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*“Strengthening Flyway Conservation in a Changing World”*

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**ECOTOURISM:**

**CASE EXAMPLES AND STRATEGIC OPTIONS FOR AEWA ENGAGEMENT**

**Introduction**

Under Objective 2 of the AEWA Strategic Plan 2019-2027 (*To ensure that any use and management of migratory waterbird populations is sustainable across their flyways*) Target 2.5 foresees that waterbird-related ecotourism is promoted in 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.

Under action 2.5(a) it is envisaged to collate by MOP8 case studies of ecotourism initiatives with proven benefits for both community livelihoods and conservation of AEWA species and their habitats and identify one or more potential strategic partners with ecotourism expertise for AEWA to work with.

In response to this mandate, task 4.11 was added to the Technical Committee workplan 2019-2021/22. Due to lack of capacity this task could not be addressed until very late in the intersessional period.

With the financial support of the Government of the United Kingdom, in early 2021 the Secretariat commissioned the compilation of an overview of case examples of ecotourism initiatives and the identification of strategic opportunities for AEWA to engage with stakeholders in the ecotourism sector. Due to the postponement of MOP8 from October 2021 to September 2022, this document could be finalised for submission to MOP8.

The document was compiled in close consultation with and input from the Technical Committee through its online Workspace. The Technical Committee reviewed drafts of the document and approved the final and agreed version for submission to the Standing Committee. The Standing Committee approved by correspondence the document for submission to MOP8.

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

The Meeting of the Parties is requested to review the document and consider its recommendations for implementation (see also Draft Resolution 8.16).

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## Introduction and Purpose of this Document

Tourism is an important source of income for many countries and communities. Nature-related tourism is a worldwide phenomenon that is expanding rapidly. The development of ecotourism based on spectacular concentrations of migratory waterbirds, or on the wetland areas that support them, can not only increase support amongst the general public for waterbird conservation, but can also provide a valuable source of income for local people.

Disturbance, habitat damage or other visitor impacts can also be a significant threat to wildlife: careful assessment and management of risks is therefore essential for any venture to qualify as “eco”-tourism by minimising harm to the environment.

The five objectives in the [AEWA Strategic Plan 2019-2027](#) include (as No. 2) “*To ensure that any use and management of migratory waterbird populations is sustainable across their flyways*”. Target 2.5 in the Plan foresees that “*Waterbird-related ecotourism is promoted in 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*”.

While the implementation and accountability for this objective and the specific target are largely a responsibility of Parties, the Technical Committee and other partners are identified as relevant *inter alia* to the issue of examples, models and pilots that will assist, as well as collaboration at strategic level. Actions 2.5 (a) and 2.5 (b) in the Plan focus on these aspects. Action 2.5 (a) specifies: “*By MOP8, collate case studies of ecotourism initiatives with proven benefits for both community livelihoods and conservation of AEWA species and their habitats, and identify one or more potential strategic partners with ecotourism expertise for AEWA to work with*”. Action 2.5 (b) specifies: “*By MOP9, conceive and launch at least three pilot ecotourism-related initiatives in different parts of the Agreement Area*”.

The Plan further notes that both the case studies under Action 2.5 (a) and the pilot projects under Action 2.5 (b) are to have “a strong focus on demonstrating impact, sustainability and potential for replication/adaptation”.

The present document accordingly sets out a selection of the envisaged case studies, provides suggestions regarding strategic partners for AEWA to work with, and identifies three candidate pilot initiatives; after first commenting on the nature of “ecotourism” as it applies to the Agreement, and referring to some relevant international standards.

## Summary and Recommendations

Nature-based tourism is an expanding phenomenon. Without careful management, its impacts can harm wildlife and habitats - but there is now a wealth of experience and guidance available to show how “ecotourism” can be conducted in responsible ways which are positive not only for conservation but also for local communities.

AEWA has previously published guidelines on the development of ecotourism at wetlands. The AEWA Strategic Plan (2019-2027) now defines actions to promote waterbird-related ecotourism, including collation of case studies, identification of strategic partners and development of pilot projects. This report addresses these objectives, confirming that such tourism has an important contribution to make to the aims of AEWA, and that the Agreement can play an important role in this field.

A number of organisations and networks have become specialised in this field, both in the environment sector and in the tourism sector itself. Notable efforts have been made to address and guide it at the international level, through work or decisions by the UN General Assembly, the UN World Tourism Organisation, UNESCO, IUCN, the International Ecotourism Society, the Global Ecotourism Network and several of the biodiversity-related Conventions. Definitions, principles, standards and guidelines arising from this are reviewed in detail in the first part of this report.

Twenty-nine real-world case examples, with a variety of different priorities and spanning the whole of the AEWA Agreement area, are documented in the report's Annex. These illustrate the extent to which waterbirds can be a particularly powerful and accessible focus for ecotourism interest. They also demonstrate ways in which tourism operators and others are achieving success in putting appropriate principles and standards into practice; and for each example, a comment is given on the key lessons emerging from the experience so far. This contributes to a growing body of evidence that can support further policy development, wider replication and scaling-up of effective approaches.

The emphasis throughout is on approaches which combine high quality visitor experiences with benefits for the conservation of AEWA species (and their habitats) and simultaneously for the livelihoods of local communities.

From a long list of potentially relevant organisations and networks, four are suggested as primary candidates for specific strategic partnerships with AEWA for collaborative work on ecotourism in future:

- The UN World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO);
- Linking Tourism and Conservation (LT&C);
- Rockjumper Birding Tours; and
- BirdLife International (specifically BirdLife South Africa's *Avitourism* programme)

Such work would be likely to include joint flagship projects to promote ways in which ecotourism can contribute to the twin aims of waterbird conservation and local community benefit. The partnerships would also support sharing of knowledge, ideas and case examples, any further development of relevant good practice guidance, policies or standards, and efforts in general to mobilise resources for work in this area.

Three potential "pilot initiatives" are also defined, covering a mix of different issues and areas. These are simply suggested concepts at this stage as a basis for discussion, in response to the Strategic Plan's provision for at least three such initiatives to be launched by the time of MOP9. They are:

- "Destination Flyways" revisited (*Key sites in a flyway context; management planning to integrate tourism, conservation and livelihoods; international knowledge-exchange network; awareness and advocacy*).
- International avitourism development support (*Training, advice, networking and other support for a wide range of tourism sector operators to develop a growing market for waterbird-based tourism, in ways which exemplify responsible approaches and positive impacts for conservation and local communities*).
- Strengthening institutional and policy capacity for ecotourism in internationally designated coastal protected areas (*Strengthening institutional, policy and management capacity and related frameworks for internationally designated protected areas that support ecotourism serving AEWA's objectives*).

It is envisaged that the pilots would be developed in collaboration with the chosen "strategic partners". They should deliver relevant results in their own right (both for waterbird conservation and for local communities), but also serve as demonstration projects that illustrate approaches, models, lessons learned and potentially tools and other resources that could be scaled up in the area(s) concerned and/or replicated and applied in other areas.

AEWA has particular strengths in offering continuity of sustained engagement in this subject (provided there is political will to do so) and an internationally connected perspective, adding value to other efforts which may be geographically isolated and/or of limited duration.

The report concludes with the following six action recommendations:

1. *Individual waterbird-related ecotourism operators and initiatives should increase their efforts to capture and make available information on the lessons learnt from their activities (positive and negative) that may contribute to wider knowledge and improved practices in the ecotourism field.*

2. *Options should be explored for undertaking further overview research on lessons emerging from waterbird-related ecotourism ventures, to assist in building a robust evidence base for the development of enhanced policy and guidance on opportunities and good practices.*
3. *Relevant ecotourism operators should verify that their operations conform to the AEWA ecotourism guidelines and other international best practice standards identified in this report, including careful assessment and minimisation of risks to migratory waterbirds and their habitats, and seeking to benefit both conservation and local community interests while providing high quality visitor experiences.*
4. *The AEWA Guidelines on the development of ecotourism at wetlands (Conservation Guidelines No. 7, 2005) should be revised and updated, and enhanced content should be added in particular concerning the issue of local community benefit.*
5. *The AEWA Secretariat should invite individual discussions with each of the “strategic partners” suggested in this report, to explore the scope for collaborating on ecotourism-related issues of shared interest, including the suggested “pilot initiatives”.*
6. *The AEWA Secretariat, together with the Technical Committee and with input from selected strategic partners as appropriate, should develop detailed proposals for taking forward (or adapting as necessary) the “pilot initiatives” suggested in this report.*

## Defining the Scope of “Ecotourism” in this Context

AEWA’s guidelines on ecotourism (see below) state that the concept, at its simplest, can be understood as relating to “nature tourism that contributes to nature conservation”. It is also referred to in some contexts as “conservation tourism”<sup>1</sup>.

The UN World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) has defined ecotourism as meaning forms of tourism which have the following characteristics:

- All nature-based forms of tourism in which the main motivation of the tourists is the observation and appreciation of nature as well as the traditional cultures prevailing in natural areas.
- It contains educational and interpretation features.
- It is generally, but not exclusively organized by specialized tour operators for small groups. Service provider partners at the destinations tend to be small, locally-owned businesses.
- It minimizes negative impacts upon the natural and socio-cultural environment.
- It supports the maintenance of natural areas which are used as ecotourism attractions by:
  - generating economic benefits for host communities, organizations and authorities managing natural areas with conservation purposes,
  - providing alternative employment and income opportunities for local communities,
  - increasing awareness.

The International Ecotourism Society defines it as “responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment, sustains the well-being of the local people, and involves interpretation and education”<sup>2</sup>; while the Global Ecotourism Network’s variant of this is “responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment, sustains the well-being of the local people, and creates knowledge and understanding through interpretation and education of all involved (visitors, staff and the visited)”<sup>3</sup>.

A further definition, developed in an African context, is given as “environmentally responsible travel to natural areas, in order to enjoy and appreciate nature (and accompanying cultural features) that promotes conservation, has a low visitor impact and provides for beneficially-active socioeconomic involvement of local peoples”<sup>4</sup>.

The UNWTO’s description of “sustainable tourism” is also pertinent, being defined as “Tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities”, and elaborated further as follows:

“Sustainable tourism development guidelines and management practices are applicable to all forms of tourism in all types of destinations, including mass tourism and the various niche tourism segments. Sustainability principles refer to the environmental, economic, and socio-cultural aspects of tourism development, and a suitable balance must be established among these three dimensions to guarantee long-term sustainability.

Thus, sustainable tourism should:

1. Make optimal use of environmental resources that constitute a key element in tourism development, maintaining essential ecological processes and helping to conserve natural heritage and biodiversity.
2. Respect the socio-cultural authenticity of host communities, conserve their built and living cultural heritage and traditional values, and contribute to intercultural understanding and tolerance.
3. Ensure viable, long-term economic operations, providing socio-economic benefits to all stakeholders that are fairly distributed, including stable employment and income-earning opportunities and social services to host communities, and contributing to poverty alleviation.

Sustainable tourism development requires the informed participation of all relevant stakeholders, backed by supportive political leadership. Achieving sustainable tourism is a continuous process and requires constant monitoring of impacts, introducing the necessary preventive and/or corrective measures whenever necessary. Sustainable tourism should also maintain a high level of tourist satisfaction and ensure a meaningful experience for tourists, raising their awareness about sustainability issues and promoting relevant sustainable practices”<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> This is the term used for example by the organisation Linking Tourism and Conservation - <https://www.ltandc.org/>.

<sup>2</sup> <https://ecotourism.org/what-is-ecotourism/>.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.globalecotourismnetwork.org/what-it-is-not-ecotourism/>.

<sup>4</sup> South African Department of Trade and Industry (2010). [Avitourism in South Africa](#). DTI, Pretoria.

<sup>5</sup> UN Environment Programme and World Tourism Organisation (2005). [Making tourism more sustainable: a guide for policy makers](#). UNEP, Paris and UNWTO, Madrid.

An emerging and fast-developing variant has also been termed “transformational tourism”, the trend towards this being defined as “a movement amongst consumers to travel with purpose and cause; maximising their time, giving something back to the destination they visit and consciously off-setting the impact of their travel”<sup>6</sup>.

While ecotourism principles, experiences and initiatives exist in relation to many natural environments and forms of wildlife around the world, the present document concentrates specifically on where they apply to the waterbird species covered by the Agreement. This extends to activities with a focus on the wetland sites or habitats supporting such species, but the most pertinent examples are those in which the birds themselves are the focus.

BirdLife South Africa, one of the organisations with an active programme in this area, uses the term “avitourism”, to refer to “a niche tourism market in which the tourist undertakes overnight travel outside of his/her usual environment to view birds in their natural habitat”<sup>7</sup>. This is regarded as an important part of the global growth in nature-based tourism. A study found that avitourists have higher than average income levels, longer trip lengths, a greater tendency to visit multiple areas than mainstream tourism market segments, and they spend more per head. It noted also that avitourism provides an important opportunity to improve the seasonal spread of tourism activity, as it continues in periods often regarded as “off season” for other forms of tourism<sup>8</sup>.

Given the terms in which the relevant targets and actions in the AEWA Strategic Plan are expressed, the emphasis in the present short review is firmly on manifestations of ecotourism that involve tangible livelihood or other well-being benefits for local communities. While there are aspects which in some circumstances can pose risks or led to unintended social costs<sup>9</sup>, UNWTO has identified seven mechanisms through which the poor can benefit from tourism<sup>10</sup>:

1. Employment of the poor in tourism enterprises.
2. Supply of goods and services to tourism enterprises by the poor or by enterprises.
3. Direct sales of goods and services to visitors by the poor (informal economy).
4. Establishment and running of small, micro or community-based tourism enterprises or joint ventures by the poor (formal economy).
5. Redistribution of proceeds from taxes or charges on tourists or tourism enterprises.
6. Voluntary giving and support by tourists and tourism enterprises.
7. Investment in infrastructure stimulated by tourism also benefitting the poor in the locality, directly or through support to other sectors.

A specific study of 11 community-based avitourism projects in South Africa assessed their results and concluded that with adequate long-term support, avitourism projects can be a cost-effective way to create jobs and deliver conservation and human development benefits<sup>11</sup>.

## Standards and Precedents

Both AEWA and some other multilateral conservation frameworks have addressed the subject of ecotourism in relevant contexts in the past - that forms an important backdrop to the present work, and there is no intention to duplicate it.

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<sup>6</sup> Visit Scotland (2020). [Travelling towards transformational tourism](#). Insight Department: Trends 2020. Visit Scotland, Edinburgh.

<sup>7</sup> South African Department of Trade and Industry (2010), *op cit*.

<sup>8</sup> South African Department of Trade and Industry (2010), *op cit*. See also Simango, SS (2011). [The evolution, structure and market for birding tourism in South Africa](#). Research report submitted for the partial fulfilment of MA in Tourism. School of Geography, Archaeology and Environmental Studies, University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa.

<sup>9</sup> See for example van der Duim, R and Henkens, R (2007). [Wetlands, poverty reduction and sustainable tourism development, opportunities and constraints](#). Wetlands International, Wageningen, The Netherlands.

