



## 8<sup>th</sup> SESSION OF THE MEETING OF THE PARTIES

26 - 30 October 2022, Budapest, Hungary

*“Strengthening Flyway Conservation in a Changing World”*

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### **SUMMARY OF THE CURRENT STATUS OF SPECIES ACTION AND MANAGEMENT PLAN PRODUCTION AND COORDINATION WITH RECOMMENDATIONS TO MOP FOR EXTENSION, REVISION OR RETIREMENT**

#### **Introduction**

The Agreement foresees both the conservation and sustainable use of migratory waterbirds by Parties and subsequently provides for the development and adoption of International Species Action and Management Plans for prioritised species/populations.

This document provides an updated overview of the current status of the production of AEWA International Species Action and Management Plans, including progress made with regard to establishing international coordinating mechanisms for adopted Plans.

In addition, the 6<sup>th</sup> Session of the Meeting of the Parties adopted a procedure for the revision and possible retirement of AEWA Action Plans (document AEWA/MOP 6.33 and Resolution 6.8, Annex 2) which was amended at the 7<sup>th</sup> Session of the Meeting of the Parties to also include the option to extend the validity of Action Plans (document AEWA/MOP 7.21). A first decision on the extension, revision or retirement of Action Plans was subsequently taken at MOP7 (AEWA Resolution 7.5).

As part of the adopted procedure the Technical Committee has the rolling task of continuing the monitoring of International Single Species Action Plans and presenting proposals for their extension, revision or retirement to each Session of the Meeting of the Parties, as appropriate and this was considered by the Committee at its 16<sup>th</sup> Meeting in January 2021. As the first of the International Species Management Plans (Pink-footed Goose) adopted under AEWA is approaching the end of its term in 2022, the Technical Committee proposes to amend the procedure on the extension, revision and retirement of AEWA Species Plans to also cover the Management Plans adopted under the Agreement. In addition, the Committee agreed on its proposals for the extension, revision or retirement of AEWA International Species Action and Management Plans to MOP8.

The MOP has also requested the Technical Committee through Resolutions 5.8 and 6.8 to produce priority lists and subsequent selections of species/populations for the development of International Species Action and Management Plans at its first meeting after each MOP. The Technical Committee has again adopted revised criteria for the prioritisation of species/populations for Action and Management Plans at its 16<sup>th</sup> Meeting in January 2021 which are attached for information in Annex II.

At its 16<sup>th</sup> meeting on 4-6 May 2021 the Standing Committee took note of the current status of International Species Action and Management Plan preparation and coordination as well as of the revised criteria for species action and management planning as adopted by the Technical Committee.

The Standing Committee further reviewed the revised process for the extension, revision and retirement of Action and Management Plans, as well as the recommended treatment of the selected AEWA International Single Species Action and Management Plans and approved the document for submission to the 8<sup>th</sup> Session of the Meeting of the Parties.

This document was updated in July 2022 to reflect some developments since it was last approved by the Standing Committee in mid-2021 for submission to MOP8 which at the time was planned for early October 2021.

### **Action Requested from the Meeting of the Parties**

The Meeting of the Parties is requested to take note of the current status of International Species Action and Management Plan preparation and coordination as well as of the revised criteria for prioritisation for species action and management planning as adopted by the Technical Committee.

Following the recommendations of the Technical Committee, the Meeting of the Parties is further requested to review and approve the revised process for the extension, revision and retirement of Action and Management Plans, as well as to review and approve the recommended treatment of the selected AEWA International Single Species Action and Management Plans.

## 1. Current status of preparation of AEWA International Species Action and Management Plans

### 1.1. Introduction

A total of 26 International Single Species Action Plans, one International Multi-Species Action Plan and three International Single Species Management Plans have been adopted under the Agreement to date. Of these, one Action Plan was retired at the 7<sup>th</sup> Session of the Meeting of the Parties and the 8<sup>th</sup> Session of the Meeting of the Parties is expected to adopt one new Action Plan.

### 1.2. Action and Management Plans adopted under AEWA 2002-2018

The following table includes all International Species Action and Management Plans adopted under AEWA 2002-2018.

Table 1: AEWA International Single Species Action and Management Plans adopted under the Agreement to date

