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**THE RELEVANCE OF AEWA TO DELIVERY OF THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT  
GOALS**

**Introduction**

Under Target 5.4 of the AEWA Strategic Plan 2019-2027 the Technical Committee has been tasked with compiling concise triennial summaries of AEWA's contributions to the relevant global frameworks (including the Sustainable Development Goals) that can be used by Parties, Standing Committee members, Technical Committee members and Secretariat to highlight at national and international levels the role of AEWA.

This mandate was included as task 8.5 of the Technical Committee work plan 2019-2021.

This overview was compiled by the Technical Committee and represents an extension of the latest such assessment presented to MOP7 (see Resolution 7.2). It was approved for submission to MOP8 by the Technical Committee by correspondence after its 16<sup>th</sup> meeting on 25-29 January 2021 and by the Standing Committee at its 16<sup>th</sup> meeting on 4-6 May 2021.

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

The Meeting of the Parties is requested to review and adopt this document as a current assessment of the potential for the AEWA to contribute to the delivery of Sustainable Development Goals.

# THE RELEVANCE OF AEWA TO DELIVERY OF THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

*Compiled by the Technical Committee*

## Summary

The implementation of AEWA, at all scales and both by Contracting Parties and other actors, has made, and continues to make, important contributions to the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). AEWA's contribution includes through actions related to:

- reduction of biodiversity loss;
- protection and restoration of habitats;
- climate change adaptation measures;
- education and awareness building;
- capacity development;
- contributing to food security and poverty reduction through waterbird sustainable harvesting;
- the wise-use use of wetlands; and
- actions to address illegally taking, killing and trade.

Through its focus on achieving favourable conservation status of waterbird species and its broad ecosystem-based approach to habitat conservation, AEWA implementation supports good environmental management both on land and at sea, and accordingly supports human communities who use and sometimes depend on ecosystem services derived from the same wetlands used by waterbirds.

## Introduction

Nature conservation sits within the context human contexts. Degradation of the environment by humankind has negative consequences not just for biodiversity but for people as well. There are multiple causes for such degradation as explored by global assessments by the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services<sup>1</sup>. On the other hand, sustainable and wise use of the environment not only benefits biodiversity but also people, by enhance the extent to which ecosystem service are able to be provided (document AEWA/MOP 8.33).

The relationship between human development issues and biodiversity loss has become increasingly obvious. Throughout the world, degraded natural environments are both a cause and a consequence of poverty.

In 2000, the UN Millennium Declaration committed world leaders to combat poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy, environmental degradation and discrimination against women. Eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) derived from this Declaration, each with specific targets and indicators. These helped steer international development activities to 2015.

Building on these MDGs, a follow-up process devised more comprehensive Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (UN General Assembly 2015) which draw out the intimate (and by now long recognised) linkages between

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<sup>1</sup> IPBES 2018. *The IPBES assessment report on land degradation and restoration*. Montanarella, L., Scholes, R. & Brainich, A. (eds.). Secretariat of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, Bonn, Germany. 744 pp.

IPBES 2019. *Summary for policymakers of the global assessment report on biodiversity and ecosystem services of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services*. IPBES Secretariat, Bonn, Germany. 56 pp.

environmental sustainability and human development (Table 1). Indeed, there is intentional and significant overlap between adopted global biodiversity targets<sup>2</sup> and the SDGs.

This assessment provides an update assessment of the relevance of the SDGs for AEWA, and conversely, the potential that the full implementation of the Agreement has to advance development generally and the SDGs specifically.

### **Where can more information on the SDGs be found?**

There is considerable information about the Sustainable Development Goals on the website of the United Nation’s Department of Economic and Social Affairs (<https://sdgs.un.org/goals>). The SDG Knowledge Hub maintained by the International Institute for Sustainable Development (<http://sdg.iisd.org>) also contains a wealth of useful information.

### **Relevance of AEWA to the SDGs**

The relevance of the Agreement to sustainable development comes through the role of migratory waterbirds and their wetland habitats as providers of ecosystem services. These are outlined in more detail in (document AEWA/MOP 8.33), but in particular relates to the food and monetary benefits that can arise from sustainable harvesting of waterbirds, as well as the multiple other services and benefits that arise from the wise use of their wetland habitats.

### **Relevance of the SDGs to AEWA**

The global focus on the need for the international community to fully deliver the SDGs by 2030 provides an important additional motivation for governments to fully implement AEWA. Indeed, Resolutions 6.15 and 7.2 urged Contracting Parties “to highlight to their development agencies, as appropriate, the relevance of AEWA implementation in the context of SDG-delivery, and to stress the need to better integrate actions for waterbird and wetland conservation within relevant development projects, so as to achieve benefits, not just for waterbirds, but also for human communities”.

Understanding these linkages better can provide further motivations for governments to fully implement the Agreement, and the development of additional funding streams that benefit waterbird and wetland conservation.

Those SDGs which are highlighted in bold and shaded in Table 1 are those for which the full implementation of AEWA can make specific contributions.

**Table 1.** The 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals.

<b>Goal 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere</b>
<b>Goal 2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture</b>
Goal 3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages
Goal 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
Goal 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
<b>Goal 6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all</b>
Goal 7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all
<b>Goal 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all</b>
Goal 9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation

<sup>2</sup> Global biodiversity targets derive from the ‘Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020’ and its “‘Aichi’ Targets”.

Goal 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries
Goal 11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
<b>Goal 12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns</b>
<b>Goal 13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts<sup>3</sup></b>
<b>Goal 14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development</b>
<b>Goal 15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss</b>
Goal 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels
<b>Goal 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development</b>

The following factsheets provide summary information on each of the most relevant SDGs and linkages to AEWA.