<sup>10</sup> UN World Tourism Organisation (2004). [Tourism and Poverty Alleviation: Recommendations for Action](#). UNWTO, Madrid.

<sup>11</sup> Biggs, D, Turpie, J, Fabricius, C and Spenceley, A (2011). [The value of avitourism for conservation and job creation - an analysis from South Africa](#). Conservation and Society 9(1): 80-90.

In AEWA's own case, [Conservation Guidelines on the development of ecotourism at wetlands](#) were first adopted at the inaugural session of the meeting of the Parties in 1999, and they were updated in 2002 and 2005<sup>12</sup>. These may become further revised in future, but it is not the purpose of the present report to comment on their strengths or weaknesses. As they exist at present the *Guidelines* are organised according to ten recommended steps for countries to address, as follows:

1. Appoint a governmental committee for ecotourism.
2. Undertake an evaluation of the ecotourism potential of AEWA sites.
3. Prepare a priority list of areas in need of tourism management.
4. Decide on the type of management plan required at each site.
5. Conduct a feasibility study at each site.
6. Assess the vulnerability of the waterbirds at each site.
7. Assess tools for the management of ecotourism.
8. Install local ecotourism management committees.
9. Draft ecotourism management plans.
10. Implement the ecotourism management plans and revise as necessary.

After noting that “ecotourism is the only form of tourism acceptable in most AEWA sites”, and that “improper management of ecotourism often results in damage to the environment, problems with visitor satisfaction, group conflicts and problems with funding”, the *Guidelines* go on to note that “Usually, protected area managers, especially in less developed countries, lack the technical, economic and organisational resources required to manage and develop tourist activities effectively. In most cases, it is more appropriate to let out concessions to individuals, companies or local communities for specific tourist activities. This implies having a sound management plan for the site, and also the need for good enforcement of the relevant regulations. Concessions, along with entrance fees, contribute to self-financing mechanisms. The government should recognise that tax-based budgets should, as far as possible, fund resource management, and the private sector should recognise its role in providing some of the required funding, especially for tourist management and research on tourism. Both the government and the private sectors should be involved in and may benefit financially from ecotourism”.

Eight “principles” are then enumerated, as follows:

- Ecotourism should lead to nature conservation.
- Culturally and economically sensitive community development is necessary.
- Ecotourism should be designed in such a way that local communities become less dependent on non-sustainable forms of land use. This will also increase awareness of the importance of nature conservation.
- Ecotourism companies in both the public and private sectors should have an environmental strategy. Well-educated staff are essential.
- Tour operators and tourists demand high environmental standards from their associates, hotels, transportation providers and destinations.
- High-quality information and services are essential.
- Planning and management capabilities are essential for long-term success.
- Environmental protection is based upon the financial viability of management, both in the public and private sectors.

UNEP and UNWTO have jointly identified a set of priority issues for the development of more sustainable tourism<sup>13</sup> that minimises the negative impacts on society and the environment and maximises tourism's positive contribution to local economies, the conservation of natural and cultural heritage, and the quality of life of hosts and visitors, as follows:

1. Economic viability.
2. Local prosperity.
3. Employment quality.
4. Social equity.

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<sup>12</sup> AEWA (2005). [Guidelines on the development of ecotourism at wetlands](#). AEWA Conservation Guidelines No. 7. Adopted by the Meeting of the Parties at its second session in September 2002, Germany, and updated in April 2005.

<sup>13</sup> UNEP and WTO (2005), *op cit*.



5. Visitor fulfilment.
6. Local control.
7. Community well-being.
8. Cultural richness.
9. Physical integrity.
10. Biological diversity.
11. Resource efficiency.
12. Environmental purity<sup>14</sup>.

The UN General Assembly has adopted several Resolutions over the years relating to “sustainable tourism, including ecotourism, for poverty eradication and environment protection”. The most recent of these, from 2018<sup>15</sup>, notes that ecotourism can contribute to sustainable development, in particular the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, and can improve the well-being of Indigenous peoples and local communities. It encourages Member States to use sustainable tourism, including ecotourism, to foster *inter alia* economic growth, social development and environmental protection, including the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity; and it encourages support for measures to build capacity, provide training, produce guidelines and strengthen partnerships.

The International Ecotourism Society and the Global Ecotourism Network both enumerate a set of key principles that include the following (with slight variations between the two organisations)<sup>16</sup>:

- Minimize physical, social, behavioural, and psychological impacts.
- Build environmental and cultural awareness and respect.
- Provide positive experiences for both visitors and hosts.
- Provide direct financial benefits for conservation.
- Generate financial benefits for both local people and private industry.
- Deliver memorable interpretative experiences to visitors that help raise sensitivity to host countries’ political, environmental, and social climates.
- Design, construct and operate low-impact facilities.
- Recognize the rights and spiritual beliefs of Indigenous Peoples.

Parties to the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) have addressed sustainable tourism specifically in relation to migratory species, initially through publication of a detailed study of the fast-growing field<sup>17</sup>, and then through a Resolution of the Conference of Parties adopted during the UN’s International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development in 2017<sup>18</sup>.

The Resolution begins by acknowledging the role of sustainable tourism as a positive driver towards environmental protection, the eradication of poverty, improved quality of life, the empowerment of local communities and the impact on the three dimensions of sustainable development (economic, social and environmental), particularly in developing countries. It further recognises that ecotourism activities can increase awareness and drive positive change in attitudes towards wildlife conservation, including the generation of resources to support protection of migratory species and their habitats, and notes the growth of forms of ecotourism that involve interaction with a range of types of wildlife including migratory species. Such activities are acknowledged to have risks of unintended negative consequences where there is a lack of clear understanding about the behaviour and requirements of migratory species.

The Resolution goes to on urge CMS Party governments to adopt measures to ensure that tourism activities do not negatively affect migratory species anywhere within their range, suggesting that these should cover issues such as:

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<sup>14</sup> (The document defines this in this context as minimising pollution and generation of waste).

<sup>15</sup> United Nations General Assembly (2018). [Promotion of sustainable tourism, including ecotourism, for poverty eradication and environment protection](#). Resolution 73/245 adopted by the 73<sup>rd</sup> session of the Assembly, 20 December 2018.

<sup>16</sup> <https://ecotourism.org/> and <https://www.globalecotourismnetwork.org/>.

<sup>17</sup> UNEP-CMS Secretariat (2006). [Wildlife watching and tourism: a study on the benefits and risks of a fast growing tourism activity and its impacts on species](#). UNEP-CMS Secretariat, Bonn, Germany.

<sup>18</sup> Convention on Migratory Species (2017a). [Sustainable tourism and migratory species](#). Resolution 12.23 adopted by the 12th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties, Manila, Philippines, 23-28 October 2017.

- national action plans;
- legislation and regulations;
- accreditation of operators, provision of training and codes of conduct;
- allowable types of wildlife interactions;
- allowable levels of activity and proximities of approach;
- limits on types of equipment or technology that could cause undue disturbance of target species;
- seasonal or life stage-specific regulations or exclusions;
- monitoring of implementation and compliance; and
- monitoring potential impacts on target species.

The text then further recommends that the following “basic philosophies” should also be taken into account:

- Tourism activities should not inhibit the natural behaviour and activity of migratory species or adversely affect their associated habitat.
- The activities should not have significant negative impact on the long-term survival of species populations.
- The activities should create sustainable social and economic benefits within local communities.
- Revenues generated should be able to provide resources for the conservation of the species concerned, including the protection of their habitat.
- Tourism involving wildlife should take into account the health and safety of observers as well as that of the wildlife.

The CMS Parties have also addressed the specific situation of “boat-based marine wildlife watching”, in light of the fact that commercial wildlife watching operations using boats in coastal and marine environments are growing fast, and that the management of these operations presents additional challenges to those in the terrestrial environment. A Resolution adopted in 2014 (and updated in 2017)<sup>19</sup> noted that wildlife watching activities can lead to positive changes in attitudes towards nature conservation, and that when managed carefully, the revenues generated can benefit the conservation of the target species and their ecosystems while at the same time providing direct and indirect benefits to local communities. The Resolution provides key principles and appended guidelines for governments to follow, featuring individual sections for particular species groups, one of which (the one of relevance for AEWA) covers seabirds. Key elements include:

- Adoption of national guidelines, codes of conduct, and if necessary, national legislation, binding regulations or other regulatory tools;
- Licensing or permitting of operators, including training, reporting and compliance requirements;
- Possible setting of daily, seasonal and/or geographical exclusion areas and limitations on the number of vessels;
- Provisions on methods of approach and interaction, including distance to be maintained, direction, speed and manoeuvring of vessels, and minimising disturbance;
- Completion of Environmental Impact Assessments prior to the establishment of operations; and
- Prohibition (in most circumstances) of provisioning food to attract seabirds.

In relation to wetlands, and so of interest to AEWA, the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands has also addressed ecotourism issues, beginning with a Memorandum of Understanding between the Convention Secretariat and UNWTO in 2010, followed by “*Wetlands and tourism, a great experience*” being the theme of World Wetlands Day in 2012 and “*Wetlands, tourism and recreation*” being the theme of the 11th meeting of the Convention’s Conference of Parties (COP11) later that year. As an input to the COP, the Ramsar Secretariat and UNWTO jointly published a document on sustainable tourism in wetlands, with details of 19 key tenets of good practice (grouped according to “Managing tourism in and around wetlands”, “Working with the tourism sector”, and “Planning and policies”), as well as 14 case studies from all regions of the world, including six in the AEWA Agreement Area<sup>20</sup>.

<sup>19</sup> Convention on Migratory Species (2017b). [Sustainable boat-based marine wildlife watching](#). Resolution 11.29 (Rev.COP12) adopted by the 12<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Conference of the Parties, Manila, Philippines, 23-28 October 2017.

<sup>20</sup> Ramsar Secretariat and UN World Tourism Organisation (2012). [Destination wetlands: supporting sustainable tourism](#). Ramsar Secretariat, Gland, Switzerland; and UNWTO, Madrid, Spain.

The Parties at the same COP then adopted a Resolution on “*Tourism, recreation and wetlands*”<sup>21</sup>, which noted that that sustainable tourism can bring economic opportunities for securing wetland conservation and wise use and the maintenance of key socio-economic wetland values and functions, and that that well designed and managed tourism can make a significant contribution to sustainable development. It pointed to the existence of several relevant guidance publications (including AEWA’s, referred to above), and encouraged a range of measures including:

- improved integration of wetland values into tourism policies and planning, including national tourism strategies;
- closer collaboration between the tourism and wetland conservation sectors;
- development of concepts and practices for sustainable tourism relating to wetlands;
- support for the active participation of indigenous peoples, local communities, municipalities and public-private partnerships in tourism decision making, planning, service provision and management;
- taking fully into account the ethical implications of cultural and historical issues of indigenous peoples and local communities in planning for sustainable tourism;
- sharing of best practices in sustainable tourism in relation to wetlands;
- promotion of quality tourist products and services that encourage responsible behaviour by those involved as well as awareness and understanding of the significance of wetlands;
- sharing of methodologies and techniques for measuring and monitoring impacts of tourism;
- researching success stories and good practices;
- ensuring that sustainable tourism initiatives include criteria for compliance with global standards; and
- (in an annex) issues for stakeholders to address in achieving sustainable tourism and recreation in and around wetlands.

Other relevant frameworks include a set of guidelines on biodiversity and tourism development produced by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity in 2004<sup>22</sup>, IUCN’s Guidelines on sustainable tourism in protected areas<sup>23</sup>, and a UNESCO manual on managing tourism at World Heritage sites<sup>24</sup>.

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<sup>21</sup> Ramsar Convention (2012). [Tourism, recreation and wetlands](#). Resolution XI.7 adopted by the 11<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Conference of Parties, Bucharest, Romania, 6-13 July 2012.

<sup>22</sup> Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (2004). [Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development: international guidelines for activities related to sustainable tourism development in vulnerable terrestrial, marine and coastal ecosystems and habitats of major importance for biological diversity and protected areas, including fragile riparian and mountain ecosystems](#). CBD Secretariat, Montreal.

<sup>23</sup> Eagles, PFJ, Haynes, CD and McCool, SF (2002). [Sustainable tourism in protected areas: Guidelines for planning and management](#). World Commission on Protected Areas Best Practice Protected Area Guidelines No.8. IUCN, Gland.

<sup>24</sup> Pedersen, A (2002). [Managing tourism at World Heritage sites: a practical manual for World Heritage site managers](#). World Heritage Manuals No.1. UNESCO World Heritage Centre, Paris.

## Potential Strategic Ecotourism Partners for AEWA

The AEWA Strategic Plan's action 2.5 (a) to “*identify one or more potential strategic partners with ecotourism expertise for AEWA to work with*” (referred to earlier) does not specify anything further concerning the nature or purpose of such a partnership. By implication, however, one focus of it is likely to be collaborating to implement the three “pilot ecotourism-related initiatives” foreseen as action 2.5 (b).

In a general sense, a partnership of this kind should help to promote the ways in which ecotourism contributes to the twin aims of (i) waterbird conservation in the Agreement Area and (ii) sustainable benefits for local communities. It could provide a platform for sharing of knowledge, ideas and case examples, and for developing collaborative initiatives, including with additional partners. Any future development of relevant good practice guidance, policies or standards would also benefit from this approach, as would efforts to mobilise resources for related work.

A range of organisations was identified in the course of developing the present report, all of which could be candidates for providing some or all of the ingredients that would support a suitable partnership with AEWA. It has been assumed that this includes operating at a genuinely “strategic” level, meaning *inter alia* a multi-country scope that embraces a significant part of the Agreement area, as well as strong insights into the policy and institutional dimensions (i.e. not just commercial) of the subject. An understanding of AEWA's agenda, and a track record of innovation, high standards and respect are also important criteria. Any partnership should be capable of being sustained for a number of years.

From a “long list” of potentially relevant organisations and networks, four are suggested below as the primary candidates with whom further details can now be explored, with an initial focus on developing the proposed “pilot initiatives”. Apart from the UNWTO (where liaison will be pursued through Secretariat channels) all of these have already declared their willingness to explore the possibilities.

### 1. The UN World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO)

UNWTO is the United Nations agency responsible for the promotion of responsible, sustainable and universally accessible tourism. It is committed to promoting tourism as an instrument in achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and it offers leadership and support to the sector in advancing knowledge and tourism policies worldwide, including through technical assistance projects in over 100 countries. Priorities include: supporting policies which make optimal use of environmental resources; maximizing the contribution of tourism to poverty reduction; fostering education and capacity building; and building partnerships.

UNWTO's definition of “ecotourism” is used in this report, and reference has been made to its previous collaboration with the Ramsar Convention, and its joint efforts with AEWA, CMS and others to develop the concept for a “Destination Flyways” project in 2014.

For more details see <https://www.unwto.org/who-we-are> .