Species	Adopted
Great Snipe ( <i>Gallinago media</i> )	MOP2 in 2002
Black-winged Pratincole ( <i>Glareola nordmanni</i> )	MOP2 in 2002
Corncrake ( <i>Crex crex</i> )	MOP3 in 2005
Ferruginous Duck ( <i>Aythya nyroca</i> )	MOP3 in 2005
Light-bellied Brent Goose ( <i>Branta bernicla hrota</i> ) - East Canadian High Arctic population	MOP3 in 2005
Lesser Flamingo ( <i>Phoeniconaias minor</i> )	MOP4 in 2008
Eurasian Spoonbill ( <i>Platalea leucorodia</i> )	MOP4 in 2008
Black-tailed Godwit ( <i>Limosa limosa</i> )	MOP4 in 2008
Lesser White-fronted Goose ( <i>Anser erythropus</i> )	MOP4 in 2008
Maccoa Duck ( <i>Oxyura maccoa</i> )	MOP4 in 2008
White-winged Flufftail ( <i>Sarothrura ayresi</i> )	MOP4 in 2008
Madagascar Pond Heron ( <i>Ardeola idae</i> )	MOP4 in 2008
Slaty Egret ( <i>Egretta vinaceigula</i> )	MOP5 in 2012
Bewick's Swan ( <i>Cygnus columbianus bewickii</i> ) – Northwest European population	MOP5 in 2012
Greenland White-fronted Goose ( <i>Anser albifrons flavirostris</i> )	MOP5 in 2012
Red-breasted Goose ( <i>Branta ruficollis</i> )	MOP5 in 2012
Sociable Lapwing ( <i>Vanellus gregarius</i> ) (Revision of the 2002 ISSAP)	MOP5 in 2012
Management Plan for the Svalbard Population of the Pink-footed Goose ( <i>Anser brachyrhynchus</i> )	MOP5 in 2012
Shoebill ( <i>Balaeniceps rex</i> )	MOP6 in 2015
Grey Crowned-crane ( <i>Balearica regulorum</i> )	MOP6 in 2015
Taiga Bean Goose ( <i>Anser f. fabalis</i> )	MOP6 in 2015
Long-tailed Duck ( <i>Clangula hyemalis</i> )	MOP6 in 2015
Eurasian Curlew ( <i>Numenius a. arquata</i> , <i>N. a. orientalis</i> and <i>N. a. suschkini</i> )	MOP6 in 2015
Northern Bald Ibis ( <i>Geronticus eremita</i> ) (revision of the 2005 ISSAP)	MOP6 in 2015

Multi-Species Action Plan for Benguela Upwelling System Coastal Seabirds: (Bank Cormorant ( <i>Phalacrocorax neglectus</i> ), African Penguin ( <i>Spheniscus demersus</i> ), Cape Gannet ( <i>Morus capensis</i> ), Cape Cormorant ( <i>Phalacrocorax capensis</i> ), Crowned Cormorant ( <i>Microcarbo coronatus</i> ), Damara Tern ( <i>Sternula balaenarum</i> ), Caspian Tern ( <i>Hydroprogne caspia</i> ), Greater Crested Tern ( <i>Thalasseus bergii bergii</i> ), African Oystercatcher ( <i>Haematopus moquini</i> ))	MOP6 in 2015
Dalmatian Pelican ( <i>Pelecanus crispus</i> )	MOP7 in 2018
Velvet Scoter ( <i>Melanitta fusca</i> ) - W Siberia & N Europe/NW Europe population	MOP7 in 2018
White-headed Duck ( <i>Oxyura leucocephala</i> ) (revision of the 2005 ISSAP)	MOP7 in 2018
Management Plan for the Barnacle Goose ( <i>Branta leucopsis</i> )	MOP7 in 2018
Management Plan for the Greylag Goose ( <i>Anser anser</i> ) - Northwest/Southwest European population	MOP7 in 2018

### 1.3. Action Plans retired, revised or extended at MOP7

At the 7<sup>th</sup> Session of the Meeting of the AEWa Parties in 2018, a first decision on the extension, revision or retirement of AEWa International Action Plans which had reached the end of their terms was taken by the Parties (Resolution 7.5), based on the recommendation presented by the Technical Committee.

Table 2: Treatment of expiring Action Plans as adopted at MOP7

Species	Agreed treatment
Light-bellied Brent Goose ( <i>Branta bernicla hrota</i> )	Retired
Great Snipe ( <i>Gallinago media</i> )	Extended 2019-2028 (conservation brief to be developed)
Ferruginous Duck ( <i>Aythya nyroca</i> )	Extended 2019-2028 (conservation brief to be developed)
Lesser Flamingo ( <i>Phoeniconaias minor</i> )	Extended 2019-2028 (conservation brief to be developed)
Eurasian Spoonbill ( <i>Platalea leucorodia</i> )	Extended 2019-2028
Black-tailed Godwit ( <i>Limosa limosa</i> )	Extended 2019-2028
Maccoa Duck ( <i>Oxyura maccoa</i> )	Extended 2019-2028 (conservation brief to be developed)
White-winged Flufftail ( <i>Sarothrura ayresi</i> )	Extended 2019-2028
Madagascar Pond Heron ( <i>Ardeola idae</i> )	Extended 2019-2028 (conservation brief to be developed)
Corncrake ( <i>Crex crex</i> )	Extended 2019-2021 to enable Western/Central European Parties to review the existing Plan and revise it if necessary, as well as to seek a coordinating organisation to facilitate a potential revision and/or further extension of the Plan and to stimulate implementation within the framework of an AEWa International Species Expert Group in consultation with the Secretariat.
Lesser White-fronted Goose ( <i>Anser erythropus</i> )	Extended (2019 – 2021) to prepare the revision of the existing plan.
Black-winged Pratincole ( <i>Glareola nordmanni</i> )	Extended (2019-2021) with request to the Technical Committee to re-assess the Plan against the criteria for extension, revision or retirement.