## Acknowledgments

This assessment was drafted by the Technical Committee of AEWA with additional inputs from Sylvia Barova, Geoffroy Citegetse, Melissa Lewis, Evelyn Moloko, Jaime Garcia Moreno and David Stroud.

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<sup>3</sup> Acknowledging that the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change is the primary international, intergovernmental forum for negotiating the global response to climate change

## Summary of those SDG targets to which full implementation of AEWA can contribute

Relevance is indicated as either:

- **Direct (higher) relevance** – where actions to implement the Agreement will directly contribute to the relevant target; or
- **Indirect relevance** – where actions are of indirect (or lower) significance.

Target	Relevance	Nature of AEWA's contribution
<b>Goal 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere</b>		
When the material needs of people are met, they are less likely to illegally or unsustainably exploit wetland resources and more likely to engage in and see the relevance of addressing wider concerns about sustainable management of their environment.		
<b>1.4</b> By 2030, ensure that all men and women, in particular the poor and the vulnerable, have equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to basic services, ownership and control over land and other forms of property, inheritance, natural resources, appropriate new technology and financial services, including microfinance	Direct	Target 2 of the <i>Plan of Action for Africa 2012-2018</i> called for community based natural resource management strategies based on wetlands and waterbirds to be developed to sustain rural development and improve conservation.  Objective 1 of the Strategic Plan 2019-2027 is relevant in that it seeks to strengthen species conservation and recovery and reduce causes of unnecessary mortality. Populations in favourable status are better placed to allow sustainable harvests, so supporting human populations.

### Case study: Developing a community-based ecotourism model at Lake Natron, Tanzania

BirdLife International's and Nature Tanzania's project at Lake Natron has helped build capacity of local communities to carry out ecotourism business and improve livelihoods. There is evidence of increased monthly incomes for all groups in society - women, youths and men.

A Community Revolving Fund (micro-loans) was established with seed funding provided by UK's Darwin Initiative and has grown by 17% from £6,500 to £7,608. Local communities, stakeholders, government agencies and tourism business operators developed a Tourism Development Plan to guide future ecotourism investment into the future. The Tourism Development Plan is a document of the Government of Tanzania.

Habitats have been restored around the Lake with 7,500 trees planted (most surviving) and 10,000 ha of wetland protected. Most critically, Lake Natron continues to be the breeding site for Lesser Flamingos *Phoeniconaias minor* in Eastern Africa – with the project recording one of the highest number of flamingos (2.7 million individuals) in the region, since 1995.

**Further information:** [https://www.birdlife.org/sites/default/files/attachments/lake\\_natron\\_project\\_factsheet.pdf](https://www.birdlife.org/sites/default/files/attachments/lake_natron_project_factsheet.pdf)

Target	Relevance	Nature of AEWA's contribution
<b>Goal 2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture</b>		
Agriculture that is environmentally sustainable will benefit both people and waterbirds.		
<p><b>2.4</b> By 2030, ensure sustainable food production systems and implement resilient agricultural practices that increase productivity and production, that help maintain ecosystems, that strengthen capacity for adaptation to climate change, extreme weather, drought, flooding and other disasters and that progressively improve land and soil quality</p>	Indirect	<p>Many waterbirds benefit from sustainable, low-intensity agriculture (which benefits land and soil quality), whilst wetland wise-use (including restoration and conservation of coastal habitats) helps adapt to climate change (Resolution 6.6) and reduce disaster risks.</p> <p>Objectives 4 (especially Targets 4.1, 4.3 and 4.4) of the Strategic Plan 2019-2027 is relevant in that it seeks to ensure there is sufficient quantity and quality of habitat in the wider environment for achieving and maintaining favourable conservation status for migratory waterbird populations. Well managed habitats will support both waterbird populations and also provide food and other resources for human populations.</p>

#### Case study: FAO's RESSOURCE Project in Sahelian wetlands

Millions of people depend on the major Sahelian wetlands to meet their food and financial needs. These ecosystems are home to a multitude of waterbirds – migratory and resident – and provide essential livelihoods and services to local communities. However, climate change, water and agricultural developments, and the intensive exploitation of the natural resources are contributing to the degradation and disappearance of the wetlands. The resulting dramatic changes in habitats have a major impact on the waterbird populations in the Sahel, and the impacts of hunting have yet to be assessed. These populations have already declined by 40 percent between 1960 and 2000. If the waterbirds were to disappear from this region, many rural communities would be deprived of an important source of protein.

The RESSOURCE Project (2017-2021) stands for “Strengthening expertise in sub-Saharan Africa on birds and their rational use for communities and their environment”. It is coordinated by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, as a joint initiative with several technical partners collaborating with national authorities and communities in the five pilot countries to ensure a sustainable environment. Co-funded by the French Global Environment Facility and the European Union, the project is the Sahelian component of the Sustainable Wildlife Management Programme (SWM Programme), an initiative of the Organization of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS).

Restoring and preserving the wetlands is a way to ensure the sustainability of the use of the services and the resources that they provide, in particular waterbirds, for the many rural populations that depend on them. In five countries in the Sahel and the Nile Valley, the RESSOURCE Project aims to:

- preserve the ecosystems of major Sahelian wetlands;
- improve knowledge on waterbird populations and on harvesting by hunting;
- develop innovative solutions for the sustainable management and exploitation of wetlands and waterbird populations.