### 2. Linking Tourism and Conservation (LT&C)

LT&C is an international NGO with a membership drawn from both the tourism and conservation sectors. It documents and promotes good practice case examples where tourism is supporting protected areas through education, awareness, finance or in other ways. LT&C's own education activities are undertaken in cooperation with tour operators. Its aims include sharing knowledge and expertise, and striving to raise standards and benefits for the establishment, development and management of protected natural areas.

LT&C's extensive documentation of case examples has been used as the source of several of those included in the present report.

For more details see <https://www.ltandc.org/> .

### 3. Rockjumper Birding Tours

Rockjumper runs scheduled and tailor-made birding tours in prime birding areas around the world, and combines this with active support for conservation projects. This includes the innovative Rockjumper Bird Conservation Fund, built from contributions levied on each tour booking. The Fund has supported a range of conservation projects and organisations, including community development, wetland and waterbird work in Africa, where Rockjumper is BirdLife International’s “species champion” for the Critically Endangered White-winged Flufftail *Sarothrura ayresi*.

Rockjumper’s tours themselves aim to exemplify good practice in enlightened standards of eco-tourism and conservation awareness-raising. Itineraries offered include “conservation tours”, with a focus on bird conservation issues and good use of trained community members as guides.

For more details see <https://www.rockjumperbirding.com/about/>.

### 4. BirdLife International (and specifically BirdLife South Africa’s Avitourism)

BirdLife International is already heavily involved with AEWA in various ways and could potentially be a strategic partner on ecotourism issues at regional or global level. Of particular relevance however is the pioneering “avitourism” project of BirdLife South Africa, which includes training of community bird guides, accrediting “birder friendly” visitor establishments and tour operators, promoting “birding routes” and promoting birding in South Africa generally. An additional specific arm of the project involves the Wakkerstroom Tourism and Education Centre.

Although not directly operating tours itself, the avitourism project generally helps to promote widespread adoption of environmentally sensitive approaches, including client awareness (a “birders Code of Conduct”), education, and links to “citizen science”. A study has confirmed the potential benefits for human livelihoods too, although further research on this could be valuable.

For more details see <https://www.birdlife.org.za/> [Some pages not functioning].

## Potential Pilot Initiatives

The AEWA Strategic Plan (Target 2.5 and its corresponding actions) provides for at least three “pilot ecotourism-related initiatives” with a focus on migratory waterbirds to be launched in different parts of the Agreement area by the time of MOP9. The aim is to exemplify the benefits that well-planned waterbird-focused ecotourism can have, both for the conservation of AEWA species and their habitats and for the livelihoods of local communities. The chosen initiatives should in particular be capable of demonstrating sustainability and replicability.

Three initial possibilities are outlined below, designed to encompass a variety of topics, situations and geographic areas. These are simply suggested concepts at this stage, as a basis for discussion – first to confirm a choice of concepts (others could be suggested, or these three amended), and then to develop proposed specifications for the chosen initiatives.

It is envisaged that the pilots would be developed in collaboration with the “strategic partners” identified in the preceding section above. The pilots should deliver relevant results in their own right (both for waterbird conservation and for local communities), but also serve as demonstration projects that illustrate approaches, models, lessons learned and potentially tools and other resources that could be scaled up in the area(s) concerned and/or replicated and applied in other areas. With this in mind, a communication strategy will need to be part of taking this forward, so that a variety of promotional stories can be developed and used for publicity, education and policy advocacy purposes.



## 1. “Destination Flyways” revisited

- *Main purpose/topic focus:* Key sites in a flyway context; management planning to integrate tourism, conservation and livelihoods; international knowledge-exchange network; awareness and advocacy.
- *Geographic scope:* Selected sites in defined inter-regional flyways in the AEWA area.

This proposal would seek to revive a concept on which considerable groundwork was already accomplished on an earlier occasion. The initial seed was sown even earlier, when “*Destination Wetlands: Supporting sustainable tourism*” was the title of a collaboration initiative between the World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) and the Ramsar Convention in 2012. In that year the subject was designated as the theme for both Ramsar COP11 and World Wetlands Day, case studies were documented, and a joint publication was issued<sup>25</sup> detailing the ways in which appropriately planned and managed tourism (with the conservation and tourism sectors working together) can contribute to wetland conservation while also bringing economic benefits to national and local economies and contributing to local livelihoods.

*Destination Flyways* was conceived two years later, this time as a collaboration between UNWTO and AEWA, CMS, Ramsar, the East Asian - Australasian Flyway Partnership, Wetlands International, BirdLife International and the German Federal Ministry of the Environment<sup>26</sup>. The subject was the theme of publicity campaigns for World Migratory Bird Day in 2014, highlighting the links between migratory bird conservation, wildlife watching tourism and community development around the world. The ambitious broader project associated with this however did not attract sufficient funding to go ahead at that time. Elements of it, adapted as necessary, are now proposed as the basis for the first of the three AEWA pilot initiatives described here.

The project was designed to focus on eight sites in different countries related to four of the world’s major migratory bird flyways. At each site, plans would be developed for linking tourism to conservation actions and community benefit, including the development of ecotourism-related income streams as an alternative to environmentally less sustainable practices. Successes would be widely promoted in public, industry and policy circles as evidence for the feasibility of the “win-win” approaches expected, contextualised in an international network of experience-exchange and migration-related connectedness.

To revive this concept as an AEWA pilot initiative in the present context, a new partnership agreement between AEWA and UNWTO is likely to be the first step. A consortium of other partners could be put together along similar lines as previously (with the same or different partners). The focus of the initiative itself (site-based, multi-benefit joint management frameworks and international networking) could be similar to that of *Destination Flyways*, but this could be a matter for discussion and other ideas might come forward. A focus on a particular habitat type, species or species group (for example) might be among the options.

Site selection should be re-visited: some of the sites identified as suitable in the 2014 proposal are within the AEWA Agreement area and might continue to be favoured candidates, but this would not be pre-judged, and factors such as willing engagement of local actors and the overall balance of situations across the project should be re-assessed. The number of locations will also need considering in terms of a judgement about the likely overall magnitude of the pilot. It could be taken forward in phases, with a limited scale for a first “proof of concept” phase, expanding later as capacity allows.

## 2. International avitourism development support

- *Main purpose/topic focus:* Training, advice, networking and other support for a wide range of tourism sector operators to develop a growing market for waterbird-based tourism, in ways which exemplify responsible approaches and positive impacts for conservation and local communities.

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<sup>25</sup> Ramsar Secretariat and UN World Tourism Organisation, *op cit.*

<sup>26</sup> See <https://www.unwto.org/sustainable-development/flyways>.

- *Geographic scope:* Ultimately the AEWA Agreement area as a whole; though potentially developed progressively in phases for individual sub-regions.

As with the first proposal above, this one would also seek to build on the experience of earlier initiatives, adapting the focus to concentrate on migratory waterbirds and their habitats, and in this case also to expand the geographic scope to the AEWA area as a whole. The inspiration is the “International Project on Ornithological Tourism” described as case example No. 2 in the Annex to this report, also known as the “Iberaves” and “Mediteraves” projects<sup>27</sup>. The scope of these was initially Iberia and then countries in the Mediterranean region, but the approach is potentially scalable to any area.

The principal emphasis is on support for tourism providers to engage with the growing market for bird-based tourism, and to develop their business activities in ways which promote nature conservation, support local economies, minimise negative environmental impacts and exemplify a model of high standards in responsible and sustainable tourism.

Support would be provided in the form of free advice, awareness and education materials, training modules, online toolkits, good practice guidance and facilitated networking, all made available in multiple languages. Advice would cover both the conservation dimension and the economic dimension, for example adapting value chains to ensure that benefits flow to local communities rather than remaining concentrated in multinational corporate profits.

The target for collaborations would be all kinds of providers including travel companies, tour operators, hotels, guest houses, campsite owners, restaurants, retail outlets, marketing agencies, birdwatching and photography guides, and other stakeholders in the tourism sector including local administrations and community organisations. As well as free or low-cost support resources, involvement in the initiative would benefit these different entities by increasing their market niche advantage and the sustainability of their enterprise. Regulatory authorities would also be assisted, and there should be a positive impact on waterbird conservation outcomes and local livelihoods.

Where still current and applicable, the materials and participant networks generated from the Iberian and Mediterranean projects would be incorporated into this initiative as a key component of it, in those areas. Another component could be a direct association with the “Avitourism” programme in Southern Africa operated by BirdLife South Africa (see suggested “strategic partner” No. 4 above and case example No. 11 in the Annex), in particular perhaps its training for guides and its “birder friendly” visitor establishment and tour operator accreditation concept. Since BirdLife Partner organisations also led the “Iberaves” and “Mediteraves” projects, strategic collaboration with BirdLife International for this potential initiative overall would seem a logical foundation for taking it forward.

### **3. Strengthening institutional and policy capacity for ecotourism in internationally designated coastal protected areas**

- *Main purpose/topic focus:* Strengthening institutional, policy and management capacity and related frameworks for internationally designated protected areas that support ecotourism serving AEWA’s objectives.
- *Geographic scope:* Coastal areas of importance for AEWA species, potentially including links to equivalent areas in regions beyond the Agreement area.

This proposal takes advantage of an opportunity presented by some of the case examples in the Annex to this report, and also of the existence of a UNESCO programme on World Heritage and Sustainable Tourism.

Ecologically, it would focus specifically on coastal ecosystems of international importance for migratory waterbirds. (This scope might embrace seabird sites, rocky islands and sandy beaches, or it might limit itself to sites with intertidal habitats of importance primarily for shorebirds, ducks, geese and swans – this

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<sup>27</sup> See <https://seo.org/mediteraves/>

choice, and the list of potential locations it produces, would be a matter for early scoping discussions. Several such sites already feature in the case examples documented in this report).

In policy terms, it would focus on coastal areas that have been (and perhaps those which are proposed to be) protected under international conservation designations. The genesis for this is the potential that exists with “natural” or “mixed” properties inscribed under the World Heritage Convention, but it might equally embrace coastal wetlands (a greater number) designated under the Ramsar Convention.

The purpose would be to promote approaches in these areas that develop and direct ecotourism in ways that achieve the objectives addressed in the present report, namely benefiting both waterbird conservation and community livelihoods. By contrast to the other pilot initiatives proposed here, however, it would primarily target the formal policy and institutional frameworks that govern the protection and management of the designated sites concerned. It could also include a formal research component, to document the resulting benefits to provide evidence for decision-makers.

The focus on internationally designated areas is designed to feed in to the existing infrastructures for standard-setting and experience exchange that are provided by the intergovernmental agreements (World Heritage and Ramsar). The emphasis is on strengthening capacity, using leading examples to transfer knowledge and experience to other comparable examples in the same international networks, and capitalising where applicable on flyway links between them.

A springboard for this is provided by case examples Nos. 8 and 9 in the Annex to this report, concerning the Waddensee World Heritage and Ramsar Site in northern Europe. The governing institutions there have developed supportive links with sites in other regions that share the same designation status (actual or proposed) and the same ornithological values - including the Banc d’Arguin in Mauritania, and sites on the Yellow Sea coast in China and the Republic of Korea. The present proposal would build on this experience and expand it.

The pilot would tie in closely with UNESCO’s *World Heritage and Sustainable Tourism* programme<sup>28</sup>, which seeks to facilitate sustainable tourism at World Heritage properties through increased awareness, capacity and participation of stakeholders, and to ensure that tourism delivers benefits for conservation of the properties and sustainable development for local communities as well as a quality experience for visitors. It further seeks to integrate sustainable tourism principles into the mechanisms of the Convention, and to strengthen the enabling environment for it with policies, strategies, frameworks and tools. The pilot would embrace these objectives, and would potentially seek to do the same in the Ramsar Convention context too.

This could all take place within the AEWA Agreement area. There may however be no good reason not to enable such strategically coordinated links to take place between AEWA-area sites and others with shared interests elsewhere in the world too (as for example with the China/Korea example mentioned above).

There are some potential links with the “Destination Flyways” pilot concept outlined above. While the emphasis is quite different between the two concepts, some synergy between them could be beneficial, and the Waddensee (as one example) has been identified to feature in both.

Given some relevant engagement by them already with elements of this concept, the suggested AEWA “strategic partner” LT&C could be a logical collaborator in this pilot. It would also however be important to pursue it in partnership with UNESCO (for the World Heritage site dimension) and with the Ramsar Convention Secretariat (if the scope is extended to cover coastal Ramsar Sites).

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<sup>28</sup> See <https://whc.unesco.org/en/tourism/>



## Conclusions and Final Recommendations

This report has shown that ecotourism has an important contribution to make to the aims of AEWA, and equally that the Agreement can play an important role in this field. If not carefully managed, visitor impacts can harm wildlife and habitats; but there is now a wealth of experience and guidance available to show how nature-based tourism can be conducted in responsible ways which are positive not only for conservation but also for local communities.

There are significant opportunities provided by the growing market for such tourism, combined with the growth in understanding about wildlife-friendly approaches, to meet vital policy objectives for sustainable development and alternative livelihoods in areas where poverty and environmental pressures may both be acute.

A significant number of organisations and networks have become specialised in this field, both in the environment sector and in the tourism sector itself. Notable efforts have been made to address and guide it in the international governance sphere, with the work of UNWTO, UNESCO and several of the biodiversity-related Conventions.

AEWA is well placed to provide impetus and leadership where the subject concerns African-Eurasian migratory waterbirds and their habitats, and where benefits can be achieved simultaneously for the birds and for human communities. The expression of this in Target 2.5 of the AEWA Strategic Plan has been explored through the present report, and some concrete steps can now be defined for taking the agenda forward.

The case examples documented in the Annex here illustrate the extent to which waterbirds can be a particularly powerful and accessible focus for ecotourism interest. They also demonstrate some of the ways in which tourism operators and others with an interest are achieving success in putting appropriate principles and standards into practice. This contributes to a growing body of evidence that can support further policy development and wider replication and scaling-up of effective approaches. Documenting “lessons learnt” from case experiences is a particularly important part of this, and more extensive analysis and promotion of such lessons should be one priority for the future.

- **Recommendation 1:** Individual waterbird-related ecotourism operators and initiatives should increase their efforts to capture and make available information on the lessons learnt from their activities (positive and negative) that may contribute to wider knowledge and improved practices in the ecotourism field.
- **Recommendation 2:** Options should be explored for undertaking further overview research on lessons emerging from waterbird-related ecotourism ventures, to assist in building a robust evidence base for the development of enhanced policy and guidance on opportunities and good practices.

AEWA has particular strengths in offering continuity of sustained engagement in this subject (provided there is political will to do so) and an internationally connected perspective, adding value to other efforts which may be geographically isolated and/or of limited duration. Given the advances on various fronts that have occurred since AEWA’s own ecotourism guidelines were last revised in 2005, there is a strong case for revising them again now to bring them up to date.

- **Recommendation 3:** Relevant ecotourism operators should verify that their operations conform to the AEWA ecotourism guidelines and other international best practice standards identified in this report, including careful assessment and minimisation of risks to migratory waterbirds and their habitats, and seeking to benefit both conservation and local community interests while providing high quality visitor experiences.
- **Recommendation 4:** The *AEWA Guidelines on the development of ecotourism at wetlands* (Conservation Guidelines No. 7, 2005) should be revised and updated, and enhanced content should be added in particular concerning the issue of local community benefit.

