOM</b>		
Mr Simon MACKOWN (StC Chair)	Head of Species Recovery and Reintroductions	Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA)
<b>SOUTH AFRICA</b>		
Ms Tebogo MASHUA	Control Biodiversity Officer	Department of Forestry, Fisheries and The Environment

**OBSERVERS FROM CONTRACTING PARTIES**

<b>Representative</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Organisation/Institution</b>
<b>CZECH REPUBLIC (HOST)</b>		
Ms Libuše VLASÁKOVÁ	Senior Advisor	Ministry of the Environment
Mr David HOŘÁK	Associate Professor	Faculty of Science, Charles University
Mr Josef CHYTIL	Zoologist	Comenius Museum Přerov

Mr Jiří KMET	Head of Division Administration of Protected Landscape Pálava	Nature Conservation Agency of the Czech Republic
Mr Vlastimil SAJFRT	Deputy Head of Division Administration of Protected Landscape Pálava	Nature Conservation Agency of the Czech Republic
<b>DENMARK</b>		
Mr Preben CLAUSEN	Senior Researcher	Aarhus University
Mr Søren EGELUND	Biologist	Ministry of Green Transition
<b>SAUDI ARABIA</b>		
Mr Abdulkarim ALANAZI	Bird Conservation Specialist The National Center for Wildlife	The National Center for Wildlife
<b>UNITED KINGDOM</b>		
Mr Matt PARSONS	Senior International Advisor on Migratory Birds	Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC)
<b>ZIMBABWE</b>		
Mr Never MUBOKO	Director	Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority
Ms Josephine ZISADZA	Ecologist	Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority
Ms Amanda VAMBE	International Conventions Officer	Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority

**OBSERVERS FROM NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS**

<b>Representative</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Organisation/Institution</b>
<b>BIRDLIFE INTERNATIONAL</b>		
Ms Nicola CROCKFORD	Principal Policy Officer	BirdLife International
<b>FACE</b>		
Mr Cy GRIFFIN	Senior Conservation Manager	Federation of Associations for Hunting and Conservation of the EU – FACE
<b>OMPO</b>		
Mr Alexandre CZAIJKOWSKI	Director	OMPO

**UNEP/AEWA SECRETARIAT**

<b>Representative</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Organisation/Institution</b>
Mr Jacques TROUVILLIEZ	Executive Secretary	UNEP/AEWA Secretariat
Mr Sergey DERELIEV	Chief Programmatic Officer	UNEP/AEWA Secretariat
Ms Melissa LEWIS	Species Officer	UNEP/AEWA Secretariat
Mr Florian KEIL	Information Officer	UNEP/AEWA Secretariat
Ms Jeannine DICKEN	Programme Management Assistant	UNEP/AEWA Secretariat