**Further information:** <http://www.fao.org/3/ca8998en/CA8998EN.pdf>

#### Case study: Grassland stewardship

South Africa's various grassland stewardship sites (especially those declared as protected environments) promote sustainable livestock agriculture amidst the protection of the properties and their wetlands.

In BirdLife South Africa's engagement with the owners of these sites, farmers are encouraged to follow a more regenerative management approach – thereby improving grassland and wetland health as well as the livestock's nutrition through less reliance on expensive hormone and pesticide use.

**Case study: Improvement management of crane habitats also benefits people**

Rugezi Marsh in Rwanda is an important breeding site for Grey Crowned Cranes *Balearica regulorum*, an Endangered AEW species. Its marsh habitats were being degraded by the illegal collection of fodder plants for livestock, threatening not only the crane breeding sites, but also the water supply from the marsh. As part of the Grey Crowned Crane ISSAP activities, planting of fodder grass around the marsh was implemented to provide alternative fodder for livestock and to secure water supply, while also protecting the marsh for Grey Crowned Crane breeding.

Further information: <https://www.ewt.org.za/fs-oct-2020-for-peats-sake-finding-fodder-in-rwandas-rugezi-marsh/>

Target	Relevance	Nature of AEWA's contribution
<b>Goal 6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all</b>		
Both people and waterbirds depend on water to provide for their basic needs. Wetlands that are wisely used can be a source of abundant clean water, including providing a mechanism to purify polluted water.		
<b>6.1</b> By 2030, achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all	Indirect	Wise-use of wetlands consistent with AEWA obligations can facilitate water supply as an ecosystem service to human communities.
<b>6.3</b> By 2030, improve water quality by reducing pollution, eliminating dumping and minimizing release of hazardous chemicals and materials, halving the proportion of untreated wastewater and substantially increasing recycling and safe reuse globally	Direct	Actions to implement AEWA's Action Plan para 4.3.9 will reduce pollution, oil spillages and waste discharge, whilst para 3.2.3, <i>inter alia</i> , addresses the need to regulate the use of agricultural chemicals and waste water which relates to impacts of nitrogen pollution (both eutrophication and hypertrophication) impacting on waterbirds, their habitats, and drinking water supplies.
<b>6.5</b> By 2030, implement integrated water resources management at all levels, including through transboundary cooperation as appropriate	Indirect	<p>Article III.2d (General Conservation Measures) requires that Parties co-ordinate their efforts to protect wetlands "in particular where wetlands extend over the area of more than one Party". The protection of such shared wetlands<sup>4</sup> will typically support the provision of water as a relevant ecosystem service to all concerned Parties.</p> <p>Objectives 3 and 4 (especially Targets 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 4.3 and 4.4) of the Strategic Plan 2019-2027 are relevant and seek to</p> <p>3: establish and sustain a coherent and comprehensive flyway network of protected areas and other sites, managed to maintain – and where necessary restore – their national and international importance for migratory waterbird populations; and</p> <p>4. to ensure there is sufficient quantity and quality of habitat in the wider environment for achieving and maintaining favourable conservation status for migratory waterbird populations.</p> <p>Multiple water supply reservoirs are also of international importance for waterbirds, with many designated as Ramsar Sites.</p>
<b>6.6</b> By 2020, protect and restore water-related ecosystems, including mountains, forests, wetlands, rivers, aquifers and lakes	Direct	Although the habitats of importance to waterbirds are not restricted to water-related ecosystems, wetlands are of major significance as noted in the Preamble to the Agreement.

<sup>4</sup> The Trilateral Waddensea Cooperation between Germany, Denmark and The Netherlands is a good example of such functional coordination



Target	Relevance	Nature of AEWA's contribution
		<p>Article III.2c (General Conservation Measures) and Action Plan sections 3.2 (Conservation of Areas) and 3.3 (Rehabilitation and Restoration) require Parties to establish a network of sites and habitats and “encourage the protection, management, rehabilitation and restoration of these sites”.</p> <p>Objectives 3 and 4 (especially Targets 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 4.3 and 4.4) of the Strategic Plan 2019-2027 are relevant as explained above.</p>

#### **Case study: AEWA Small Grants Fund supports enhanced management of Senegalese wetland**

This AEWA Small Grants Funded project focused on support for the sustainable management of the Réserve Naturelle Communautaire (RNC) de Tocc Tocc, located in north-western Senegal in 2013 - 2014. The project was led by Senegal's Directorate of National Parks, with active participation from local stakeholders.

RNC Tocc Tocc, created in 2011 by the Ronkh Rural Council in collaboration with the Department of National Parks, Wetlands International Africa and the NGO, Nature Tropicale Sénégal, was designated as Senegal's fifth Ramsar site in September 2013. The reserve comprises the Lac de Guiers, a BirdLife International-designated Important Bird Area, which is also a major source of freshwater for the country's capital Dakar. Being an integral part of the Senegal River Delta Transboundary Biosphere Reserve, the RNC Tocc Tocc boasts rich biodiversity and serves as home for large numbers of waterbirds.

In order to contribute to the sustainable management of the reserve, the project focused on strengthening habitat conservation and the waterbird population dynamics of the reserve, as well as increasing awareness of local communities and decision-makers of the importance of waterbirds and their flyways.

**Further information:** <https://www.unep-aewa.org/en/news/boost-waterbird-conservation-project-senegal-aewa-small-grants-fund>

Target	Relevance	Nature of AEWA's contribution
<b>Goal 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all</b>		
Management of the environment can provide numerous types of employment thus supporting human communities.		
<b>8.9</b> By 2030, devise and implement policies to promote sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products	Direct	Target 2.5 of the Strategic Plan 2019-2027 is relevant in encouraging the promotion of waterbird related ecotourism at least half of the Contracting Parties following the model/example of at least three ecotourism pilots focusing on migratory waterbirds that exemplify benefits to local communities as well as for the conservation status of AEWA populations and their habitats. [Target also within the AEWA Plan of Action for Africa 2019-2027].  Well managed natural environments provide employment opportunities.