Four potential strategic partners have been identified for future collaborative work with AEWA on ecotourism. Such work would be likely to include joint flagship projects to promote ways in which ecotourism can contribute to the twin aims of waterbird conservation and local community benefit. These partnerships would also support sharing of knowledge, ideas and case examples, any further development of relevant good practice guidance, policies or standards, and efforts in general to mobilise resources for work in this area. Any of these activities could involve more than one of the partners, and others could be involved too; but the four identified here provide a starting point for taking this concept forward.

Three potential pilot initiatives have been defined, covering a mix of different issues and areas. These are simply suggested concepts at this stage, as a basis for discussion (others could be suggested, or these three amended, and there could be synergies between them). Further investigation/scoping, starting with these proposals, should now take place.

- **Recommendation 5:** The AEWA Secretariat should invite individual discussions with each of the “strategic partners” suggested in this report, to explore the scope for collaborating on ecotourism-related issues of shared interest, including the suggested “pilot initiatives”.
- **Recommendation 6:** The AEWA Secretariat, together with the Technical Committee and with input from selected strategic partners as appropriate, should develop detailed proposals for taking forward (or adapting as necessary) the “pilot initiatives” suggested in this report.

## **Annex: Case Examples**

The following selection of case examples illustrates some of the range of variation in types of ecotourism related to wetlands and waterbirds in the AEWA area. Examples from further afield might also offer instructive insights for the Agreement, and this form of research could be widened in future to encompass them; but for present purposes it has been limited to the geographical scope of the Agreement.

The sample has been compiled from a range of sources of varying age and detail, including personal consultations, reports and online searches. Each example is presented here in a summary form under a few standardised information headings to allow comparison. The twin elements of conservation benefit and community benefit (as far as those can be judged) have guided the selection of cases, although in many instances the substance of this would merit further research. Likewise, the lessons emerging from experience have not always necessarily been documented by those concerned, and doing so should be encouraged further in future.

The list is divided into regions, and then within each region the examples are presented in alphabetical order. The resulting overview is indicative rather than a scientific analysis, and any of these accounts could in principle potentially be augmented by further studies.

On the next page, before the example accounts themselves, a list of them is provided in a table that identifies some of the key attributes that are featured. This information is drawn only from the sources that were available as the basis for the case summaries, so some attributes may be relevant in more cases than indicated – but the table provides at least a broad picture of the spread of situations represented.

**KEY TO LIST OF EXAMPLES AND SOME OF THE ATTRIBUTES REPRESENTED**

Case example	Ecotourism integrated in formal environmental area management framework	Multi-country partnership initiative	Other strategic programme	Example based mainly on organised tours and hospitality	Example with a major “ visitor centre” component	Community-led initiative	Intertidal area with flyway connections	Focus on seabirds	Example with a focus on conservation of a particular species	Economic incentives, sustainable financing or innovative funding model	Visitor tax, entry fees or equivalent	Focused on a protected area or “ hotspot”	Education activities
<b>EUROPE</b>													
1. <i>Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve (Romania)</i>	✓										✓	✓	✓
2. <i>International Project on Ornithological Tourism (Spain, Portugal, Cyprus, Greece)</i>		✓											
3. <i>Lista landscape (Norway)</i>	✓											✓	✓
4. <i>Sooma National Park (Estonia)</i>	✓											✓	✓
5. <i>Svalbard Environmental Protection Fund (Norway)</i>										✓	✓		
6. <i>Torre Guaceto (Italy)</i>					✓							✓	✓
7. <i>Urdaibai Bird Centre (Spain)</i>					✓							✓	✓
8. <i>Wadden Sea (1) - Trilateral cooperation (The Netherlands, Germany, Denmark)</i>		✓					✓					✓	
9. <i>Wadden Sea (2) - Schutzstation Wattenmeer (Germany)</i>					✓							✓	✓
10. <i>Wadden Sea (3) - Sort Safari’s “Grey Sun” (Denmark)</i>				✓									

<b>AFRICA</b>													
11. <i>BirdLife South Africa Avitourism Project (South Africa)</i>			✓										
12. <i>Boulders Beach (South Africa)</i>								✓	✓		✓	✓	
13. <i>Borana Lodge and Conservancy (Kenya)</i>				✓									
14. <i>Cape Town Pelagics (South Africa)</i>								✓					✓
15. <i>Djoudj National Park (Senegal)</i>	✓										✓	✓	
16. <i>Dyer Island Conservation Trust (South Africa)</i>								✓	✓				✓
17. <i>iSimangaliso Wetland Park (South Africa)</i>	✓											✓	
18. <i>Lake Ichkeul (Tunisia)</i>	✓											✓	✓
19. <i>Lake Nakuru National Park (Kenya)</i>	✓										✓	✓	✓
20. <i>Lake Nokoué (Bénin)</i>							✓					✓	
21. <i>Lower Sanaga River (Cameroon)</i>							✓				✓	✓	✓
22. <i>Mabamba wetlands (Uganda)</i>							✓		✓		✓	✓	
23. <i>Mahavavy-Kinkony (Madagascar)</i>			✓	✓								✓	
24. <i>Middelpunt Wetland and Berga (South Africa, Ethiopia)</i>		✓							✓			✓	
25. <i>Molli Haoussa (Niger)</i>							✓					✓	✓
26. <i>Seychelles Sustainable Tourism Foundation (Seychelles)</i>			✓										
27. <i>Tsam Tsam ecotourism, Lake Oguemoué (Gabon)</i>							✓					✓	✓
28. <i>Wakkerstroom Tourism and Education Centre (South Africa)</i>					✓							✓	✓
<b>INTERNATIONAL</b>													
29. <i>Rockjumper Conservation Initiative (International)</i>		✓										✓	

## EUROPE

<p><b>Name of the case example:</b></p> <p>1. Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve</p>	<p><b>Country or countries concerned:</b></p> <p>Romania</p> <p><i>(NB this example concentrates on Romania, although the Danube Delta also extends into Ukraine, where there is also a Biosphere Reserve).</i></p>
<p><b>Key words describing the type of ecotourism involved:</b></p> <p>Large protected area with a range of tourist activities exploring the natural and cultural heritage of the wetland environment, including its birds.</p>	
<p><b>Relevance to AEWA (e.g. species):</b></p> <p>Internationally important (Ramsar designated) for several species of breeding, passage and wintering waterbirds.</p>	
<p><b>Summary of the nature of the operation:</b></p> <p>Tourism and conservation of the area are regulated and managed by the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Authority (DDBRA). Sustainable tourism is increasing (over 70,000 visitors per year), strongly promoted by the DDBRA (together with ecological restoration) as part of the modern future of the area, following historical degradation and loss of important wetland habitats. Provision includes birdwatching groups, hiking trails, boat-based tours, floating hotels, several visitor centres and education activities.</p>	
<p><b>Conservation benefits resulting or expected:</b></p> <p>The tourism is an integral part of the conservation and management regime for the area. It is regulated to avoid harm, and public awareness and understanding are promoted. Some of the funding for the area's management is provided by visitor fees.</p>	<p><b>Local livelihood or other community benefits resulting or expected:</b></p> <p>A key component of the local economy, including employment.</p>
<p><b>Operator and contact information:</b></p> <p>Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Authority: 34 A Portului Str., 820243 Tulcea, Romania. +40 (240) 518945. arbdd@ddbra.ro .</p>	
<p><b>Important lessons learnt from this example (including scope for replication):</b></p> <p>Tourism occurs in the context of management plan, with multi-stakeholder input including tourism interests, and informed by specific studies on the tourism potential, including a Sustainable Tourism Development Strategy. The area's zonation according to levels and types of use, in line with the Biosphere Reserve philosophy, provides a useful tool for managing the tourism element. The area's tourism certification scheme, aiming to ensure the quality of tourism products and services, may be a useful model for application elsewhere. DDBRA has received several international awards for its approach to integrated management of the area.</p>	
<p><b>Web links and references:</b></p> <p>www.ddbra.ro .  <a href="http://www.unesco.org/new/en/natural-sciences/environment/ecological-sciences/biosphere-reserves/europe-north-america/romaniaukraine/danube-delta/">http://www.unesco.org/new/en/natural-sciences/environment/ecological-sciences/biosphere-reserves/europe-north-america/romaniaukraine/danube-delta/</a> .  <a href="https://www.ramsar.org/document/wetland-tourism-case-study-romania-danube-delta">https://www.ramsar.org/document/wetland-tourism-case-study-romania-danube-delta</a> .</p>	
<p><b>Name of the case example:</b></p> <p>2. International Project on Ornithological Tourism</p>	<p><b>Country or countries concerned:</b></p> <p>Spain, Portugal, Cyprus, Greece</p>

<b>Key words describing the type of ecotourism involved:</b>	
Strategic initiative to promote responsible bird-based ecotourism in the Mediterranean region.	
<b>Relevance to AEWA (e.g. species):</b>	
Strategic relevance, covering bird-based ecotourism in general.	
<b>Summary of the nature of the operation:</b>	
Initiatives for training, cooperation, promotion of good practices, awareness-raising and advice for the tourism sector on operating bird-based tourism that is beneficial for conservation and local development, and elevates beyond a narrowly-specialised market niche. Over 1,400 people downloaded the online training tool in the first two years. Begun in Spain and Portugal as the “Iberaves” project, it subsequently expanded to the Mediterranean more widely as the “Mediteraves” project. Run by BirdLife International partner organisations in the participating countries, together with the BirdLife Secretariat. Working with travel companies, hoteliers, restaurants, marketing agencies, birdwatching and photography guides, and other stakeholders in the tourism sector.	
<b>Conservation benefits resulting or expected:</b>	<b>Local livelihood or other community benefits resulting or expected:</b>
Widespread raising of avitourism standards and awareness.	Increased integration of local development benefits in avitourism operations.
<b>Operator and contact information:</b>	
Partnership between SEO/BirdLife Spain, SPEA (BirdLife in Portugal), BirdLife Cyprus, HOS (Hellenic Ornithological Society) and the BirdLife International Secretariat. Lead contact SEO/BirdLife Spain: C/Melquiades Biencinto 34, Madrid 28053, Spain. +34 914340910. seo@seo.org .	
<b>Important lessons learnt from this example (including scope for replication):</b>	
Example of strategic synergy between conservation and tourism partners, situating bird-based tourism in a wider context. Initial two-country model then expanded to other countries, and potentially further replicable/expandable at wider scales.	
<b>Web links and references:</b>	
<a href="https://seo.org/mediteraves/">https://seo.org/mediteraves/</a> . <a href="https://seo.org/en-el-campo/turismo-ornitologico/iberaves/">https://seo.org/en-el-campo/turismo-ornitologico/iberaves/</a> . <a href="https://www.birdlife.org/europe-and-central-asia/news/sustainable-birdwatching-tourism-grow-europe">https://www.birdlife.org/europe-and-central-asia/news/sustainable-birdwatching-tourism-grow-europe</a> . <a href="https://www.birdlife.org/europe-and-central-asia/news/ornithological-tourism-project-kicks-meeting-barcelona">https://www.birdlife.org/europe-and-central-asia/news/ornithological-tourism-project-kicks-meeting-barcelona</a> . <a href="https://www.birdlife.org/europe-and-central-asia/news/momentum-gaining-mediterranean-ipot-sustainable-birdwatching-tourism">https://www.birdlife.org/europe-and-central-asia/news/momentum-gaining-mediterranean-ipot-sustainable-birdwatching-tourism</a> .	

<b>Name of the case example:</b>	<b>Country or countries concerned:</b>
3. Lista landscape	Norway
<b>Key words describing the type of ecotourism involved:</b>	
Coordination by Municipality of a range of landscape and wildlife-based visitor opportunities, combined with expansion of protection and management regimes for the landscape and ecological values of the area.	
<b>Relevance to AEWA (e.g. species):</b>	
A diverse region with attractions that include waterbirds and wetlands, including the Lista Wetlands System Ramsar Site (qualifying on a basis of its migratory waterbirds).	
<b>Summary of the nature of the operation:</b>	
Since 1976 the Farsund Municipality has coordinated conservation interests in Lista with other land-use interests, including tourism, at a landscape scale. As part of this, a suite of areas has been demarcated as	

<p>statutorily-protected outdoor recreation and conservation areas. Visitor provision includes cycling and walking trails, education initiatives, guides wildlife visits, and a Wetland Visitor Centre at Lista Lighthouse.</p>	
<p><b>Conservation benefits resulting or expected:</b></p> <p>Expanded system of protected areas; management plans in operation (e.g. for grazing regimes); increased public awareness of conservation values.</p>	<p><b>Local livelihood or other community benefits resulting or expected:</b></p> <p>Sustaining the local way of life by integrating tourism, farming and other business interests. Support for farmers through management agreements that include conservation objectives and tourism access provisions. Other beneficial impacts on the local economy.</p>
<p><b>Operator and contact information:</b></p> <p>Farsund Municipality, Brogaten 7, 4550 Farsund, Norway. +47 38 38 20 00. <a href="mailto:post@farsund.kommune.no">post@farsund.kommune.no</a> .          Lista Lighthouse Visitor Centre: Lista Fyr AS, Fyrveien 70, 4563 Borhaug, Norway. Pål Hals, Manager. +47 906 12 688. <a href="mailto:post@listafyr.no">post@listafyr.no</a> .</p>	
<p><b>Important lessons learnt from this example (including scope for replication):</b></p> <p>Example of a sustainable way of linking tourism and conservation at integrated landscape scale. The Municipality is positive about sharing its long-term experience of this more widely.</p>	
<p><b>Web links and references:</b></p> <p><a href="https://www.farsund.kommune.no/">https://www.farsund.kommune.no/</a> .  <a href="https://www.listafyr.no/en/">https://www.listafyr.no/en/</a> .  <a href="https://www.ltandc.org/examples/">https://www.ltandc.org/examples/</a> .</p>	

<p><b>Name of the case example:</b></p> <p>4. Sooma National Park</p>	<p><b>Country or countries concerned:</b></p> <p>Estonia</p>
<p><b>Key words describing the type of ecotourism involved:</b></p> <p>The most popular destination for wilderness tourism experiences in the Baltic countries. The National Park includes an information &amp; education centre, and private operators provide excursions and other wildlife experiences, in the carefully managed context of a protected area.</p>	
<p><b>Relevance to AEWA (e.g. species):</b></p> <p>A Ramsar-designated area of bogs, rivers and wet meadows that is an important breeding area for several species of migratory waterbirds.</p>	
<p><b>Summary of the nature of the operation:</b></p> <p>Tourism in the National Park is framed by a Sustainable Tourism Development Strategy that seeks to facilitate access through various visitor management approaches while safeguarding the ecological values of the area. Guided tours, canoe routes, trails, boardwalks and zoned areas all help to channel this appropriately, and it has been informed inter alia by local research on disturbance tolerances of breeding waders. The Park receives around 45,000 visitors per year.</p>	
<p><b>Conservation benefits resulting or expected:</b></p> <p>Tourism fully integrated into the conservation management of the protected area.</p>	<p><b>Local livelihood or other community benefits resulting or expected:</b></p> <p>The Park has no entry fees, but the eco-tourism contributes in other ways to the local economy. The Sustainable Tourism Development Strategy includes provisions relating to the creation of jobs and local businesses, and to support more generally for the welfare of local communities, including efforts to preserve the area's traditional ways of life.</p>



