



Report on the implementation of AEWA for the period 2018-2020

The format for reports on the implementation of the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (AEWA) for the period 2018-2020 was approved by the 7th Session of the Meeting of the Parties (MOP7, 4-8 December 2018, Durban, South Africa) through Resolution 7.1 and modified by the Standing Committee at its 15th meeting (11-13 December 2019, Bristol, UK) as mandated by the MOP. This format has been compiled following the AEWA Annex 3 (Action Plan), the AEWA Strategic Plan 2019-2027 and resolutions of the MOP.

In accordance with article V(c) of the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds, each Party shall prepare to each ordinary session of the MOP a National Report on its implementation of the Agreement and submit that report to the Agreement Secretariat. By Resolution 7.1 of the MOP the deadline for submission of National Reports to the 8th Session of the MOP was set at 180 days before the opening date of MOP8, which was scheduled to take place on 5-9 October 2021 in Hungary; therefore the deadline for submission of National Reports was Thursday 8 April 2021.

As per Resolution 7.1 of the MOP, Chapter 3 of the National Report Format for MOP8 reports was developed as a stand-alone online reporting module, which was administered through a separate reporting process on the population status of AEWA-listed (native) and non-native species of waterbirds for the period 2013-2018. This reporting process was concluded on 30 June 2020 as agreed by MOP7. Therefore, this report does not contain Chapter 3.

The AEWA National Reports 2018-2020 were compiled and submitted through the AEWA Online National Reporting System, which is part of the broader CMS Family Online Reporting System. The CMS Family Online Reporting System was developed by the UNEP-World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC) in close collaboration with and under the guidance of the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat.

1. General Information

Name of reporting Contracting Party

>>> Belgium

Date of entry into force of AEWA in the Contracting Party

>>> 01.06.2006

List any reservations that the Contracting Party has made (if any) in respect of any population(s) listed in Table 1 of Annex 3 or any specific provision of the AEWA Action Plan - either upon deposition of its instruments of accession (per AEWA, Article XV) or subsequent to any amendment of Table 1 or the AEWA Action Plan, as adopted by a session of the Agreement's Meeting of the Parties (per AEWA, Article X.6).

EU member states should list also all reservations entered by the European Commission on behalf of the European Union.

>>> None for Belgium. As noted in the caption, the European Commission, on behalf of the European Union, has entered reservations following MOP7 and previous MOP's, full details of which are already known to the secretariat.

2. Institutional Information

Please update information on the National AEWA Administrative Authority, the National Focal Points, the Designated National Respondent and the other contributors to this report.

Designated National AEWA Administrative Authority

Full name of the institution

>>> Agency For Nature and Forests, Government of Flanders

Name and title of the head of institution

>>> Marleen Evenepoel, Administrator general

Mailing address - Street and number

>>> Havenlaan 88

P.O.Box

>>> bus 75

Postal code

>>> 1000

City

>>> Brussels

Country

>>> Belgium

Telephone

>>> (0032) 2 / 553 81 02

Fax

>>> 00

E-mail

>>> anb@vlaanderen.be

Website

>>> www.natuurenbos.be

Designated National Focal Point (NFP) for AEWA matters

Name and title of the NFP

>>> Mr. Floris Verhaeghe, Policy Advisor Species

Affiliation (institution, department)

>>> Flemish Government, Agency for Nature and Forest

Mailing address - Street and number

>>> Koning Albert I-laan 1/2

P.O.Box

>>> bus 74

Postal code

>>> 8200

City

>>> Bruges

Country

>>> Belgium

Telephone

>>> +32 479 89 01 09

Fax
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E-mail
>>> Floris.Verhaeghe@vlaanderen.be

Website
>>> www.natuurenbos.be

Designated National Focal Point for AEWA Technical Committee (TC NFP) matters

Name and title of the TC NFP
>>> Mr. Koen Devos

Affiliation (institution, department)
>>> Research Institute for Nature and Forest