#### **Case study: Restoration of saltpans in Larache, Morocco**

Salt pans are known to be used by shorebirds in many regions of the world, and are thought to help replace natural habitat lost for several migratory species. The Saltpan Recovery Project was implemented by BirdLife Partners in Morocco, Tunisia, Spain and Portugal, with support from Vogelbescherming Nederland. The overarching goal was to improve and secure the management of salt pans for the benefit of (migratory) birds.

Near the city of Larache in northern Morocco is the Lower Loukkos Complex Ramsar site, an important bird and biodiversity area (IBA) and a critical site of the Africa-Eurasia Flyway (Marais Larache). According to the Ramsar Information Sheet, the area includes "... a number of abandoned salines". Salt pans here have been used since Roman times. The 40 ha salt pans next to the Roman ruins of Lixus ceased to be exploited in 2008, as they were not deemed economically viable. The area then dried out and the birdlife they supported, including waders, herons, flamingos and spoonbills among others, declined sharply.

In 2017, GREPOM/BirdLife Morocco started the restoration of this salt pans with the ultimate goal of making it attractive to birds again. With support of the community of Larache, it helped set up a new cooperative for its exploitation. For the city of Larache, the project was attractive because it generated employment and because, by reinforcing the dikes next to the river and the concentration pools to produce salt, it increased the resilience of the last stretch of the N1 road (per Loubna Tihad, Initiative Nationale pour le Développement Humain). After ten years of inactivity, the new cooperative started to harvest salt successfully once again in 2019. The city of Larache is helping to identify salt consumers within the Larache municipality (*e.g.* for food preserving and restaurants) to whom they could sell. It is also planned to sell artisanal salt on site, as the salt pans can be visited in combination with the Roman ruins already attracting tourists. Importantly, GREPOM's goal has also been achieved: with the salt pan re-wetting and management of water levels, many waterbirds are returning to this site.

**Further information:** <https://medwet.org/2020/03/the-lixus-salt-pans-morocco-human-development-at-the-service-of-environmental-protection/>

Target	Relevance	Nature of AEWA's contribution
<b>Goal 12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns</b>		
<p>One of the ultimate drivers of the environmental crisis is unsustainable consumption and production. These drive multiple aspects of environmental degradation. Addressing the sustainability of consumption and production, in all its multi-faceted aspects, will help reduce the extent to which so many waterbird habitats and populations are being lost and degraded.</p>		
<p><b>12.2</b> By 2030, achieve the sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources</p>	Direct	<p>Article III.2b (General Conservation Measures) requires that Parties “ensure that any use of migratory waterbirds ... is sustainable for the species as well as for the ecological systems that support them”.</p> <p>Objectives 2 and 3 (especially Targets 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4 and 3.5) of the Strategic Plan 2019-2027 are relevant through seeking to ensure that any use and management of migratory waterbird populations is sustainable across their flyways, as well as seeking to establish and sustain a coherent and comprehensive flyway network of protected areas and other sites, managed to maintain – and where necessary restore – their national and international importance for migratory waterbird populations.</p>
<p><b>12.4</b> By 2020, achieve the environmentally sound management of chemicals and all wastes throughout their life cycle, in accordance with agreed international frameworks, and significantly reduce their release to air, water and soil in order to minimize their adverse impacts on human health and the environment</p>	Indirect	<p>The Parties have set as an objective that “The use of lead shot for hunting in wetlands is phased out in all Contracting Parties” {Strategic Plan Target 2.1}.</p> <p>Actions to implement AEWA's Action Plan para 4.3.9 will reduce pollution, oil spillages and discharge of wastes whilst para 3.2.3, <i>inter alia</i>, addresses the need to regulate the use of agricultural chemicals and discharges of wastewater.</p>
<p><b>12.8</b> By 2030, ensure that people everywhere have the relevant information and awareness for sustainable development and lifestyles in harmony with nature</p>	Direct	<p>Actions to implement AEWA's Action Plan section 6 (Education and Information) are especially targeted at wetland uses to promote the sustainability-based objectives of the Agreement.</p>
<p><b>12.a</b> Support developing countries to strengthen their scientific and technological capacity to move towards more sustainable patterns of consumption and production</p>	Indirect	<p>Hunting according to AEWA's principles will result in sustainable harvesting and thus socio-economic benefits for some communities.</p>
<p><b>12.b</b> Develop and implement tools to monitor sustainable development impacts for sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products</p>	Indirect	<p>Actions to implement AEWA's Action Plan section 4.2 on ecotourism are supportive in seeking to encourage sensitive and appropriate eco-tourism at wetlands holding concentrations of waterbirds.</p>

### **Case study: Tackling health risks posed by lead ammunition in the EU under chemicals regulation REACH**

Lead ammunition has long been recognised as a source of poisoning of wildlife, in particular waterbirds which consume shot pellets in mistake for food or grit. In Europe one million waterbirds are estimated to die annually from resultant lead poisoning with millions more sub-lethally affected. The solution to this pollution lies in the use of alternative non-toxic ammunition and AEWA, since its inception in 1995, has been the driver to oblige signatory Parties to prevent lead shot from entering wetlands in the African Eurasian region. The original deadline for phase out of lead shot in wetlands was 2000; though this and subsequent deadlines have been missed by many, AEWA has kept the issue high profile.