<p><b>Operator and contact information:</b></p> <p>Soomaa National Park: Tipu küla, Põhja-Sakala vald, Viljandimaa, 71211 Estonia. +372 526 1247 . info.soomaa@rmk.ee .</p>
<p><b>Important lessons learnt from this example (including scope for replication):</b></p> <p>The National Park has found ways of facilitating “wilderness” experiences while doing this in a sufficiently managed way to protect the sensitive ecological values of the area. The approach has catalysed the development of useful knowledge about the tolerance limits involved and techniques for directing the human presence in the area. Having met the renewable auditing standards set by the PAN Parks Network, Soomaa has been included in the Network and has gained benefits from the resulting exchange of experience between regions, and a boost in interest among local ecotourism providers.</p>
<p><b>Web links and references:</b></p> <p><a href="https://kaitsealad.ee/en/protected-areas/soomaa-national-park">https://kaitsealad.ee/en/protected-areas/soomaa-national-park</a> .  <a href="https://www.ramsar.org/document/wetland-tourism-case-study-estonia-soomaa">https://www.ramsar.org/document/wetland-tourism-case-study-estonia-soomaa</a> .  <a href="http://www.soomaa.com">http://www.soomaa.com</a> .</p>

<p><b>Name of the case example:</b></p> <p>5. Svalbard Environmental Protection Fund</p>	<p><b>Country or countries concerned:</b></p> <p>Norway</p>
<p><b>Key words describing the type of ecotourism involved:</b></p> <p>Visitor tax used to fund environmental protection programme.</p>	
<p><b>Relevance to AEWA (e.g. species):</b></p> <p>Key Arctic breeding area for migratory birds, notably geese.</p>	
<p><b>Summary of the nature of the operation:</b></p> <p>Since 2007, all visitors travelling to Svalbard (around 60,000 per year, which includes significant and increasing numbers of wildlife-watching tourists) have been required to pay a mandatory levy which goes into the government-run Environmental Protection Fund. The Fund is then open to applications for projects for environmental and cultural heritage management, restoration, research, monitoring, education and training.</p>	
<p><b>Conservation benefits resulting or expected:</b></p> <p>Currently around NOK 20 million of support is provided for conservation and heritage projects per year. A thriving tourism sector is operated in conjunction with high standards of environmental protection.</p>	<p><b>Local livelihood or other community benefits resulting or expected:</b></p> <p>External funding for conservation enhances the wider capacity of the local economy.</p>
<p><b>Operator and contact information:</b></p> <p>Svalbards Miljøvernfond, Sysselmannen på Svalbard, Postboks 633, 9171 Longyearbyen, Norway. +47 79 02 43 51. firmapost@sysselmannen.no .</p>	
<p><b>Important lessons learnt from this example (including scope for replication):</b></p> <p>The tourism potential of the area, and joint advocacy by tour operators and conservation NGOs, was instrumental in generating the government policy that aspires to see Svalbard being “the best-managed wilderness area in the world”, and the national park designations that followed. Arctic tourism experiences can be particularly impactful in sensitising people to issues of global environmental change. There is scope for sharing experiences with other Arctic countries, and the economic model of the Environmental Protection Fund could be replicated more widely elsewhere in the world. Visitors may not necessarily be aware that their tour costs have included this element and the uses to which it is put, and there may be scope to make this more visible.</p>	

<p><b>Web links and references:</b></p> <p><a href="https://www.miljovernfondet.no/en/front-page/">https://www.miljovernfondet.no/en/front-page/</a> .  <a href="https://www.ltandc.org/examples/">https://www.ltandc.org/examples/</a> .</p>
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<b>Name of the case example:</b> 6. Torre Guaceto	<b>Country or countries concerned:</b> Italy
<b>Key words describing the type of ecotourism involved:</b> An important marine & coastal protected area which actively promotes a range of sensitive tourist activities (including through a visitor centre) as a tool for educating the public about its ecological significance.	
<b>Relevance to AEWA (e.g. species):</b> Although the visitor focus is partly on the marine environment, there is a (Ramsar-designated) wetland component of importance for migratory waterbirds.	
<b>Summary of the nature of the operation:</b> The Visitor Centre has a programme of engagement with tourists, schools, students and local communities which includes education, interpretation, citizen science projects, guided tours and excursions, and other wildlife watching activities. Revenues are used towards conservation of the protected area, and the open and inviting approach aims to build public support for protecting its values.	
<b>Conservation benefits resulting or expected:</b> Support in terms of finance and positive public attitudes for the conservation of the area.	<b>Local livelihood or other community benefits resulting or expected:</b> Promotion of socioeconomic development of the local communities is an explicit aim. Also educational benefits.
<b>Operator and contact information:</b> Consorzio di Gestione di Torre Guaceto, Via Sant' Anna 6 - 72012 Carovigno, Brindisi, Italy. And Contrada Serranova, 26, 72012 Carovigno, Brindisi, Italy. +39 0831 990882. <a href="mailto:segreteria@riservaditorreguaceto.it">segreteria@riservaditorreguaceto.it</a> ; <a href="mailto:info@riservaditorreguaceto.it">info@riservaditorreguaceto.it</a> . Torre Guaceto Visitor Centre, Via Piazzetta, A/32, 72012 Serranova di Carovigno, Brindisi, Italy. +39 0831 989885.	
<b>Important lessons learnt from this example (including scope for replication):</b> Maintaining equitability between the promotion of tourism and the facilitation of access/participation by local residents has been a key factor in the success of Torre Guaceto. This, together with the combined approach to tourism and conservation, offers experiences that could valuably inform other operations elsewhere.	
<b>Web links and references:</b> <a href="http://www.riservaditorreguaceto.it">www.riservaditorreguaceto.it</a> . <a href="http://www.pugliaandculture.com/parks-of-puglia/protected-nature-reserve-of-torre-guaceto">http://www.pugliaandculture.com/parks-of-puglia/protected-nature-reserve-of-torre-guaceto</a> <a href="https://www.ltandc.org/examples/">https://www.ltandc.org/examples/</a>	

<b>Name of the case example:</b> 7. Urdaibai Bird Centre	<b>Country or countries concerned:</b> Spain
<b>Key words describing the type of ecotourism involved:</b> A bird observation centre and museum, in the heart of the reserve.	
<b>Relevance to AEWA (e.g. species):</b>	

The most important wetland in the Atlantic Basque Country. A Ramsar Site, Biosphere Reserve and EU Special Protection Area, important for migratory waterbirds.	
<b>Summary of the nature of the operation:</b> A bird observation centre and museum, with viewing platform, permanent telescopes and an audio-guided exhibition. Research, public awareness, education visits, production of bird guides.	
<b>Conservation benefits resulting or expected:</b> The operator is involved in the conservation of the site as well as providing the ecotourism facility. Engaging visitors in conservation training and raising public awareness. Bird ringing operation.	<b>Local livelihood or other community benefits resulting or expected:</b> A facility for education, courses in ornithology, training, and visiting researchers.
<b>Operator and contact information:</b> Aranzadi Zientzi Elkarte (Aranzadi Society of Sciences), Urdaibai Bird Centre, Orueta 7, Gautegiz Arteaga 48314, Bizkaia, Spain. +34 94 6251157. urdaibai@birdcenter.org .	
<b>Important lessons learnt from this example (including scope for replication):</b> One of the aims of the Center/the ASS is international collaboration and exchange of information and experience, particularly with others on the same flyway.	
<b>Web links and references:</b> <a href="https://www.birdcenter.org/en/">https://www.birdcenter.org/en/</a> .	

<b>Name of the case example:</b> 8. Wadden Sea (1) – Trilateral cooperation	<b>Country or countries concerned:</b> The Netherlands, Germany, Denmark.
<b>Key words describing the type of ecotourism involved:</b> Birdwatching, natural history tourism, coastal recreation, environmental education centres, interpretation of flyway linkages.	
<b>Relevance to AEWA (e.g. species):</b> This largely intertidal system is one of the most important areas in the world for migratory birds. A critical stopover and wintering site on the East Atlantic Flyway. Up to 6.1 million birds can be present at one time, with an average of 10 to 12 million birds passing through each year. World Heritage Site; Ramsar Site.	
<b>Summary of the nature of the operation:</b> Cooperation between the three countries, through the Common Wadden Sea Secretariat, includes a Sustainable Tourism Strategy, and projects and partnership programmes fostering the interdependence between the significance of the area as a major tourist destination and its significance for nature conservation.	
<b>Conservation benefits resulting or expected:</b> Site protection policy and management frameworks; international cooperation and capacity-building.	<b>Local livelihood or other community benefits resulting or expected:</b> Nature-based tourism is a major contributor to the regional economy.
<b>Operator and contact information:</b> Common Wadden Sea Secretariat. Dr. Harald Marencic, Deputy Executive Secretary. +49 4421 9108 15. marencic@waddensea-secretariat.org .	
<b>Important lessons learnt from this example (including scope for replication):</b>	

Offers a model of transboundary cooperation, and collaboration between government and non-government agencies. Regarded also as a model of integrating sustainable tourism in a World Heritage context. In that context, experiences have been shared with similarly important intertidal sites in West Africa (including a partnership established in 2014 with the Banc d'Arguin in Mauritania), China and the Republic of Korea.
<b>Web links and references:</b>  <a href="https://www.waddensea-worldheritage.org/common-wadden-sea-secretariat">https://www.waddensea-worldheritage.org/common-wadden-sea-secretariat</a> . <a href="https://www.ltandc.org/examples/">https://www.ltandc.org/examples/</a> .

<b>Name of the case example:</b>  9. Wadden Sea (2) - Schutzstation Wattenmeer	<b>Country or countries concerned:</b>  Germany
<b>Key words describing the type of ecotourism involved:</b>  A cluster of 17 information and education centres promoting visitor engagement and understanding about the area and its international importance.	
<b>Relevance to AEWA (e.g. species):</b>  The tri-national Wadden Sea is one of the most important areas in the world for migratory birds. A critical stopover and wintering site on the East Atlantic Flyway. Up to 6.1 million birds can be present at one time, with an average of 10 to 12 million birds passing through each year. World Heritage Site; Ramsar Site.	
<b>Summary of the nature of the operation:</b>  A focus on education and engagement, with excursions, exhibitions and other activities which every year involve over 8,000 events reaching more than 350,000 people. Also active involvement in conservation agendas for the area.	
<b>Conservation benefits resulting or expected:</b>  The large-scale public awareness and support developed by Schutzstation Wattenmeer's work, and its direct engagement in conservation advocacy, are credited as a major influence in securing the designations of the World Heritage Site and the Nationalpark Schleswig-Holsteinisches Wattenmeer. It is also credited with shifting general attitudes to the area away from extractive exploitation and towards conservation. The Schutzstation's staff and volunteers also undertake monitoring and other work for the National Park authority, funded by the revenues generated from tourism.	<b>Local livelihood or other community benefits resulting or expected:</b>  Nature-based tourism is a major contributor to the regional economy. Includes employment of the Schutzstation's own staff.
<b>Operator and contact information:</b>  Schutzstation Wattenmeer e.V., Hafenstrasse 3, 25813 Husum, Germany. +49 4841 668530. info@schutzstation-wattenmeer.de .	
<b>Important lessons learnt from this example (including scope for replication):</b>  Levels of ecotourism interest can be a powerful factor in securing formal protection of important sites. The Schutzstation was founded in 1962 and is one of the longest-established models of combining nature conservation with guiding and educating people about the environmental importance of an area. Its experiences could be valuable for comparable situations elsewhere, particularly in contexts where World Heritage protection is being applied in intertidal environments.	
<b>Web links and references:</b>  <a href="https://www.schutzstation-wattenmeer.de/">https://www.schutzstation-wattenmeer.de/</a> . <a href="https://www.ltandc.org/examples/">https://www.ltandc.org/examples/</a> .	

<b>Name of the case example:</b> 10. Wadden Sea (3) – Sort Safari’s “Grey Sun”	<b>Country or countries concerned:</b> Denmark
<b>Key words describing the type of ecotourism involved:</b> Tours to experience the spectacle of huge flocks of wintering geese.	
<b>Relevance to AEWA (e.g. species):</b> Takes place in one of the most important areas in the world for migratory waterbirds. Focuses on geese (particularly Barnacle Geese) arriving in winter – hence not only concerns several relevant species but also emphasises the phenomenon of migration.	
<b>Summary of the nature of the operation:</b> Sort Safari created the now widely known events dubbed “Black Sun”, in which over 50,000 people every year experience the natural spectacle of massive starling roost murmurations in the Waddensee. “Grey Sun” extends this concept with tours to witness the similarly captivating phenomenon of the area’s huge flocks of wintering geese.	
<b>Conservation benefits resulting or expected:</b> Wider appreciation of the waterbird values of the area.	<b>Local livelihood or other community benefits resulting or expected:</b> Developed a bird-based source of pride and icon of identity for the area.
<b>Operator and contact information:</b> Sort Safari, Slotsgaden 19, DK - 6270 Tønder, Denmark. +45 73 72 64 00. info@sortsafari.dk .	
<b>Important lessons learnt from this example (including scope for replication):</b> Interest in aspects of nature of relevance to AEWA can be built from ecotourism operations that initially focus on other natural attractions.	
<b>Web links and references:</b> <a href="https://en.sortsafari.dk/ture/492763384480729">https://en.sortsafari.dk/ture/492763384480729</a> .	