#### 1.4. Action Plans expected to be adopted at MOP8

The following table includes all International Species Action and Management Plans expected to be adopted at the 8<sup>th</sup> Session of the Meeting of the Parties in October 2021.

*Table 3: AEWA International Species Action and Management Plans proposed for adoption at MOP8*

Species
International Single Species Action Plan for the Conservation of the Common Eider ( <i>Somateria mollissima</i> ) – Baltic, North & Celtic Seas, Norway & Russia, Svalbard & Franz Josef Land populations

#### 1.5. Current plans for new AEWA International Species Action and Management Plans

Following the established procedure, the AEWA Technical Committee will prioritise species for action- and management planning at the beginning of the next triennium (2023-2025).

## 2. Current status of coordination of AEWA International Species Action and Management plans

### 2.1. Introduction

MOP3 instructed the Secretariat in Resolution 3.12 to establish mechanisms, resources permitting, to coordinate the international implementation of existing and future Action Plans. Much progress has been made in this regard due to the continued development of international coordination through the establishment of so-called AEWA International Species Working and Expert Groups.

As further highlighted by MOP6 in Resolution 6.8., active international coordination is a key prerequisite for the successful implementation of International Species Action and Management Plans and there is an urgent need to step-up the work of the existing AEWA International Species Working and Expert Groups and their coordination.

An overview of the current status of established international coordination is presented below.

### 2.2. Overview of established coordination for adopted Action and Management Plans

Table 4. Overview of status of international coordination established for adopted AEWA International Action and Management Plans

Species	AEWA International Working/Expert Group Convened	Coordination provided by	Comments
<b>Great Snipe</b> ( <i>Gallinago media</i> )	NO	-	Efforts underway to find coordinating organisation/expert, after which IWG/IEG will be convened.
<b>Black-winged Pratincole</b> ( <i>Glareola nordmanni</i> )	NO	n/a	Only initially extended until 2021, therefore no active efforts to establish IWG/IEG
<b>White-headed Duck</b> ( <i>Oxyura leucocephala</i> )	YES IWG	Ankara University	-
<b>Corncrake</b> ( <i>Crex crex</i> )	NO	n/a	Only initially extended until 2021, therefore no efforts to establish IWG/IEG
<b>Ferruginous Duck</b> ( <i>Aythya nyroca</i> )	NO	-	Efforts underway to find coordinating organisation/expert, after which IWG will be convened.
<b>Lesser Flamingo</b> ( <i>Phoeniconaias minor</i> )	YES IWG	BirdLife South Africa	-
<b>Eurasian Spoonbill</b> ( <i>Platalea leucorodia</i> )	YES IEG	Tour du Valat	-
<b>Black-tailed Godwit</b> ( <i>Limosa limosa</i> )	YES IWG	Sovon	-
<b>Lesser White-fronted Goose</b> ( <i>Anser erythropus</i> )	YES IWG	AEWA Secretariat	-
<b>Maccoa Duck</b> <i>Oxyura maccoa</i>	NO	-	Efforts underway to find coordinating organisation/expert, after which IWG will be convened.
<b>White-winged Flufftail</b> <i>Sarothrura ayresi</i>	YES IWG	BirdLife South Africa	-
<b>Madagascar Pond Heron</b> <i>Ardeola idae</i>	YES IWG	Asity Madagascar	-