Mailing address - Street and number
>>> Havenlaan 88

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>>> 73

Postal code
>>> 1000

City
>>> Brussels

Country
>>> Belgium

Telephone
>>> +32 4 95 66 78 67

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E-mail
>>> koen.devos@inbo.be

Website
>>> www.inbo.be

Designated National Focal Point for Communication, Education and Public Awareness (CEPA NFP) matters

Name and title of the CEPA NFP
>>> Mr. Floris Verhaeghe

Affiliation (institution, department)
>>> Agentschap voor Natuur en Bos

Mailing address - Street and number
>>> Koning Albert I-laan 1/2

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Postal code
>>> 8200

City
>>> Bruges

Country

>>> Belgium

Telephone

>>> +32(0)479.89.01.09

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>>> Floris.Verhaeghe@vlaanderen.be

Website

>>> www.natuurenbos.be

Designated National Respondent (DNR) in charge of the compilation and submission of the AEWA National Report 2018-2020

Please select from the list below as appropriate.

The National Focal Point (NFP) has been designated as the National Respondent

Other contributors to the AEWA National Report 2018-2020

Please list the names and affiliations (institution, organisation) of the other contributors to this report. For Contracting Parties in which nature conservation is not an exclusive competence of national/federal government, Designated National Respondents are encouraged to seek input from other relevant levels of government.

>>> Olivier Beck (Brussels Government, Brussels Environment)

Catherine Debruyne (Public Service of Wallonia, Walloon Government)

Mieke Degloire (Federal Government, DG Environment / Milieu Marin)

Floris Verhaeghe (Flemish Government, Agency for Nature and Forest)

Barbara Geschier (Flemish Government, Agency for Nature and Forest)

Koen Devos (Flemish Institute for Nature and Forest Research)

Tim Adriaens (Flemish Institute for Nature and Forest Research)

Pressures and Responses

4. Species Conservation

4.1 Legal Measures

1. Following MOP7, was a review undertaken in your country of the relevant domestic legislation against the provisions of the latest version of the Agreement text and its annexes, including Table 1 in Annex III, taking into account all amendments adopted by MOP7? (AEWA Strategic Plan 2019-2027, Actions 1.1 (a), 1.1 (b), 2.2(a) and 2.2(b))

Yes

Please indicate the outcome of this review

Relevant national legislation was fully in line with the Agreement text and its annexes

2. Was your country's national legislation reviewed following the Guidance on Measures in National Legislation for Different Populations of the Same Species, Particularly with Respect to Hunting and Trade (Resolution 6.7)?

See Appendix 1 / Appendix 2 / Appendix 3

Notice: Before clicking on the above hyperlink, please keep pressing the **Ctrl button** on your keyboard to open the link in a new tab.

Yes

Did this require adjusting your national legislation?

No

Please describe how your current national legislation is compatible with the advice provided in the Guidance

>>> Only few species marked are hutable in BE (Flanders, Wallonia):

- Anser anser (only in Flanders): focus of the hunting period lies on the breeding/resident population, august-september, when migratory specimens are not present yet, or at least not the bigger numbers.

-Anas platyrhynchos: All hunting is closed in the most important areas for migrating waterbirds (in Flanders) from the 15th of november on. The larger number of migratory waterbirds arrive for hibernation after this date. In this way the most important areas are free of hunting for most of the hibernation period and the hibernating population is less likely to be subject to hunting.

- Anas crecca: was hutable in Wallonia in 2018-2020 (now suspended) - bigger numbers hibernate in Flanders, where the species cannot be hunted.

3. Please confirm the protection status under your country's national legislation of the AEWA Table 1, Column A populations that are regularly occurring in your country (AEWA Action Plan, paragraph 2.1.1; AEWA Strategic Plan 2019-2027, Target 1.1).

Guidance on responding to this question:

1- Please click here and download the Excel file starting with your country's name. (**Notice:** before clicking on this hyperlink, please keep pressing the Ctrl button on your keyboard to open the link in a new tab.)