## AFRICA

<b>Name of the case example:</b> 11. BirdLife South Africa Avitourism Project	<b>Country or countries concerned:</b> South Africa
<b>Key words describing the type of ecotourism involved:</b> Strategic programme by bird conservation organisation that includes training of community bird guides, accrediting “birder friendly” visitor establishments and tour operators, promoting “birding routes” and promoting birding in South Africa generally.	
<b>Relevance to AEWA (e.g. species):</b> Highly congruent with AEWA’s strategic interests in responsible ecotourism.	
<b>Summary of the nature of the operation:</b> Training programme for community bird guides creates a network of self-employed guides available to lead tailored tours for birders, to responsible standards. “Birding routes” are an information resource for birders that help to promote and guide beneficial bird-based ecotourism, linked to education and skills development for local communities. “Birder friendly” visitor establishments and tour guides are accredited against criteria for	

<p>environmental and ethical responsibility, community support and tailoring to birder interests, and in return the establishments/operators are included in premium listings and are able to use the accreditation in their branding and marketing. An additional specific arm of the project involves the Wakkerstroom Tourism and Education Centre (covered specifically in a separate one of these case examples).</p>	
<p><b>Conservation benefits resulting or expected:</b></p> <p>Widespread promotion of environmentally sensitive approaches to avitourism, including client awareness (birders Code of Conduct) and education. Some contribution by birders to “citizen science” data collection.</p>	<p><b>Local livelihood or other community benefits resulting or expected:</b></p> <p>Employment benefits for the bird guides; business promotion for the visitor establishments and tour operators.</p>
<p><b>Operator and contact information:</b></p> <p>BirdLife South Africa. Physical Address: Isdell House, 17 Hume Road, Dunkeld West 2196, Johannesburg, South Africa. Postal Address: Private Bag X16, Pinegowrie, 2123, Johannesburg, South Africa. +27 (0) 11 789 1122. info@birdlife.org.za . Avitourism Project Manager: Andrew de Blocq, andrew.deblocq@birdlife.org.za .</p>	
<p><b>Important lessons learnt from this example (including scope for replication):</b></p> <p>Example of a national programmatic approach by a conservation organisation aiming to integrate the positive opportunities offered by ecotourism. Will contribute to research on avitourism and trends in this as a market segment. The programme is relatively new but there should be opportunities to demonstrate its impact for example by quantifying impacts on local economies.</p>	
<p><b>Web links and references:</b></p> <p><a href="https://www.birdlife.org.za/what-we-do/empowering-people/">https://www.birdlife.org.za/what-we-do/empowering-people/</a> .  <a href="https://www.birdlife.org.za/go-birding/community-bird-guides/">https://www.birdlife.org.za/go-birding/community-bird-guides/</a> .  <a href="https://www.birdlife.org.za/go-birding/birding-routes/">https://www.birdlife.org.za/go-birding/birding-routes/</a> .  <a href="https://www.birdlife.org.za/go-birding/bird-friendly-establishments/">https://www.birdlife.org.za/go-birding/bird-friendly-establishments/</a> .  <a href="https://www.birdlife.org.za/go-birding/bird-friendly-tour-operators/">https://www.birdlife.org.za/go-birding/bird-friendly-tour-operators/</a> .</p>	

<p><b>Name of the case example:</b></p> <p>12. Boulders Beach</p>	<p><b>Country or countries concerned:</b></p> <p>South Africa</p>
<p><b>Key words describing the type of ecotourism involved:</b></p> <p>Protected penguin colony, allowing close approach by visitors via boardwalks and limited beach access.</p>	
<p><b>Relevance to AEWA (e.g. species):</b></p> <p>Important breeding colony of African Penguin <i>Spheniscus demersus</i> (AEWA listed).</p>	
<p><b>Summary of the nature of the operation:</b></p> <p>The colony is within the Table Mountain National Park Marine Protected Area: fishing and close approach by boats are prohibited, but visitors on foot (around 60,000 per year) are permitted to access the beach, including via a system of boardwalks.</p>	
<p><b>Conservation benefits resulting or expected:</b></p> <p>Education and awareness about the species. Entry fees contribute to the maintenance of the site and the conservation of its birds.</p>	<p><b>Local livelihood or other community benefits resulting or expected:</b></p> <p>Popular attraction, providing a noted element in the tourism offer of the Cape Town region and thereby making a significant contribution to the regional economy.</p>
<p><b>Operator and contact information:</b></p>	

<p>South African National Parks, Table Mountain National Park: Boulders Penguin Colony, Kleintuin Road, Sea Forth, Simons Town 7975, South Africa. Postal Address: P O Box 62, Simon's Town, 7995 South Africa. +27 (0)21 786 2329. <a href="mailto:faroeska.gool@sanparks.org">faroeska.gool@sanparks.org</a> ; <a href="mailto:tablemountain@sanparks.org">tablemountain@sanparks.org</a> .</p>
<p><b>Important lessons learnt from this example (including scope for replication):</b></p> <p>With care, control and education, an important and sensitive waterbird site can be made accessible as a tourist experience, helping to build public appreciation and making a contribution to the visitor economy.</p>
<p><b>Web links and references:</b></p> <p><a href="https://www.capetown.travel/headline-boulders-beach/">https://www.capetown.travel/headline-boulders-beach/</a> .  <a href="https://www.capetown.travel/get-to-know-the-african-penguins-at-boulders-beach/">https://www.capetown.travel/get-to-know-the-african-penguins-at-boulders-beach/</a> .  <a href="https://www.sanparks.org/assets/docs/parks_table_mountain/boulders-brochure.pdf">https://www.sanparks.org/assets/docs/parks_table_mountain/boulders-brochure.pdf</a> .  <a href="http://www.tmnp.co.za">www.tmnp.co.za</a> .</p>

<p><b>Name of the case example:</b></p> <p>13. Borana Lodge and Conservancy</p>	<p><b>Country or countries concerned:</b></p> <p>Kenya</p>
<p><b>Key words describing the type of ecotourism involved:</b></p> <p>Game lodge and safari operation combined with a non-profit organisation for wildlife conservation and community support.</p>	
<p><b>Relevance to AEWA (e.g. species):</b></p> <p>While the most heavily promoted wildlife tourism attraction is the area's large mammals, it is also important for birdlife, including waterbirds; and wetlands are among the varied habitats represented.</p>	
<p><b>Summary of the nature of the operation:</b></p> <p>Borana Lodge is styled as a not-for-profit eco-lodge, and hosts an extensive game drive and safari tourism operation, welcoming around 2,000 visitors each year. Its revenues fund the Conservancy, which is a habitat and species conservation programme covering 13,000 ha of the landscape, including habitat protection, anti-poaching measures and other activities, in conjunction with several other conservation organisation partners. Local community support is an integral part of the operation.</p>	
<p><b>Conservation benefits resulting or expected:</b></p> <p>Habitat and species protection work over an extensive area.</p>	<p><b>Local livelihood or other community benefits resulting or expected:</b></p> <p>Employment of over 100 local people (in e.g. hospitality and in e.g. anti-poaching teams) including women who otherwise would have no other source of employment. Provision of a mobile health clinic, education support programme, community focused livestock-to-market programme, water safety programme, training for wildlife rangers and a sales outlet for Maasai beadwork crafts.</p>
<p><b>Operator and contact information:</b></p> <p>Borana Conservancy, PO Box 137, Nanyuki 10400, Laikipia, Kenya. +254 727735578. <a href="mailto:conservancy@borana.co.ke">conservancy@borana.co.ke</a> .</p>	
<p><b>Important lessons learnt from this example (including scope for replication):</b></p> <p>Shows a way in which a classic African wildlife tourism operation can run on a not-for-profit basis in conjunction with a conservation programme. Scope perhaps for developing the waterbird dimension further, alongside the area's other wildlife attractions.</p>	
<p><b>Web links and references:</b></p> <p><a href="https://www.borana.co.ke/conservancy">https://www.borana.co.ke/conservancy</a> .  <a href="https://www.boranaconservancy.com/">https://www.boranaconservancy.com/</a> .</p>	



<https://www.ltandc.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Borana.pdf> .  
<https://www.ltandc.org/examples/> .

<b>Name of the case example:</b> 14. Cape Town Pelagics	<b>Country or countries concerned:</b> South Africa
<b>Key words describing the type of ecotourism involved:</b> Pelagic seabird watching trips, with all profits donated to seabird research and conservation.	
<b>Relevance to AEWA (e.g. species):</b> The conservation support relates mainly to albatrosses, which are not AEWA-listed species; but the case example is included here as an operating model that could be replicated elsewhere (or expanded here) to cover other pelagic seabirds. The tourism experience itself covers a range of species.	
<b>Summary of the nature of the operation:</b> A specialised sister company of Birding Africa, focusing on pelagic wildlife. Run on a non-profit basis, with all proceeds being donated to seabird research and conservation, including via BirdLife International's "Save the Albatross" campaign.	
<b>Conservation benefits resulting or expected:</b> Has provided significant funding for seabird research and conservation, principally for albatrosses. Also educating and inspiring visitors and locals to support the conservation effort; and providing boat transport for field researchers.	<b>Local livelihood or other community benefits resulting or expected:</b> Staff employment. Likely ancillary benefits for the local economy. Engagement of local people including through a school bird club.
<b>Operator and contact information:</b> Cape Town Pelagics. Contact via email only: <a href="mailto:info@capetownpelagics.com">info@capetownpelagics.com</a> . Otherwise via sister company Birding Africa: 4 Crassula Way, Pinelands 7405, South Africa. +27 (0)215319148 / (0)215316405 / (0)832560491. <a href="mailto:info@birdingafrica.com">info@birdingafrica.com</a> .	
<b>Important lessons learnt from this example (including scope for replication):</b> Demonstrates how an ecotourism operation can function both for birdwatching recreation and as a significant funder of conservation programmes. The model as currently applied in this instance mainly to conservation of albatrosses (which are not AEWA species) could be replicated elsewhere (or expanded here) to cover other pelagic seabirds (which the tours aspect of it already does).	
<b>Web links and references:</b> <a href="http://www.capetownpelagics.com">www.capetownpelagics.com</a> . <a href="http://birdingafricacapetownpelagics.wordpress.com/">http://birdingafricacapetownpelagics.wordpress.com/</a> . <a href="http://www.birdingafrica.com">www.birdingafrica.com</a>	

<b>Name of the case example:</b> 15. Djoudj National Park	<b>Country or countries concerned:</b> Senegal
<b>Key words describing the type of ecotourism involved:</b> Extensive wetland National Park with birdwatching as a prime visitor attraction.	
<b>Relevance to AEWA (e.g. species):</b>	



<p>A Ramsar Site, World Heritage Site, Biosphere Reserve and National Park hosting around 1.5 million migratory waterbirds. The first critical wetland site for southbound migrants after crossing the Sahara. Largest colony of Great White Pelicans <i>Pelecanus onocrotalus</i> in West Africa.</p>	
<p><b>Summary of the nature of the operation:</b></p> <p>River cruises, birdwatching, guided tours, village camps, small eco-museum.</p>	
<p><b>Conservation benefits resulting or expected:</b></p> <p>Visitor entry fees help to support management of the protected area. Public awareness of the area's conservation importance promoted.</p>	<p><b>Local livelihood or other community benefits resulting or expected:</b></p> <p>Tourism revenues benefit the local economy, including village accommodation providers, employment of wardens and guides, sales of local crafts.</p>
<p><b>Operator and contact information:</b></p> <p>Parc National des Oiseaux de Djoudj, BP 80, Saint Louis, Senegal.</p>	
<p><b>Important lessons learnt from this example (including scope for replication):</b></p> <p>Importance for tourism has been a factor in stimulating efforts to address some of the significant conservation management challenges in the area. A study in 2006 (Ly <i>et al.</i> – see below) recommended that entry fees could be increased and aspects of visitor infrastructure needed improving. The site was a candidate for inclusion in the proposed “Destination Flyways” tourism and migratory birds project (AEWA, UNWTO and others) in 2014. (The project did not come to fruition).</p>	
<p><b>Web links and references:</b></p> <p><a href="https://www.wetlands.org/blog/hand-in-hand-wetland-conservation-and-tourism-in-senegal/">https://www.wetlands.org/blog/hand-in-hand-wetland-conservation-and-tourism-in-senegal/</a> .  <a href="https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/25/">https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/25/</a> .  Ly, OK, Bishop, JT, Moran, D and Dansokho, M (2006). Estimating the Value of Ecotourism in the Djoudj National Bird Park in Senegal. IUCN, Gland. <a href="https://portals.iucn.org/library/sites/library/files/documents/2006-058.pdf">https://portals.iucn.org/library/sites/library/files/documents/2006-058.pdf</a> .</p>	

<p><b>Name of the case example:</b></p> <p>16. Dyer Island Conservation Trust</p>	<p><b>Country or countries concerned:</b></p> <p>South Africa</p>
<p><b>Key words describing the type of ecotourism involved:</b></p> <p>Eco-cruises and visits to the Trust's African Penguin &amp; Seabird Sanctuary help to fund conservation and education activities for these species.</p>	
<p><b>Relevance to AEWA (e.g. species):</b></p> <p>Seabirds, with an emphasis on African Penguin <i>Spheniscus demersus</i> (AEWA listed). Dyer Island is an IBA.</p>	
<p><b>Summary of the nature of the operation:</b></p> <p>A partnership with Dyer Island Cruises and Marine Dynamics, who run eco-cruises for watching marine wildlife. Revenues support the work of the Trust in running environmental education initiatives, policy advocacy for marine protection, and the African Penguin &amp; Seabird Sanctuary, which is both a visitor attraction and a centre for research, for managing an artificial nest-site provision programme and for rescue and rehabilitation of individual birds. Significant partnerships with local businesses, local government and Fair Trade Tourism (FTT) in a strategic approach to responsible tourism for the wider Cape Whale Coast visitor destinations.</p>	
<p><b>Conservation benefits resulting or expected:</b></p> <p>Research, monitoring, species recovery work (helping to maintain the population of the African Penguin),</p>	<p><b>Local livelihood or other community benefits resulting or expected:</b></p>

protected area advocacy and public awareness-raising concerning seabirds.	Local employment, education, and ancillary benefits for the local economy.
<b>Operator and contact information:</b>	
Dyer Island Conservation Trust (DICT): 5 Geelbek St, Van Dyks Bay, 7220 South Africa. +27 (0) 82 907 5607; +27 (0) 28 384 2739. office@dict.org.za .	
<b>Important lessons learnt from this example (including scope for replication):</b>	
The collaborative multi-stakeholder approach taken by DICT to coordinated ecotourism activities in the area offers a constructive model that could encourage other marine & coastal tourism operations elsewhere. The connection with FTT provides a ready vehicle for exchanging experiences on this.	
<b>Web links and references:</b>	
DICT: <a href="https://dict.org.za/">https://dict.org.za/</a> . Cape Whale Coast: <a href="https://whalecoast.info/">https://whalecoast.info/</a> . <a href="https://www.ltandc.org/examples/">https://www.ltandc.org/examples/</a> .	

<b>Name of the case example:</b>	<b>Country or countries concerned:</b>
17. iSimangaliso Wetland Park	South Africa
<b>Key words describing the type of ecotourism involved:</b>	
Large scale protected area-based tourism, including wildlife tourism, with multiple operators.	
<b>Relevance to AEWA (e.g. species):</b>	
Extensive coastal landscape of lakes, estuaries and shorelines. World Heritage and Ramsar designated (“St Lucia System”), internationally important for migratory waterbirds, and one of the country’s few pelican breeding sites.	
<b>Summary of the nature of the operation:</b>	
Various tour operators focused on the National Park and its wildlife, including the birds. Over half a million visitors each year.	
<b>Conservation benefits resulting or expected:</b>	<b>Local livelihood or other community benefits resulting or expected:</b>
The management of the area primarily for its natural environmental values is partly driven by its importance for tourism.	Tourism is one of the most significant sources of employment, directly or indirectly supporting several thousand jobs in nearby villages.
<b>Operator and contact information:</b>	
(Overall responsibility) - iSimangaliso Wetland Park Authority: The Dredger Harbour, Private Bag X05, St Lucia 3936, South Africa. +27 35 590 1633/1602. info@isimangaliso.com .	
<b>Important lessons learnt from this example (including scope for replication):</b>	
The popularity of this area for tourism, including wildlife tourism, has helped to protect it against development threats (e.g. dune mining) and to support today’s policy emphasis on protecting the natural values of the area, including through restoration works.	
<b>Web links and references:</b>	
<a href="https://isimangaliso.com/">https://isimangaliso.com/</a> .	