<b>Slaty Egret</b> <i>Egretta vinaceigula</i>	YES IWG	BirdLife Botswana	-
<b>Bewick's Swan</b> <i>Cygnus columbianus bewickii</i>	YES IEG	*	Previous coordination by WWT was phased out and at present some coordination is provided by the coordinator who was previously affiliated with WWT
<b>Greenland White-fronted Goose</b> <i>Anser albifrons flavirostris</i>	NO	-	Initial efforts to establish IEG not successful. Active Species Expert Group exists: Greenland White-fronted Goose Study (GWGS).
<b>Red-breasted Goose</b> <i>Branta ruficollis</i>	YES IWG	Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds (BSPB)	-
<b>Sociable Lapwing</b> <i>Vanellus gregarius</i>	YES IWG	-	The Secretariat has identified a coordinating organisation and will be making the necessary arrangements.
<b>Pink-footed Goose</b> <i>Anser brachyrhynchus</i>	YES IWG	AEWA Secretariat	Falls under the European Goose Management Platform and the AEWA EGM IWG
<b>Shoebill</b> <i>Balaeniceps rex</i>	NO	-	Efforts underway to find coordinating organisation/expert, after which IWG will be convened.
<b>Grey Crowned-crane</b> <i>Balearica regulorum</i>	YES IWG	Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT) in partnership with the International Crane Foundation (ICF)	-
<b>Taiga Bean Goose</b> <i>Anser f. fabalis</i>	YES IWG	AEWA Secretariat	Falls under the European Goose Management Platform and the AEWA EGM IWG
<b>Long-tailed Duck</b> <i>Clangula hyemalis</i>	YES IWG	Aarhus University and University of Latvia	AEWA European Seaduck International Working Group
<b>Eurasian Curlew</b> <i>Numenius a. arquata, N. a. orientalis and N. a. suschkini</i>	YES IWG	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)	-
<b>Northern Bald Ibis</b> <i>Geronticus eremita</i>	YES IWG	BirdLife International	-
<b>Benguela Coastal Seabirds</b>	YES IWG	BirdLife South Africa	-
<b>Dalmatian Pelican</b> <i>Pelecanus crispus</i>	YES IWG	-	Efforts are underway to identify a coordinating organisation/expert
<b>Velvet Scoter</b> <i>Melanitta fusca</i>	YES IWG	Aarhus University and University of Latvia	AEWA European Seaduck International Working Group
<b>Barnacle Goose</b> <i>Branta leucopsis</i>	YES IWG	AEWA Secretariat	Falls under the European Goose Management Platform and the AEWA EGM IWG
<b>Greylag Goose</b> <i>Anser anser</i>	YES IWG	AEWA Secretariat	Falls under the European Goose Management Platform and the AEWA EGM IWG

Efforts are also underway to secure international coordination of the International Species Action Plan expected to be adopted at MOP8, in order to ensure that coordinated implementation is launched as soon as possible.

Table 5. Foreseen international coordination arrangements for new International Species Action Plans expected to be adopted at MOP8

Species	AEWA International Working/Expert Group foreseen	Coordination provided by
Common Eider ( <i>Somateria mollissima</i> )	YES IWG	Falls under the AEWA European Seaduck International Working Group. Options will need to be sought for the coordination of the adaptive harvest management programme to be developed and implemented under this ISSAP (possibly in conjunction with the EGMP).