There has been more recent recognition of the multiple negative health impacts of lead ammunition to wider sectors including people consuming game meat, and the extent of environmental pollution e.g. >20,000 tonnes of lead shot is deposited in the EU annually contaminating soils and creating a toxic legacy. In response, the European Commission began to address the problems using the EU's chemicals regulation REACH which aims to improve the protection of human health and the environment from the risks that can be posed by chemicals. The Commission chose a two-stage approach, firstly to harmonise the patchy and sometimes non-existent lead shot wetlands-related regulations in EU Member States, and secondly to address risks from all lead ammunition in terrestrial environments which will maximise benefits to human and wildlife health and reduce enforcement issues with the partial restriction in wetlands only (completion date 2023).

The restriction on use and possession of lead shot in wetlands was adopted into EU legislation in January 2021 with a 24-month transition period for most countries. Those countries with a higher proportion of wetland land coverage (>20%) were given a 36-month transition period.

Globally lead ammunition remains one of the last sources of environmental lead pollution which is poorly regulated, but substantive shift to non-toxic ammunition in a region of high hunting activity such as the EU will drive normalisation of non-toxic ammunition use around the world.

#### **Further information:**

<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32021R0057&qid=1625490475588&from=EN>  
<https://echa.europa.eu/hot-topics/lead-in-shot-bullets-and-fishing-weights>

Target	Relevance	Nature of AEWA's contribution
<b>Goal 13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts<sup>5</sup></b>		
Addressing climate change is of the utmost urgency to avoid severe consequences both for people and waterbirds.		
<b>13.1</b> Strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters in all countries	Indirect	Climate change adaptation measures for waterbirds will reduce climate-related disaster risks Resolution 6.6.
<b>13.2</b> Integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning	Direct	Resolutions 5.13 and 6.6 seek to ensure that climate change adaptation measures are integrated within national policies, strategies and planning, and these will benefit both waterbirds and human communities.
<b>13.3</b> Improve education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning	Direct	Responses to changing climate are an important component of actions to implement Action Plan section 6 (Education and Information) and AEWA's Communications Strategy Resolution 6.10.

#### **Case study: Sustaining environmental flows for the Inner Niger Delta, Mali**

Nearly two million people directly depend on the waters of the Upper Niger River and seasonal wetlands in Mali's Inner Niger Delta. This inland delta of rivers and marshes supports people directly with freshwater, fish, pasture and fertile land for rice paddies and is one of the largest seasonal floodplain wetlands in the world, running along the edge of the Sahara Desert. These wetlands are also of critical importance for multiple waterbird species including very many breeding in Europe.

The flow of water into the Inner Niger Delta has decreased 50% since the 1980s, due in part to man-made upstream dams and irrigation, while upstream rainfall has decreased by 30%. A warmer climate with longer and more frequent droughts is increasing the competition for natural resources in northern Mali and contributing to conflict. Local people have demonstrated remarkable resilience to droughts and desertification but are increasingly at risk.

Wetlands International, IUCN and others have years of experience working with local communities and at the highest level of government. Results of their research include the publication '[The Niger, A Lifeline](#)' which presents a decision-support system for effective river management in the Upper Niger, in which ecological and socio-economic impacts and benefits of dams and irrigation systems can be analysed in relation to different water management scenarios. This has provided a strong knowledge base to contribute to decisions affecting the Inner Niger Delta so important to both waterbirds and people.

**Further information:** <https://www.wetlands.org/blog/an-environmental-flow-for-the-inner-niger-delta/>

<sup>5</sup> Acknowledging that the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change is the primary international, intergovernmental forum for negotiating the global response to climate change.

Target	Relevance	Nature of AEWA's contribution
<b>Goal 14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development</b>		
<p>Unustainable exploitation of marine resources directly impacts waterbirds of the seas and coasts. Actions to ensure exploitation of the marine environment is sustainable will benefit waterbirds too.</p>		
<p><b>14.1</b> By 2025, prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, in particular from land-based activities, including marine debris and nutrient pollution</p>	<p>Indirect</p>	<p>Actions to implement Action Plan para 4.3.9 will reduce pollution (including nutrient pollution), oil spillages and discharge of wastes whilst para 3.2.3, <i>inter alia</i>, addresses the need to regulate the use of agricultural chemicals and discharges of wastewater.</p>
<p><b>14.2</b> By 2020, sustainably manage and protect marine and coastal ecosystems to avoid significant adverse impacts, including by strengthening their resilience, and take action for their restoration in order to achieve healthy and productive oceans</p>	<p>Direct</p>	<p>Article III.2c (General Conservation Measures) and Action Plan sections 3.2 (Conservation of Areas) and 3.3 (Rehabilitation and Restoration) require Parties to establish a network of sites and habitats and “encourage the protection, management, rehabilitation and restoration of these sites”.</p> <p>Objectives 3 and 4 (especially Targets 3.1, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 4.3 and 4.4) of the Strategic Plan 2019-2027 are relevant and seek to:</p> <p>3: establish and sustain a coherent and comprehensive flyway network of protected areas and other sites, managed to maintain – and where necessary restore – their national and international importance for migratory waterbird populations; and</p> <p>4. to ensure there is sufficient quantity and quality of habitat in the wider environment for achieving and maintaining favourable conservation status for migratory waterbird populations.</p> <p>Well managed marine and coastal ecosystems support not only waterbirds but provide the basis for sustainable use by people thus providing for their needs.</p>
<p><b>14.5</b> By 2020, conserve at least 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas, consistent with national and international law and based on the best available scientific information</p>	<p>Direct</p>	<p>Article III.2c (General Conservation Measures) and Action Plan section 3.2 (Conservation of Areas) require Parties to establish a network of sites and habitats and encourage their protection and management.</p>