<b>Name of the case example:</b> 18. Lake Ichkeul	<b>Country or countries concerned:</b> Tunisia
<b>Key words describing the type of ecotourism involved:</b> Mixed tourism including trekking, birdwatching, camping, cycling and sightseeing.	
<b>Relevance to AEWA (e.g. species):</b> One of the most important wetlands in the Mediterranean region, and a critical stopover area for hundreds of thousands of migratory waterbirds. Is a National Park, a Ramsar Site, a World Heritage Site and a Biosphere Reserve.	
<b>Summary of the nature of the operation:</b> Always a popular area for recreation and tourism, including nature-based tourism, Ichkeul's visitor numbers have increased (currently around 50,000 per year) following reversal of dramatic hydrological and ecological deterioration that occurred in the 1990s. Activities include trekking, birdwatching, camping, cycling and sightseeing, all actively promoted by the Park and by national authorities. This is managed within the framework of management plans for the various conservation designations, including educative interpretation and control of access to sensitive areas. There is also a visitor centre.	
<b>Conservation benefits resulting or expected:</b> Visitor impact is minimised by prohibiting access to certain areas, directing access in others, use of trained guides and provision of interpretation, which increases public awareness. The area overall is in conservation management, which is supported by income generated from tourism.	<b>Local livelihood or other community benefits resulting or expected:</b> Important contribution made to employment and the local economy, both in the immediate area and in surrounding settlements. Tourists also constitute an important market for local agricultural produce. Community outreach and schools visit programmes are undertaken. There is a programme of support, including training and credit schemes, to increase the involvement of local businesses and communities in tourism activities.
<b>Operator and contact information:</b> Parc National de l'Ichkeul, Direction Générale des Forêts, 30 Rue Alain Savary, B.P. 1002, Tunis, Tunisia.	
<b>Important lessons learnt from this example (including scope for replication):</b> The area comes under the responsibility of a complex array of statutory departments and agencies, but coordination was boosted by international funding assistance for the production of a Development and Management Plan and a Community Development Plan for the National Park, while National Park Management Committee brings together official agencies and local stakeholders. Zonation of uses and participatory management with local communities are features of this that may particularly be of wider interest.	
<b>Web links and references:</b> <a href="http://www.anpe.nat.tn/Fr/parc-ichkeul_11_186">http://www.anpe.nat.tn/Fr/parc-ichkeul_11_186</a> . <a href="http://whc.unesco.org/fr/list/8">http://whc.unesco.org/fr/list/8</a> . <a href="https://www.ramsar.org/document/wetland-tourism-case-study-tunisia-lake-ichkeul">https://www.ramsar.org/document/wetland-tourism-case-study-tunisia-lake-ichkeul</a> .	

<b>Name of the case example:</b> 19. Lake Nakuru National Park	<b>Country or countries concerned:</b> Kenya
<b>Key words describing the type of ecotourism involved:</b> Lodges, game drives and birdwatching; an iconic site drawing large numbers of visitors.	
<b>Relevance to AEWA (e.g. species):</b>	

<p>Variety of important waterbirds (part of the lake's qualification as a Ramsar Site), including variable but sometimes huge numbers of flamingos (both AEWA-listed species occur). The flamingos are a key component of the tourist attraction of the area.</p>	
<p><b>Summary of the nature of the operation:</b></p> <p>The National Park is classed as a "premium park", drawing around 245,000 visitors a year and forming part of Kenya's national wildlife tourism image. Birdwatching, and particularly the lake's spectacle of flamingos, is a central part of this. Privately-run lodges run tours, but the Park itself is administered by State authorities.</p>	
<p><b>Conservation benefits resulting or expected:</b></p> <p>Entrance fees help to pay for the conservation management of the Park, zonation helps to control access, and tour guides and interpretation materials promote awareness of the area's values.</p>	<p><b>Local livelihood or other community benefits resulting or expected:</b></p> <p>Employment of Park staff, lodge staff and local guides, and other ancillary inputs to the local economy. Education, training and engagement activities are provided to schools, students (over 100,000 per year) and local residents as well as visitors.</p>
<p><b>Operator and contact information:</b></p> <p>Kenya Wildlife Service: The Senior Warden, Lake Nakuru National Park, PO Box 539-20100, Nakuru, Kenya. swlakenakuru@kws.go.ke .</p>	
<p><b>Important lessons learnt from this example (including scope for replication):</b></p> <p>The volume of visitor numbers combined with other pressures in the area has focused attention on the need for careful strategic planning and management of tourism in the Park. Studies in previous years revealed poor diversification of the visitor offer, relatively short stays (low spend), weak promotion of the area's attractions, and poor flows of revenue to local communities, giving them little incentive to engage in the tourism process. All of these issues have been addressed (at least to some degree) in subsequent management strategies for the Park.</p>	
<p><b>Web links and references:</b></p> <p><a href="http://www.kws.go.ke/lake-nakuru-national-park">http://www.kws.go.ke/lake-nakuru-national-park</a> .  <a href="https://www.ramsar.org/document/wetland-tourism-case-study-kenya-lake-nakuru">https://www.ramsar.org/document/wetland-tourism-case-study-kenya-lake-nakuru</a> .</p>	

<p><b>Name of the case example:</b></p> <p>20. Lake Nokoué</p>	<p><b>Country or countries concerned:</b></p> <p>Bénin</p>
<p><b>Key words describing the type of ecotourism involved:</b></p> <p>Birdwatching tours led by local guides, linked to waterbird conservation programme.</p>	
<p><b>Relevance to AEWA (e.g. species):</b></p> <p>Lake Nokoué is an extensive lagoon, swamp forest and delta complex, and an Important Bird Area hosting large populations of waterbirds.</p>	
<p><b>Summary of the nature of the operation:</b></p> <p>Birdwatching tours led by local guides. Observation facilities at Vékky and Togondji; eco-lodge ("Nokoué Sauvage") on Dékamé island, run by the community and an environmental NGO engaged in bird conservation and monitoring work in the area.</p>	
<p><b>Conservation benefits resulting or expected:</b></p> <p>The ecotourism operation is directly linked to the conservation activities of the NGO BEES at the lake, including wetland habitat restoration, strengthened protection ordinances and waterbird monitoring</p>	<p><b>Local livelihood or other community benefits resulting or expected:</b></p> <p>The ecotourism generates income for the local communities, and supports the training, equipping and employment of 12 local ornithology tour guides from the two main communities in the area.</p>

<p>particularly around Sô-Ava and Aguégoués in the south-eastern part of the area. Communication and outreach activities have included the formation of 5 local environment clubs.</p>	
<p><b>Operator and contact information:</b></p> <p>Bénin Environment and Education Society (BEES ONG): 01 BP 2862 Porto-Novo, Bénin. +229 96 013 837, +229 97 167 835. <a href="mailto:contact@bees-ong.org">contact@bees-ong.org</a> , <a href="mailto:bees@hotmail.fr">bees@hotmail.fr</a> .</p>	
<p><b>Important lessons learnt from this example (including scope for replication):</b></p> <p>The close link between community involvement in the ecotourism and the NGO's conservation programme at the lake has significantly raised awareness in the local population about the ecological importance of the area, leading to commitments to help protect the waterbirds and their habitats, and the conversion of former poachers into tour guides.</p>	
<p><b>Web links and references:</b></p> <p><a href="http://www.bees-ong.org">www.bees-ong.org</a> .  <a href="http://www.lac-nokoue.org">www.lac-nokoue.org</a> .</p>	

<p><b>Name of the case example:</b></p> <p>21. Lower Sanaga River</p>	<p><b>Country or countries concerned:</b></p> <p>Cameroon</p>
<p><b>Key words describing the type of ecotourism involved:</b></p> <p>Internationally funded project to develop an integrated programme of community ecotourism and wetland conservation.</p>	
<p><b>Relevance to AEWA (e.g. species):</b></p> <p>River, estuary and swamp forest system with important numbers of African Skimmer <i>Rynchops flavirostris</i>, (10% of the African population), Grey Pratincole <i>Glareola cinerea</i> and White-fronted Plover <i>Charadrius marginatus</i>, and around 5,000 waterbirds in total. Regarded as a hotspot for inter-African migration. Cameroon is not yet an AEWA Party, but commitments have been made to accede to the Agreement and preparatory work has been undertaken.</p>	
<p><b>Summary of the nature of the operation:</b></p> <p>In the framework of the UNDP GEF Small Grants Programme, a community based ecotourism initiative was launched, with explicit components of livelihood support, waterbird conservation and public awareness. Includes tour guiding, accommodation and interpretation.</p>	
<p><b>Conservation benefits resulting or expected:</b></p> <p>Habitat management strengthened. Former poachers who killed birds for food or sale now work for their protection, and to educate visitors about conservation. Waterbird monitoring expanded with community participation. The intention is to build from the activities to date towards designation of the area as a National Park and a Ramsar Site, and to conclude Cameroon's accession to AEWA.</p>	<p><b>Local livelihood or other community benefits resulting or expected:</b></p> <p>Significant livelihood support from visitor fees for employment of tour guides, revenues at accommodation facilities, sales of food and handicrafts. Education, participatory activities and groups formed to implement the GEF project have supported community solidarity.</p>
<p><b>Operator and contact information:</b></p> <p>Watershed Task Group: Napoleon Forpah. +237 675405260. <a href="mailto:nforpah@yahoo.fr">nforpah@yahoo.fr</a> . Jean Paul Songue. +237 6770317332.</p>	
<p><b>Important lessons learnt from this example (including scope for replication):</b></p>	

The international context of donor support perceived international importance of the bird populations and prospects of progress in the frameworks of AEWA and the Ramsar Convention have been important driving forces for the integrated ecotourism activities undertaken. The attractiveness of this agenda for local communities has converted former wildlife poachers into conservationists.

**Web links and references:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I3EgM7NzueM> .  
<http://ilimbeilimbe.canalblog.com/archives/2013/05/13/27151958.html> .

<b>Name of the case example:</b> 22. Mabamba wetlands	<b>Country or countries concerned:</b> Uganda
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**Key words describing the type of ecotourism involved:**  
 Community-run boat-based visits including birding tours, featuring as a star attraction the iconic Shoebill stork.

**Relevance to AEWA (e.g. species):**  
 The Mabamba Bay Swamp and Bussi Island are listed as an IBA and as a Ramsar Site. High bird diversity, and important for large numbers of migratory waterbirds. Famed breeding site for Shoebill *Balaeniceps rex*, which is the subject of an AEWA International Single Species Action Plan.

**Summary of the nature of the operation:**  
 Birdwatching boat tours with Shoebill as the highlight. Eco-tourism information centre and nature school/campsite.

<b>Conservation benefits resulting or expected:</b> <p>The rise of ecotourism at this site has shifted local attitudes towards conservation, and community members now take charge of protecting the wetland. MWETA is a Site Support Group for the IBA, assisted by NatureUganda. Burning of wetland vegetation and capture and killing of Shoebills by fishermen have dramatically declined as the community gains more value from boat tours and protecting the birdlife. Visitor revenues help to support conservation activities at the site.</p>	<b>Local livelihood or other community benefits resulting or expected:</b> <p>Visitor fees and locally-run tour operations provide a significant source of income and development support for the local community, helping to deter less sustainable forms of livelihood. Micro-enterprises (handicraft souvenirs, restaurants and other visitor facilities) have been stimulated to develop. Capacity building support with external assistance has been provided to the local community, stimulated by their ecotourism efforts.</p>
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**Operator and contact information:**  
 Mabamba Wetland Eco-tourism Association (MWETA). No direct contact details, but can probably link via NatureUganda: Plot 1, Katalima Crescent, Lower Naguru, P.O BOX 27034, Kampala, Uganda. +256 414 540 719. [info@natureuganda.org](mailto:info@natureuganda.org) .

**Important lessons learnt from this example (including scope for replication):**  
 Community-driven waterbird-based ecotourism can provide a sufficient incentive for the community to switch to pro-conservation livelihoods, has leveraged national and international assistance, and supports the conservation of an important site.

**Web links and references:**  
<https://storkibisspoonbill.org/projects/shoebills-a-source-of-livelihoods-in-uganda/> .  
<https://www.aboutuganda.com/travel/attractions/birding11> .  
 International Single Species Action Plan for Shoebill (AEWA Technical Series No 51). <https://www.unep-aewa.org/en/publication/international-single-species-action-plan-conservation-shoebill-ts-no-51> .  
 Mabamba Bay Wetland Community Action Plan (2014).  
<http://www.natureuganda.org/downloads/Mabamba%20Bay%20Community%20Action%20Plan.pdf>

<b>Name of the case example:</b> 23. Mahavavy-Kinkony	<b>Country or countries concerned:</b> Madagascar
<b>Key words describing the type of ecotourism involved:</b> Birding ecotourism promoted including annual “Safari Birding” event, combined with cultural interest of the area.	
<b>Relevance to AEWA (e.g. species):</b> Large IBA wetland complex of importance for waterbirds, including large numbers of Greater Flamingo <i>Phoenicopterus roseus</i> . Lake Kinkony is Ramsar designated.	
<b>Summary of the nature of the operation:</b> Initially little known, the importance of the Mahavavy-Kinkony wetlands for waterbirds and its potential for tourism was promoted from 2016 onwards by the BirdLife International partner organisation in Madagascar (Asity Madagascar) launching an annual “Safari Birding” event, a conference and a collaboration with national tour operators, local tourism offices and the local community. The area is now developing as an ecotourism destination with positive community engagement, including support from leaders of the Sakalava ethnic group, whose cultural heritage is an added aspect of the area’s interest.	
<b>Conservation benefits resulting or expected:</b> Protection status has been enhanced, and the ecotourism is being led by conservation interests.	<b>Local livelihood or other community benefits resulting or expected:</b> The development of ecotourism is designed to benefit the local community.
<b>Operator and contact information:</b> Asity Madagascar: Lot IAB 39 Ter C, Analamahitsy, Antananarivo, Madagascar. +261 (0) 33 15 536 07. contact@asity-madagascar.org .	
<b>Important lessons learnt from this example (including scope for replication):</b> The ornithological importance of the area and its latent potential for beneficial ecotourism became realised through a catalytic initiative by a conservation organisation in collaborative partnership with local and national interests, successfully leveraging external support.	
<b>Web links and references:</b> <a href="https://www.birdlife.org/worldwide/news/safari-birding-ecotourism-revolution-madagascar">https://www.birdlife.org/worldwide/news/safari-birding-ecotourism-revolution-madagascar</a> . <a href="https://asity-madagascar.org/">https://asity-madagascar.org/</a> .	