### 3. Extension, Revision or Retirement of AEWA International Species Action and Management Plans

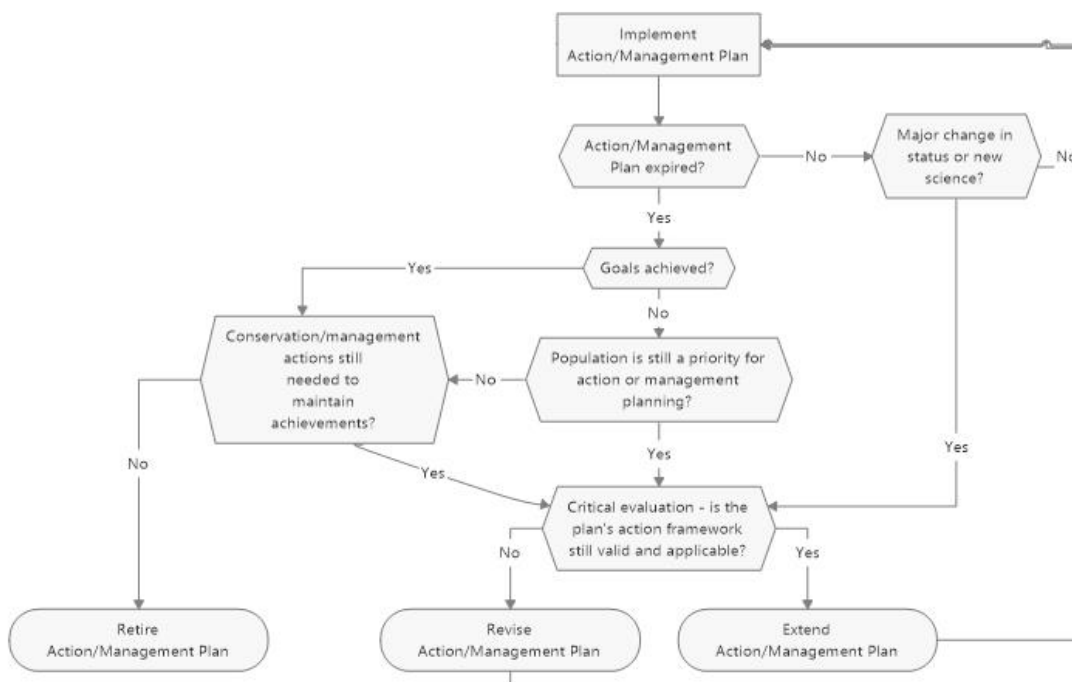
#### 3.1. Introduction

Recognising the need for a process by which AEWA International Single Species Action Plans are assessed at the end of their tenure, the 6<sup>th</sup> Session of the Meeting of the Parties adopted a procedure for the revision and possible retirement of Action Plans (AEWA Doc. MOP6.33 and Resolution 6.8 Annex 2). MOP6 further instructed the Technical Committee to continue the monitoring of International Single Species Action Plans and to present proposals for their revision or retirement to each Session of the Meeting of the Parties, as appropriate. The 7<sup>th</sup> Session of the Meeting of the Parties amended the procedure slightly based on a recommendation from the Technical Committee to include also the option of extending the validity of existing Action Plans (AEWA Doc. MOP7.21). Following the adopted procedure an assessment was prepared in consultation with the relevant AEWA International Species Working and Expert Groups as well as other species experts and submitted for discussion and decision to the 16<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the AEWA Technical Committee in January 2021. The final recommendations of the Technical Committee to MOP8 are presented below.

#### 3.2. Consideration of AEWA International Management Plans

In 2022, the first International Species Management Plan adopted under AEWA for the Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus* is coming to the end of its ten-year term. In addition to assessing whether AEWA Species Action Plans should be extended, revised or retired at the end of their tenures, it is therefore proposed to extend the same procedure to cover AEWA International Species Management Plans to ensure their continued adequate treatment under the Agreement. The amended procedure which would also include the consideration of Management Plans is shown below in figure 1.

Figure 1. Amended procedure



### 3.2. Recommendation to MOP8 for the Extension, Revision or Retirement of AEWA International Species Action and Management Plans

- **Extend the validity of the International Single Species Management Plan for the Pink-footed Goose (*Anser brachyrhynchus*) Svalbard/North-West Europe population for the next three years (2023 – 2025)**, to enable the revision of the Plan under the European Goose Management Platform and its European Goose Management International Working Group and associated Pink-footed Goose Task Force with a view to bringing the revised Plan to MOP9 for adoption;
- **Extend the validity of the International Single Species Action Plan for the Black-winged Pratincole (*Glareola nordmanni*) for the next three years (2023-2025)** to enable the revision of the Plan subject to the availability of a champion range state or organisation as well as adequate resources;
- **Extend the validity of the International Single Species Action Plan for the Lesser White-fronted Goose (*Anser erythropus*) for the next three years (2023-2025)** to enable the revision of the Plan under the AEWA Lesser White-fronted Goose International Working Group with a view to bringing the revised Plan to MOP9 for adoption;
- **Extend the validity of the International Single Species Action Plan for the Bewick's Swan (*Cygnus columbianus bewickii*) Northwest European population for the next three years (2023–2025)**, to enable an assessment of the implementation of the Plan under the AEWA Bewick's Swan International Expert Group, as well as its revision should the Expert Group's assessment conclude that an update of the Plan is required, with a view to bringing the revised Plan to MOP9 for adoption;
- **Retire the International Single Species Action Plan for the Corncrake (*Crex crex*)** under the Agreement as the respective Action Plan goals have been achieved and the species is no longer a priority for action-planning (listed on Column C of Table 1 of AEWA's Annex 3), whilst noting that the Plan remains valid under the Convention on Migratory Species and the EU;
- **Extend the validity of the following four ISSAPs for another 10 years (until 2032)** as the main threats as well as the corresponding goals, results and actions outlined in the respective ISSAPs remain valid and the species/populations in question will still benefit from the existence of an international flyway conservation framework:
  - Slaty Egret (*Egretta vinaceigula*);
  - Greenland White-fronted Goose (*Anser albifrons flavirostris*);
  - Red-breasted Goose (*Branta ruficollis*);
  - Sociable Lapwing (*Vanellus gregarius*).

In order to increase much needed implementation of these Plans following the extension of their validity, specific recommendations for next steps with regard to each of the ISSAPs and ISSMPs are outlined in the table in Annex I.

As is the case for all AEWA International Single Species Action and Management Plans, emergency reviews of any of these Plans shall, of course, be undertaken if there are any sudden major changes liable to affect any of the species/populations in question.

**Annex I: AEWA International Single Species Action and Management Plans considered for extension, revision or retirement**

AEWA ISSAP	Adopted	Revision foreseen	IWG/IEG in place	IUCN Red List status	Status of populations under AEWA covered by ISSAP*	Threats and subsequent results & activities in ISSAP wrong/inadequate	Species trend**, ***, ****	Notes	Suggested TC recommendation and next steps
<b>Black-winged Pratincole</b> <i>(Glareola nordmanni)</i>	2002	2005 <sup>1</sup>	No	NT	SE Europe and Western Asia/ Southern Africa <b>A 4</b>	-	UNC	-	<b>Extend and REVISE for MOP9, subject to availability of funds</b>
<b>Corncrake</b> ( <i>Crex crex</i> )	2005	2015 <sup>2</sup>	No	LC	Europe & Western Asia/Sub-Saharan Africa <b>C 1</b>	-	DEC	Species is Least Concern; Action Plan goals achieved	<b>Retire</b>
<b>Lesser White-fronted Goose</b> <i>(Anser erythropus)</i>	2008	2021	Yes	VU	NE Europe, Siberia etc. <b>A 1a 1b 2</b>	-	DEC?	A revision process was proposed by the Secretariat in 2019, on which there was no agreement amongst range states. New evidence on LWfG genetics has since been presented by Sweden. The IWG is active, activities are clear – no conservation brief needed.	<b>Extend and REVISE for MOP9</b>
					Fennoscandian – <b>A 1a 1b 1c</b>		INC		
<b>Slaty Egret</b> ( <i>Egretta vinaceigula</i> )	2012	2022	Yes	VU	Central Southern Africa – <b>A 1b 1c</b>	-	DEC?	IWG is active, activities are clear – no conservation brief needed.	<b>Extend until 2032</b>