#### **Case study: Conservation actions reduce seabird mortality in Namibia**

After over a decade of work with the country's fishing industry and fisheries managers, the Albatross Task Force (ATF) in Namibia reduced seabird mortality by 98%, equating to 22,000 birds saved every year. This was achieved thanks to effective government regulation and dedicated grassroots engagement with the industry by BirdLife International's team of seabird bycatch instructors. The Task Force engaged directly with the fishing industry and demonstrated simple measures that can prevent birds being caught on longline fishing hooks or killed by collisions with the thick steel cables that haul trawl nets through the water.

Before mitigation actions, Namibia's hake trawl and longline fisheries were found to be among the world's deadliest for seabirds with an estimated 30,000 birds were being killed each year.

The Task Force started [meetings with the fishing industry to show them seabird 'mitigation measures'](#) like bird-scaring lines – simple lines with colourful streamers towed behind the vessel that act as 'scarecrows' and keep birds away from baited hooks or dangerous trawl cables. After many thousands of hours at sea and in ports building support for these measures and the importance of protecting seabirds, in 2015 the team were successful in advocating for fishery regulations requiring the use of mitigation measures by law. These new laws meant that bird-scaring lines were then widely adopted across the fleet, and a [published assessment](#) demonstrates how effective the potent combination of grassroots engagement and solid regulations has been.

The Namibian team have also been able to connect bycatch reduction to female empowerment by partnering with local women's group [Meme Itumbapo](#). The group have been building bird-scaring lines to sell to the fleet and have recently signed an agreement to partner with one of the major fisheries supply companies in Walvis Bay to continue their work.

**Further information:**

<https://www.birdlife.org/worldwide/news/namibian-fishery-reduces-seabird-deaths-98>

[Reduction in seabird mortality in Namibian fisheries following the introduction of bycatch regulation](#)

Target	Relevance	Nature of AEWA's contribution
<p><b>Goal 15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss</b></p>		
<p>The restoration and maintenance of the favourable conservation status of migratory waterbirds is AEWA's fundamental objective. This can be accomplished through actions not just for species but also for their habitats – which are often widely degraded thus limiting their potential productivity both for people and waterbirds.</p>		
<p><b>15.1</b> By 2020, ensure the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems and their services, in particular forests, wetlands, mountains and drylands, in line with obligations under international agreements</p>	<p>Direct</p>	<p>Article III.2c (General Conservation Measures) and Action Plan sections 3.2 (Conservation of Areas) and 3.3 (Rehabilitation and Restoration) require Parties to establish a network of sites and habitats and “encourage the protection, management, rehabilitation and restoration of these sites” in liaison with relevant international frameworks.</p> <p>Objectives 3 and 4 (especially Targets 3.1, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 4.1, 4.3 and 4.4) of the Strategic Plan 2019-2027 are relevant and seek to:</p> <p>3: establish and sustain a coherent and comprehensive flyway network of protected areas and other sites, managed to maintain – and where necessary restore – their national and international importance for migratory waterbird populations; and</p> <p>4. to ensure there is sufficient quantity and quality of habitat in the wider environment for achieving and maintaining favourable conservation status for migratory waterbird populations.</p> <p>Well managed terrestrial ecosystems, especially wetlands, support not only waterbirds but provide the basis for sustainable use by people thus providing for their needs.</p>
<p><b>15.2</b> By 2020, promote the implementation of sustainable management of all types of forests, halt deforestation, restore degraded forests and substantially increase afforestation and reforestation globally</p>	<p>Direct</p>	<p>Target 4.1 of the Strategic Plan 2019-2027 is relevant in encouraging the establishment of priorities for habitat conservation and management in the wider environment.</p>
<p><b>15.3</b> By 2030, combat desertification, restore degraded land and soil, including land affected by desertification, drought and floods, and strive to achieve a land degradation-neutral world</p>	<p>Direct</p>	<p>Target 3.5, 4.1 and 4.4 of the Strategic Plan 2019-2027 are relevant as indicated above.</p>
<p><b>15.4</b> By 2030, ensure the conservation of mountain ecosystems, including their biodiversity, in order to enhance their capacity to provide benefits that are essential for sustainable development</p>	<p>Direct</p>	<p>Target 4.1 of the Strategic Plan 2019-2027 encourages the establishment of priorities for habitat conservation and management in the wider environment. Mountains and arctic/ alpine ecosystems are of major importance as breeding areas for some waterbirds.</p>