<b>Name of the case example:</b> 24. Middelpunt Wetland and Berga	<b>Country or countries concerned:</b> South Africa, Ethiopia
<b>Key words describing the type of ecotourism involved:</b> Birding tours operator substantially funds the conservation and research efforts for the Critically Endangered White-winged Flufftail. Measures to control birder access to prevent disturbance.	
<b>Relevance to AEWA (e.g. species):</b> Two of the very few known sites for the Critically Endangered White-winged Flufftail <i>Sarothrura ayresi</i> . Migratory patterns not well known, and links between Middelpunt (South Africa) and other locations (particularly Berga in Ethiopia) are a current active research priority. The species is the subject of an International Single Species Action Plan.	
<b>Summary of the nature of the operation:</b>	



<p>Middelpunt Wetland is a Protected Environment run by a private landowner in collaboration with BirdLife South Africa (BLSA) and leased to the Middelpunt Wetland Trust (MWT), an organisation dedicated to conservation of the White-winged Flufftail. International birding tours operator Rockjumper Birding Tours dedicates some of its income, and organises specific fundraising initiatives (such as the “Kruger Birds &amp; Wildlife Challenge”), to support conservation efforts for the Flufftail, by BLSA and the Trust. Rockjumper’s support includes funding a full-time research position. Birder interest in seeing the bird poses potential risks and hence measures are needed to restrict access.</p>	
<p><b>Conservation benefits resulting or expected:</b></p> <p>Intensive research and species protection measures for Flufftail at both Middelpunt and at Berga funded by wider bird-based ecotourism activities. MWT has also undertaken habitat improvements at Middelpunt.</p>	<p><b>Local livelihood or other community benefits resulting or expected:</b></p> <p>At the Berga site in Ethiopia, MWT and Rockjumper have funded the construction of a school, as part of cooperation with the local community to protect the Flufftail via a site support group, and prevention of damage by the local subsistence grazing regime.</p>
<p><b>Operator and contact information:</b></p> <p>Middelpunt Wetland Trust. malcolmd@metroweb.co.za .</p>	
<p><b>Important lessons learnt from this example (including scope for replication):</b></p> <p>Pioneering example of collaborative partnership between ecotourism operators and conservation organisations at a site-specific and species-specific level, while also in a framework of international cooperation, including with AEWA (via SSAP). Significant resource mobilisation success and benefits for local livelihoods (Ethiopia) as well as clear conservation impact.</p>	
<p><b>Web links and references:</b></p> <p><a href="https://www.rockjumperbirding.com/rockjumper-supports-middelpunt-wetland-trust/">https://www.rockjumperbirding.com/rockjumper-supports-middelpunt-wetland-trust/</a> .  <a href="https://www.birdlife.org/worldwide/news/rewrite-bird-books-new-breeding-site-found-one-worlds-rarest-birds">https://www.birdlife.org/worldwide/news/rewrite-bird-books-new-breeding-site-found-one-worlds-rarest-birds</a> .  <a href="http://www.adu.uct.ac.za/adu/projects/wwf/middelpunt">http://www.adu.uct.ac.za/adu/projects/wwf/middelpunt</a> .  <a href="https://ladysmithbirders.webs.com/middelpunt-wetland-trust">https://ladysmithbirders.webs.com/middelpunt-wetland-trust</a> .  <a href="https://www.backabuddy.co.za/charity/profile/middelpunt">https://www.backabuddy.co.za/charity/profile/middelpunt</a> .  International Single Species Action Plan for the Conservation of the White-winged Flufftail (TS No. 38/CMS No. 19). <a href="https://www.unep-awa.org/en/publication/international-single-species-action-plan-conservation-white-winged-flufftail-ts-no-38cms">https://www.unep-awa.org/en/publication/international-single-species-action-plan-conservation-white-winged-flufftail-ts-no-38cms</a> .  <a href="https://www.africanbirdclub.org/sites/default/files/2013_White_winged_Flufftail_research_0.pdf">https://www.africanbirdclub.org/sites/default/files/2013_White_winged_Flufftail_research_0.pdf</a></p>	

<p><b>Name of the case example:</b></p> <p>25. Molli Haoussa</p>	<p><b>Country or countries concerned:</b></p> <p>Niger</p>
<p><b>Key words describing the type of ecotourism involved:</b></p> <p>Community-based ecotourism supporting village livelihoods, education and public awareness.</p>	
<p><b>Relevance to AEWA (e.g. species):</b></p> <p>Molli Haoussa is a nature reserve adjacent to the “W” National Park and Ramsar Site, the latter being of major international importance for migratory waterbirds.</p>	
<p><b>Summary of the nature of the operation:</b></p> <p>A community camp hosting ecotourism (over 2000 visitors in a good year), linked to environmental education and awareness-raising activities. Includes a visitor centre. Engagement of young people.</p>	
<p><b>Conservation benefits resulting or expected:</b></p> <p>Habitat management, environmental education and public awareness are supported by the ecotourism operation.</p>	<p><b>Local livelihood or other community benefits resulting or expected:</b></p> <p>Income generated from the ecotourism helps to support the livelihood of local villagers, including by</p>



	employment as guides. Capacity building in small-scale ecotourism enterprise development.
<b>Operator and contact information:</b>	
Contribution à la Gestion des Zones Humides (CoGeZoH), Commune Niamey I, Boulevard Mali Béro, Face Lycée Bosso, BP 2448 Niamey, Niger. +227 21718159 / 96586838 / 90537017 / 96730853 / 21765249 / 96975499. ong_cogezoh@yahoo.fr .	
<b>Important lessons learnt from this example (including scope for replication):</b>	
Example of community-driven operation well linked to international conservation networks, including eg IUCN and Wetland Link International.	
<b>Web links and references:</b>	
<a href="https://wli.wwt.org.uk/?member=molli-haoussa-community-ecotourism-camp">https://wli.wwt.org.uk/?member=molli-haoussa-community-ecotourism-camp</a> .	

<b>Name of the case example:</b>	<b>Country or countries concerned:</b>
26. Seychelles Sustainable Tourism Foundation	Seychelles
<b>Key words describing the type of ecotourism involved:</b>	
An NGO promoting strategic approaches to an environmentally sustainable tourism sector in the country.	
<b>Relevance to AEWA (e.g. species):</b>	
Seychelles is a non-Party Range State for AEWA, but is highly significant for seabirds and other waterbirds, including migratory shorebirds. The Foundation is not specifically focused on bird-based tourism, but this is undoubtedly part of the market attraction of the area (for the endemic species, certainly, but no doubt also for the migrants).	
<b>Summary of the nature of the operation:</b>	
The Seychelles receive around 125,000 overseas tourists per year. SSTF is an NGO which has established a national connecting platform for stakeholders in the tourism sector in the country, aiming to make Seychelles an international best practice example for sustainable tourism, through a coordinated approach between public and private interests in both business and conservation. This includes seeking certification by the Global Sustainable Tourism Council. Many existing operations in the islands constitute eco-tourism which directly finances conservation efforts, but the Foundation's goal is to join this together in a nationally coherent way. In addition it undertakes its own research, advocacy and awareness-raising activities.	
<b>Conservation benefits resulting or expected:</b>	<b>Local livelihood or other community benefits resulting or expected:</b>
Conservation in the Seychelles already relies heavily on tourism. The goal here is to scale up the benefits of this linkage.	Supporting one of the main pillars of the national economy.
<b>Operator and contact information:</b>	
Seychelles Sustainable Tourism Foundation, Oliaji Trade Center, Victoria; Mahe, Seychelles. +248 4 225 058 . office.sstf@gmail.com .	
<b>Important lessons learnt from this example (including scope for replication):</b>	
Although many good efforts have been in place to link tourism with conservation, there was seen to be a lack of a national coordination mechanism that could scale up the impact and secure strengthening measures such as relevant international accreditations. The situation here may have parallels in other Small Island Developing State situations where rich biodiversity is part of the tourism draw, and SSTF is keen to share its experience.	
<b>Web links and references:</b>	

<http://seychellessustainable.org/> .  
<https://www.ltandc.org/examples/> .

<b>Name of the case example:</b>	<b>Country or countries concerned:</b>
27. Tsam Tsam ecotourism, Lake Oguemoué	Gabon
<b>Key words describing the type of ecotourism involved:</b>	
Community-based conservation NGO developing sustainable futures for an important wetland, with ecotourism as a central component.	
<b>Relevance to AEWA (e.g. species):</b>	
Lake Oguemoué is part of the Bas Ogooué Ramsar Site, an IBA with important waterbirds. Although these may mostly not necessarily be migratory, the case example is nevertheless an interesting one for consideration in the AEWA context.	
<b>Summary of the nature of the operation:</b>	
In response to community concerns about overfishing and other livelihoods issues, the organisation Ecotouristique du Lac Oguemoué (OELO) was formed in 2011 to develop a programme based on sustainable fishing and ecotourism, including wildlife watching, guided hiking tours, canoe safaris, environmental education in schools (reaching over 8,000 students and 100 teachers to date), community outreach on protected species, a community youth environmental centre, citizen science projects and other biodiversity research.	
<b>Conservation benefits resulting or expected:</b>	<b>Local livelihood or other community benefits resulting or expected:</b>
The ecotourism here is central to a strategy (now with government engagement) for supporting sustainable livelihoods that offer alternatives to overexploitation of fisheries, forests and bushmeat. OELO's community environmental education work is also making a key contribution to this, including community custodianship of natural resources. The site also generates funding for OELO's other conservation programmes.	Income generation for the local community; establishment of more sustainable livelihoods; participatory involvement in custodianship of the area, employment as guides; and educational benefits.
<b>Operator and contact information:</b>	
Ecotouristique du Lac Oguemoué, Sahoty, Lambaréné, Gabon. Mailing address: OELO, BP 3292, Libreville, Gabon. + 241 (0) 77 01 49 01. tsamtsam@oelogabon.org .	
<b>Important lessons learnt from this example (including scope for replication):</b>	
Example of how wetland-based ecotourism can be the driver for an entire sustainable livelihoods and biodiversity conservation programme. Example of how a very local community-driven initiative can engage international support (some project support was provided by international conservation organisations) and can become a collaboration with government authorities.	
<b>Web links and references:</b>	
<a href="https://oelogabon.org/tsam-tsam/">https://oelogabon.org/tsam-tsam/</a> . <a href="https://peacegeeks.org/partner/organisation-ecotouristique-du-lac-oguemou%C3%A9">https://peacegeeks.org/partner/organisation-ecotouristique-du-lac-oguemou%C3%A9</a> . <a href="https://www.programmeppi.org/en/beneficiaire/oelo-organisation-ecotouristique-du-lac-oguemou/">https://www.programmeppi.org/en/beneficiaire/oelo-organisation-ecotouristique-du-lac-oguemou/</a> . <a href="https://www.ramsar.org/es/tsam-tsam-biodiversity-conservation-through-ecotourism-in-the-largest-ramsar-site-of-gabon">https://www.ramsar.org/es/tsam-tsam-biodiversity-conservation-through-ecotourism-in-the-largest-ramsar-site-of-gabon</a> .	

<b>Name of the case example:</b>	<b>Country or countries concerned:</b>
28. Wakkerstroom Tourism and Education Centre	South Africa

<b>Key words describing the type of ecotourism involved:</b>	
A visitor and education centre focused on the site's bird interest.	
<b>Relevance to AEWA (e.g. species):</b>	
The attraction is partly based on the birds of a grassland IBA, but there is also a valuable wetland hosting waterbirds.	
<b>Summary of the nature of the operation:</b>	
Education programme, local bird guides, observation hides, accommodation facilities, conference facilities, community engagement. Part of the BLSA Empowering People Programme, which includes a wider Avitourism Project (covered separately in another one of these case examples).	
<b>Conservation benefits resulting or expected:</b>	<b>Local livelihood or other community benefits resulting or expected:</b>
A local team of 25 young fire wardens organised and trained by the centre make an important contribution to conservation of the area's habitats, through integrated fire management practices as well as erosion control and alien plant removal. Also bird monitoring and increased conservation awareness among locals and visitors.	Community engagement through schools programmes, junior bird clubs and the fire wardens training scheme. A shared voice in management practices.
<b>Operator and contact information:</b>	
Wakkerstroom Tourism and Education Centre, Wakkerstroom, South Africa. +27 (0) 71 718 1566 / (0) 81 726 5282. wakkerstroom@birdlife.org.za ; kristi.garland@birdlife.org.za .	
<b>Important lessons learnt from this example (including scope for replication):</b>	
An example demonstrating mutual benefits for visitors and host community, and the importance of community empowerment.	
<b>Web links and references:</b>	
<a href="https://www.birdlife.org.za/go-birding/wakkerstroom-tourism-and-education-centre/">https://www.birdlife.org.za/go-birding/wakkerstroom-tourism-and-education-centre/</a> .	

## INTERNATIONAL

<b>Name of the case example:</b>	<b>Country or countries concerned:</b>
29. Rockjumper Conservation Initiative	(International)
<b>Key words describing the type of ecotourism involved:</b>	
Birding-based tour operator with a varied programme of practical conservation partnerships funded from its tourism revenues.	
<b>Relevance to AEWA (e.g. species):</b>	
Varied programme includes projects of relevance to AEWA, including the Middelpunt Wetland Trust and BirdLife South Africa's work for the Critically Endangered White-winged Flufftail (covered more specifically in a separate one of these case examples).	
<b>Summary of the nature of the operation:</b>	
A minimum of \$50 from each tour registration goes into the Rockjumper Bird Conservation Fund. The Fund is then used to support bird conservation organisations and projects, including for the White-winged Flufftail (see above), for which Rockjumper is the BirdLife International "species champion". Rockjumper's tours themselves aim to exemplify good practice in enlightened standards of eco-tourism. Itineraries offered include "conservation tours", with a focus on bird conservation issues.	

<p><b>Conservation benefits resulting or expected:</b></p> <p>Funding a range of conservation organisations and activities including species recovery, site management, research, monitoring, and public awareness.</p>	<p><b>Local livelihood or other community benefits resulting or expected:</b></p> <p>Engagement of local tour guides, and provision of training. Community-level benefits feature in a number of the supported conservation projects.</p>
<p><b>Operator and contact information:</b></p> <p>Rockjumper Birding Ltd: (1) Sanlam, Labourdonnais Village, Mapou, Riviere du Rempart, 31803 Mauritius. +230 452 3731 . mauritius@rockjumper.com . (2) P O Box 13972, Cascades 3202, South Africa. +27 31 813 5608. info@rockjumper.com . And: conservation@rockjumper.com .</p>	
<p><b>Important lessons learnt from this example (including scope for replication):</b></p> <p>Demonstrates to other tour operators that a viable revenue stream for conservation can be generated from an ecotourism operation, with client awareness-raising benefits in addition to direct conservation results. An example also of constructive partnership innovations.</p>	
<p><b>Web links and references:</b></p> <p><a href="https://www.rockjumperbirding.com/about/rockjumper-conservation/">https://www.rockjumperbirding.com/about/rockjumper-conservation/</a> .</p>	