<sup>1</sup> Extended 2019-2021 with request to the Technical Committee to re-assess the Plan against the criteria for extension, revision or retirement.

<sup>2</sup> Extended 2019-2021 to enable Western/Central European Parties to review the existing Plan and revise it if necessary, as well as to seek a coordinating organisation to facilitate a potential revision and/or further extension of the Plan and to stimulate implementation within the framework of an AEWA International Species Expert Group in consultation with the Secretariat.

AEWA ISSAP	Adopted	Revision foreseen	IWG/IEG in place	IUCN Red List status	Status of populations under AEWA covered by ISSAP*	Threats and subsequent results & activities in ISSAP wrong/inadequate	Species trend**, ***, ***	Notes	Suggested TC recommendation and next steps
<b>Bewick's Swan</b> ( <i>Cygnus columbianus bewickii</i> )	2012	2022	Yes	EN <sup>3</sup>	Western Siberia & NE Europe/North-west Europe – <b>A 2</b>	-	DEC	IEG will be active until 2021, when implementation review is expected. Possibly to be revised depending on outcome of review.	<b>Extend and possibly REVISE for MOP9</b>
<b>Greenland White-fronted Goose</b> ( <i>Anser albifrons flavirostris</i> )	2012	2022	No	VU <sup>4</sup>	Greenland/Ireland & UK – <b>A 2*</b>	-	DEC	-	<b>Extend until 2032</b> - Consider issuing a conservation brief, including updated versions of ISSAP annexes; - Consider establishing AEWA EGW
<b>Red-breasted Goose</b> ( <i>Branta ruficollis</i> )	2012	2020	Yes	EN	Northern Siberia/Black Sea & Caspian – <b>A 1a 1b 3a</b>	-	UNC	IWG is active, activities are clear – no conservation brief needed.	<b>Extend until 2032</b>
<b>Sociable Lapwing</b> ( <i>Vanellus gregarius</i> )	2012	2022	Yes	CE	Central Asia/S, SW Asia, NE Africa – <b>1a 1b 2</b>	-	DEC/STA	IWG is active, activities are clear – no conservation brief needed.	<b>Extend until 2032</b>
<b>Pink-footed Goose</b> ( <i>Anser brachyrhynchus</i> )	2012	2022	Yes	LC	Svalbard/North-West Europe	n/a	STA		<b>Extend and REVISE for MOP9</b>

\* Expected to be adopted at MOP8

\*\*DRAFT CSR8 (status December 2020)

\*\*\*DEC – Decreasing, INC – Increasing, FLU – Fluctuating, STA – stable, UNC – Uncertain

<sup>3</sup> European Red List of Birds assessed at species level Tundra Swan *Cygnus columbianus*.

<sup>4</sup> VU according to EU Red List Assessment. The whole population was assessed for the Greenland Red list in 2007 as EN. In 2017 the population was reassessed as CR in GB (which amounts to UK as there are none in Northern Ireland).

## Annex II: Revised Criteria for Prioritising AEWA Species/Populations for Action- and Management- Planning as adopted at the 16<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the AEWA Technical Committee

### 1. Revised Prioritisation Criteria for International Species Action Plans

AEWA International Species Action Plans are recovery plans for species/populations listed in Column A with priority given to the most threatened species listed in Category 1, Categories 2 and 3 marked with an asterisk, and Category 4 on Column A of Table 1 (i.e. eligible populations) of the AEWA Action Plan with the aim to restore them to a favourable conservation status.

#### 1.1. Current criteria for prioritisation and identified problems

As agreed at the Technical Committee's 11th Meeting, the following criteria are applied for the selection and prioritisation of populations for action planning (to be applied consecutively):

- 1) **IUCN Red List status** – in descending order: Critically Endangered (CR), Endangered (EN), Vulnerable (VU), Near-threatened (NT) and Least Concern (LC);
- 2) **Population size estimate** – in descending order from lowest to highest estimate. The estimates are to be taken from the latest Conservation Status Review (CSR). Where the population size estimate has been given by a range (e.g. 1-10,000) the geometrical mean has been used for the ranking (i.e. 5,000). Populations with exact size estimates (e.g. 5,000) have been ranked higher than populations whose size estimates are presented by a range and the geometrical mean is equal to the size of the populations with an exact estimate (e.g. 5,000 as an exact population estimate is ranked higher than 5,000 as a geometrical mean of the estimate from 1-10,000).  
  