Target	Relevance	Nature of AEWA's contribution
<p><b>15.5</b> Take urgent and significant action to reduce the degradation of natural habitats, halt the loss of biodiversity and, by 2020, protect and prevent the extinction of threatened species</p>	<p>Direct</p>	<p>The central objective of the Agreement expressed in the broad objective of Article II.1 is to restore and maintain the conservation status of migratory waterbirds.</p> <p>Article III.2c (General Conservation Measures) and Action Plan sections 3.2 (Conservation of Areas) and 3.3 (Rehabilitation and Restoration) require Parties to establish a network of sites and habitats and “encourage the protection, management, rehabilitation and restoration of these sites” in liaison with relevant international frameworks.</p> <p>Article III.1 requires Parties to “take measures to conserve migratory waterbirds, giving special attention to endangered species and well as those with an unfavourable conservation status”.</p> <p>Objectives 1, 3 and 4 (especially Targets 1.2, 1.3, 3.1, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5 and 4.1) of the Strategic Plan 2019-2027 are relevant through seeking to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. strengthen species conservation and recovery and reduce causes of unnecessary mortality;</li> <li>3: establish and sustain a coherent and comprehensive flyway network of protected areas and other sites, managed to maintain – and where necessary restore – their national and international importance for migratory waterbird populations; and</li> <li>4. to ensure there is sufficient quantity and quality of habitat in the wider environment for achieving and maintaining favourable conservation status for migratory waterbird populations.</li> </ol>
<p><b>15.7</b> Take urgent action to end poaching and trafficking of protected species of flora and fauna and address both demand and supply of illegal wildlife products</p>	<p>Direct</p>	<p>Section 2.1 (Legal measures) of the Action Plan specifically requires Parties to give legal protection for relevant waterbirds, and relevant International Single Species Action Plans address the issues of poaching and trafficking.</p> <p>Action Plan para 4.1.6, requiring Parties to ‘develop and implement measures to reduce, and as far as possible eliminate, illegal taking’, is especially relevant.</p> <p>Targets 1.1 and 2.2 of the Strategic Plan 2019-2027 are relevant as indicated above.</p>
<p><b>15.8</b> By 2020, introduce measures to prevent the introduction and significantly reduce the impact of invasive alien species on land and water ecosystems and control or eradicate the priority species</p>	<p>Direct</p>	<p>Article III.2g (General Conservation Measures) and Action Plan section 2.5 (Introductions) require Parties to prohibit the deliberate introduction and take all appropriate measures to prevent the unintentional release into the environment of non-native species of animals and plants detrimental to waterbirds.</p>

Target	Relevance	Nature of AEWA's contribution
		This issue has been a major focus of attention with triennial reporting required of the Parties. Both Article III.2g and section 2.5 call for measures to control non-native species – such as predators – that have been already introduced. Paras 3.3, 4.3.10 & 4.3.11 of the Action Plan are also relevant as indicated above.
<b>15.9</b> By 2020, integrate ecosystem and biodiversity values into national and local planning, development processes, poverty reduction strategies and accounts	Direct	Objectives 2, 3, 4 and 5 (especially Targets 2.6, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 4.3 and 5.5) of the Strategic Plan 2019-2027 are relevant as indicated above.
<b>15.a</b> Mobilize and significantly increase financial resources from all sources to conserve and sustainably use biodiversity and ecosystems	Direct	<p>Actions to resource conservation actions for waterbirds and their habitats will also benefit other species, wider ecosystems and human communities.</p> <p>Target 5.6 of the Strategic Plan 2019-2027 encourages the provision of resources required for coordination and delivery of the Strategic Plan at international and national levels have been assessed as realistically as possible and corresponding resource mobilisation plans implemented.</p>
<b>15.c</b> Enhance global support for efforts to combat poaching and trafficking of protected species, including by increasing the capacity of local communities to pursue sustainable livelihood opportunities	Direct	<p>Relevant International Single Species Action Plans address the issues of poaching and trafficking.</p> <p>AEWA is contributing to relevant international Task Forces convened by CMS on the illegal killing of birds and related issues, and leads the development of the Plan of Action, and Task Force, on bird trapping in Egypt and Libya.</p> <p>Target 2.5 of the Strategic Plan 2019-2027 is relevant in encouraging the development of good practise eco-tourism development.</p>

### Case study: Restoration of African mangroves for waterbirds and people

Mangrove Capital Africa is a ten-year programme led by Wetlands International and funded by DOB Ecology. Its goal is to safeguard and restore African mangrove ecosystems for the benefit of people and nature. By 2027, it is planned that 1 million hectares of African mangroves will be conserved or restored, maintaining their biodiversity while also benefitting some two million people.

Initial work is focused on two sites, the Saloum and Rufiji deltas, because of their exceptional biodiversity and importance for local economies. In subsequent years, restoration sites will include the Senegal River Delta, Lamu in Kenya, Cacheu/Bijagos in Guinea-Bissau, the Niger Delta, Ruvuma Bay in Tanzania/Mozambique, the Zambezi in Mozambique, as well as sites in Sierra-Leone, the Congo (Brazzaville), Guinea and Madagascar. Work includes community groups and local authorities who benefit from the mangroves and is being undertaken as part of the Mangrove Global Alliance, contributing to its goal of expanding the global extent of [mangroves by 20% by 2030](#).

Healthy mangroves support many animals. Migratory waterbirds by their millions feed on the crabs and shrimp that thrive in mangrove shallows, whilst manatees live in their creeks, and sea turtles nest on beaches secured by their roots. Fish productivity and other socio economic activities [depend entirely on healthy mangroves](#). The tangle of roots, branches, and waterways of a mangrove forest buffer the storms that come off the oceans, absorbing the force

of waves before they reach people. This will become even more important as climate change [raises sea levels and brings storms](#) . Healthy mangrove forest also stores great amounts of carbon – five times more carbon than inland forests.

**Further information:** [Wetlands International](#)

### **Case Study: Integrated wise use for Madagascan wetlands**

Most of Madagascar's wetlands have either been lost (-60%) or severely degraded due to conversion, sedimentation, invasive species and over-harvesting. Wetland species have accordingly declined dramatically as their habitats disappeared. Human communities, of which 80% are rural and 90% have jobs reliant on natural resources, have also suffered due to loss of ecosystem services. Finding a sustainable solution to avoid the complete loss of native wetlands while improving conditions for local communities requires an integrated approach.