When two or more populations have the same size population estimate, those belonging to less numerous species within the Agreement area have been ranked higher.
- 3) **Population trend estimate** – in descending order: Declining, Fluctuating, Unknown, Stable and Increasing, and with estimates taken from the latest CSR;
- 4) **Vulnerability to climate change** - classified as high, moderate or low, according to the report on the effects of climate change on migratory waterbirds within the African-Eurasian flyways presented to MOP4 (AEWA/MOP 4.27).

The following issues with the current methodology were identified by the Technical Committee:

- The population focus of the ranking is inconsistent with the practice of AEWA, whereby Action Plans are usually produced for all populations of the species at least within the AEWA Agreement Area and sometimes even beyond.
- In practice, the algorithm has not been applied in the above described consecutive order but in the order of (1) → (3) → (2) and (4). Although this order might be more meaningful than the one in document AEWA/MOP 6.33, this inconsistency should be resolved;
- A problem with the population trend criterion is that it treats populations with Declining, Fluctuating, Unknown, Stable and Increasing trends differently. However, the categories Fluctuating (in the sense as it is used in the STA/FLU category, but not in the sense of large fluctuations as defined in document AEWA/MOP 5.21, i.e. doubling or halving in one generation), Unknown (when we do not have any recent trend information), Uncertain (when the results of the trend analyses are statistically not uncertain) and Stable (when the trend is statistically significantly stable) do not represent a true difference in trend direction, only our ability to assess the trend;
- A second problem with the population trend criterion is that the reported CSR trends used in this assessment are the short-term trends and not the long-term trends. However, to prioritize

species or populations for action-planning, the latter would be more relevant. Short-term trends are more variable than long-term ones and their statistical power is also weaker. An approach focusing ranking species or population based on their long-term trend would be more consistent with the one already applied during the process of classifying populations in Table 1 of the AEWa Action Plan under categories A3(c) and B2(c);

- A third problem with the population trend criterion is that it is insensitive to the differences in the rate of decline. However, a more rapidly declining population is in greater need of conservation action than a more slowly declining one;
- The population size criterion is also inaccurate in the sentence: “Where the population size estimate has been given by a range (e.g. 1-10,000) the geometrical mean has been used for the ranking (i.e. 5,000)”. The criterion is consistent with earlier recommendations of the Technical Committee in its preference to use the geometric mean instead of the arithmetic one. However, the correct value of the geometric mean of 1 and 10,000 should be 100 and not 5,000 (that would be the arithmetic mean);
- The population size criterion also goes into too much details how to rank populations with the same geometric mean. However, this would lead to only marginal differences;
- The utility of the criteria on vulnerability to climate change also requires revision. On the one hand, the climate change vulnerability of populations takes into account the size of the population (see document AEWa/MOP 4.27) at the time of MOP3, i.e. almost 15 years ago. On the other hand, Appendix II of AEWa/MOP 4.27 only lists populations that were deemed to be either critically or highly threatened by climate change based on the assessed traits. In addition, it is a question whether species trait-based climate vulnerability (correctly sensitivity) is a factor that should have a major role in ranking populations for action-planning;
- Although this algorithm is able to rank the populations, it is not suitable to prioritise species or populations or their groups for various types of action-planning taking into account opportunities and potential synergies.

## 1.2. Proposed way forward

Based on the experiences made with respect to species action-planning under AEWa thus far, the production of less than 10 Action Plans can be funded each triennium compared to the nearly hundred populations that would qualify for such plans. Although the AEWa Strategic Plan addresses this gap by introducing the instrument of conservation and management guidance, it is paramount to be very strategic when prioritising species for action-planning.

It is therefore recommended that priority should be given to the recovery of Globally Threatened and Near-Threatened species listed on Annex 2 of AEWa and to populations marked with an asterisk, which would be consistent with the practice of AEWa so far.

Considering the above-mentioned shortcomings of the current prioritisation methodology, it is suggested to adopt three categories of priorities:

**Priority 1:** Globally Threatened and Near Threatened species listed on Annex 2 of AEWa based on their global Red List Status<sup>5</sup>;

**Priority 2:** populations of Least Concern species listed in Categories 1(a), 1(c), or 2 or 3 and marked with an asterisk in Table 1 and in long- or rapid short-term decline;

**Priority 3:** populations of Least Concern species listed in Category 1c not in long- or rapid short-term decline.

### a) Prioritisation for action-planning

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<sup>5</sup> Note: only species which are red-listed due to the status of their populations in the AEWa region.

## Priority 1 species

It is recommended to rank first Globally Threatened and Near-Threatened species in descending order: Critically Endangered (CR), Endangered (EN), Vulnerable (VU) and Near-threatened (NT). This list should exclude all species that are adequately covered by an AEWA ISSAP/IMSAP or a plan under another legally binding framework.

Then use the following factors as additional filters to select the priority species for action planning amongst the Globally Threatened and Near Threatened ones:

1. Species will be excluded where a major portion of the global population of the species occurs outside the AEWA Agreement Area (>10% of the global population size). Currently, this would lead to the exclusion of two species: Siberian Crane (*Leucogeranus leucogeranus*)<sup>6</sup>, and Great Knot (*Calidris tenuirostris*)<sup>7</sup>;
2. AEWA provides the most appropriate international policy platform for the development and implementation of the Action Plan. This filter can lead to the exclusion of species that could be better covered by action plans under other legally binding treaties such as the EU and the Bern Convention, etc.

For priority 1 species which remain after the elimination process described above, the following factors could be considered as advantages and could lead to moving the species up in the ranking on the list by 1-7 steps depending the number of criteria which are met of those listed below:

1. The causes of decline are understood<sup>8</sup>;
2. Remedial actions have been successfully developed and tested;
3. The species is subject of utilisation;
4. The recovery is dependent not only on habitat conservation measures but also on species management actions<sup>9</sup>;
5. The species population can be subject of one or more international Multi-species Action Plans<sup>10</sup>;
6. There is a potential Contracting Party (or Non-Party Range State) champion for the species to fund the planning and implementation process;
7. There is a potential coordinator for the development and implementation of the Action Plan.

An initial ranking of the priority 1 species is presented in Annex 1<sup>11</sup>.

## Priority 2 and 3 populations

Populations in these categories to be ranked within their own categories in an increasing order of their population size while excluding populations that are adequately covered by an AEWA ISSAP/IMSAP or a plan under another legally binding framework. Then filter out all populations for which AEWA would not be considered the most appropriate framework for action planning and they would be better covered by an action plan under another legally binding treaty. It should be noted that for the resulting list of priority 2 and 3 populations most likely only the development of conservation guidance will be feasible.

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<sup>6</sup> Already quasi-extinct in the Agreement Area with only one known individual at the known wintering area. It is also subject of a CMS action plan and MOU.

<sup>7</sup> The population listed on AEWA represents c. 1% of the global population of the species and most of its range - the entire breeding range and the bulk of the wintering range - is outside of the Agreement area.

<sup>8</sup> Priority 1 species for which the causes of decline are not understood will be considered within the TC work on identifying, prioritizing and addressing priority gaps in information related to the implementation of AEWA.

<sup>9</sup> E.g. it is unclear whether any species conservation measures are feasible for High Arctic breeding waders such as Bar-tailed Godwit (*Limosa lapponica*), Red Knot (*Calidris canutus*) and/or Curlew Sandpiper (*Calidris ferruginea*).

<sup>10</sup> On the other hand, the above mentioned species could be potentially addressed through a multi-species action plan because they share wintering and (partly breeding) habitats.

<sup>11</sup> Please note that Annexes 1-3 have been provided as separate Excel files on the dedicated TC16 meeting documents webpage.

An initial ranking of the priority 2 and 3 populations is presented in Annexes 2 and 3 respectively.

## **2. Revised Prioritisation Criteria for International Species Management Plans**

### *2.1. Management plans with a recovery objective*

This category applies to species/populations listed in Column B Category 2c (showing long-term decline) and 2e (showing rapid short-term decline) of which taking occurs and which may or may not cause damages.

Here it is suggested to prioritise the populations as follows:

1. Populations listed in Column B in both Categories 2c and 2e (ranked according to population size – smallest to largest) – these populations are in long-term decline and also declining rapidly in the short-term;
2. Populations listed only in Column B Category 2c (ranked according to population size – smallest to largest) – these populations are in long-term decline but do not decline rapidly in the short-term.

It should be noted that a full analysis of which of these populations in Categories 2c and 2e of Column B are harvested still needs to be undertaken (information is planned to be requested from Contracting Parties in 2022) and will then need to be applied as an additional filter.

In addition, from 2022 onwards the Technical Committee is foreseen to start implementing a process for the rapid assessment of the sustainability of harvest of huntable populations under AEWA. When this assessment becomes available, it should be used as an additional criterion for prioritising populations for management planning by drawing focus to those where harvest may be having an important contribution to the decline of the population.

### *2.2. Management plans that aim to manage populations causing significant damage to agriculture or fisheries whilst maintaining a favourable conservation status*

The initiation of flyway-scale management of populations causing significant damage to crops or fisheries is ultimately a policy decision responding to the need of resolving a concrete human–wildlife conflict at population level when the respective range states have identified the need for a coordinated action. It is therefore proposed that management-planning process for such populations will only be initiated by the Secretariat if mandated through a MOP Resolution. As such no prioritisation of these populations will be undertaken by the Technical Committee.