Lake Sofia, in northern Madagascar is the most intact remnant of the once vast Bealanana Wetlands Complex and holds some of the world's most threatened endemic waterbirds. It represents one of the last opportunities to implement this approach. Around 10,000 people (most of whom are highly impoverished) rely on this wetland for water, food and marsh plants. The main problems are threats from external pressures such as mining, agri-business and fishers from other regions, as well as increasing malnutrition and livestock disease.

Since 2015, the Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust and partners Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust, OSDRM - Support Organization for Rural Development in Madagascar, and Asity Madagascar, have worked at Lake Sofia and across its wider catchment to: (i) establish representative community management structures; (ii) enhance local livelihoods and establish additional livelihood options; (iii) reduce key threats (such as from burning/clearance of marsh, hunting/trapping of threatened wildlife, and wetland drainage) through policy, practice and awareness; and (iv) develop national sustainable wetland management guidance (informed by the model developed at Lake Sofia).

This work has resulted in: (i) >10,000 wetland-dependent people now having secure access to natural resources as part of a community-based management regime improving food security, wellbeing, livelihoods and ecological conditions; (ii) sustainable management of the Lake Sofia catchment for people and wildlife, acting as a national model for wetland and catchment management so helping Madagascar deliver international development commitments (Millennium Development Goals/Sustainable Development Goals); (iii) adoption of national wetland management guidance by the Government of Madagascar and its use at wetlands across the country; and (iv) designation of Lake Sofia as a Ramsar Site in May 2017.

**Further information:** <https://www.wwt.org.uk/our-work/projects/madagascars-wetlands/>

Target	Relevance	Nature of AEWA's contribution
<b>Goal 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development</b>		
Supporting sustainable development is a mission that all sectors of society needs to support through positive actions. Partnerships at all scales are crucial.		
<b>17.1</b> Strengthen domestic resource mobilization, including through international support to developing countries, to improve domestic capacity for tax and other revenue collection	Indirect	Target 5.6 of the Strategic Plan 2019-2027 is relevant in encouraging the provision of resources required for coordination and delivery of the Strategic Plan at international and national levels have been assessed as realistically as possible and corresponding resource mobilisation plans implemented.
<b>17.2</b> Developed countries to implement fully their official development assistance commitments, including the commitment by many developed countries to achieve the target of 0.7 per cent of ODA/GNI to developing countries and 0.15 to 0.20 per cent of ODA/GNI to least developed countries; ODA providers are encouraged to consider setting a target to provide at least 0.20 per cent of ODA/GNI to least developed countries	Direct	As above.
<b>17.3</b> Mobilise additional financial resources for developing countries from multiple sources	Direct	As above.
<b>17.6</b> Enhance North-South, South-South and triangular regional and international cooperation on and access to science, technology and innovation and enhance knowledge sharing on mutually agreed terms, including through improved coordination among existing mechanisms, in particular at the United Nations level, and through a global technology facilitation mechanism	Direct	Target 5.1 of the Strategic Plan 2019-2027 seeks to fill key gaps in scientific and technical information, including population monitoring data, required for implementation of the Agreement.
<b>17.8</b> Fully operationalize the technology bank and science, technology and innovation capacity-building mechanism for least developed countries by 2017 and enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology	Indirect	Objectives 1 and 3 (especially Targets 1.4, 1.5 and 3.2) of the Strategic Plan 2019-2027 is relevant as outlined above.

Target	Relevance	Nature of AEWA's contribution
<p><b>Capacity-building</b></p> <p><b>17.9</b> Enhance international support for implementing effective and targeted capacity-building in developing countries to support national plans to implement all the sustainable development goals, including through North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation</p>	Direct	<p>National development of capacity and expertise within developing countries for waterbird and wetland conservation will also contribute to wider attainment of SDGs. This is addressed in Article III.2i (General Conservation Measures) and paras 6.1 &amp; 6.2 of the Action Plan.</p> <p>Objectives 1 and 5 (especially Targets 1.4, 1.5, 5.2 and 5.3) of the Strategic Plan 2019-2027 are relevant as outline above.</p>
<p><b>Systemic issues</b></p> <p><i>Multi-stakeholder partnerships</i></p> <p><b>17.16</b> Enhance the global partnership for sustainable development, complemented by multi-stakeholder partnerships that mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources, to support the achievement of the sustainable development goals in all countries, in particular developing countries</p>	Indirect	<p>Multi-stakeholder partnerships, for example as involved in waterbird monitoring are crucial to waterbird conservation.</p>
<p><b>17.17</b> Encourage and promote effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships, building on the experience and resourcing strategies of partnerships</p>	Direct	<p>Effective implementation of AEWA critically depends on the development and nurturing of such partnerships.</p>

### Case study: International partnership benefits cranes and people

The International Crane Foundation (ICF) and the Endangered Wildlife Trust developed a formal partnership in 2005, and established the African Crane Conservation Programme. The joint programme goal is to secure and improve the conservation status of Africa's four resident crane species by reducing threats to wetland and grassland habitats upon which they depend. This is achieved through conservation actions that effectively reduce threats to the species and their habitats, working closely with local communities and key national and global stakeholders. The work empowers individuals, community groups and organisations to manage catchments for the benefit of both people and cranes, ensuring that conservation is mainstreamed into local decision making and practices for sustainable species and habitat conservation impacts.

The following countries are involved in the conservation work on the four AEWA species: South Africa, Zambia, Uganda, Rwanda, Kenya, and Senegal.

**Further information:** <https://endangeredwildlifetrust.wordpress.com/category/african-crane-conservation-programme/>