2- Fill in the Excel template comprehensively;

3- Upload the completed Excel file as an attachment here. For uploading please click on the little blue icon below containing a paper clip.

I confirm that I have downloaded the Excel file with my country's name, filled it in as necessary and uploaded the completed file as an attachment to this question.

You have attached the following documents to this answer.

[Belgium_Q3_AEWA_NR_2018-2020_PopCoIA_\(1\).xlsx](#)

4. Please confirm whether there is an open hunting season for the AEWA Table 1, Column A, category 2 or 3 with an asterisk or category 4 populations that are regularly occurring in your country (AEWA Action Plan, paragraph 2.1.1; AEWA Strategic Plan 2019-2027, Target 1.1).

Guidance on responding to this question:

1- Please click here and download the Excel file starting with your country's name. (**Notice:** before clicking on this hyperlink, please keep pressing the Ctrl button on your keyboard to open the link in a new tab.)

2- Fill in the Excel template comprehensively;

3- Upload the completed Excel file as an attachment here. For uploading please click on the little blue icon below containing a paper clip.

I confirm that I have downloaded the Excel file with my country's name, filled it in as necessary and uploaded the completed file as an attachment to this question.

You have attached the following documents to this answer.

[Belgium_Q4_AEWA_NR_2018-2020_PopCoIA-Cat2_3_4.xlsx](#)

5. Please confirm whether taking is regulated for the AEWA Table 1, Column B populations that are regularly occurring in your country (AEWA Action Plan, paragraph 2.1.2; AEWA Strategic Plan 2019-2027, Target 1.1).

Guidance on responding to this question:

1- Please click here and download the Excel file starting with your country's name. (**Notice:** before clicking on this hyperlink, please keep pressing the Ctrl button on your keyboard to open the link in a new tab.)

2- Fill in the Excel template comprehensively;

3- Upload the completed Excel file as an attachment here. For uploading please click on the little blue icon below containing a paper clip.

I confirm that I have downloaded the Excel file with my country's name, filled it in as necessary and uploaded the completed file as an attachment to this question.

You have attached the following documents to this answer.

[Belgium_Q5_AEWA_NR_2018-2020_PopCoIB.xlsx](#)

6. Please indicate if any of the following modes of taking are prohibited in your country: snares, limes, hooks, live birds which are blind or mutilated used as decoys, tape recorders and other electronic devices, electrocuting devices, artificial light sources, mirrors and other dazzling devices, devices for illuminating targets, sighting devices for night shooting comprising an electronic image magnifier or image converter, explosives, nets, traps, poison, poisoned or anesthetic baits, semi-automatic or automatic weapons with a magazine capable of holding more than two rounds of ammunition, hunting from aircraft, motor vehicles, or boats driven at a speed exceeding 5 km p/h (18 km p/h on the open sea), other non-selective modes of taking. (AEWA Action Plan, paragraph 2.1.2(b); AEWA Strategic Plan 2019-2027, Target 1.1)

Yes, one or more modes of taking have been prohibited

Please provide details to each mode of taking in the list below:

Snares

Yes, fully

Please indicate the legislation under which the mode of taking is prohibited

>>> Different legislation per region, but consistent through the whole of the country:

FLANDERS: Decree on species protection and species management d.d. 15/05/2009.

BELGIAN PART OF THE NORTH SEA: Royal Decree concerning the species protection in the maritime regions under the jurisdiction of Belgium d.d. 21 December 2001.

WALLONIA: Loi du 12 juillet 1973 sur la conservation de la nature.

BRUSSEL: Order on Nature Conservation, 1/03/2012.

Limes

Yes, fully

Please indicate the legislation under which the mode of taking is prohibited

>>> Different legislation per region, but consistent through the whole of the country:

FLANDERS: Decree on species protection and species management d.d. 15/05/2009.

BELGIAN PART OF THE NORTH SEA: Royal Decree concerning the species protection in the maritime regions under the jurisdiction of Belgium d.d. 21 December 2001.

WALLONIA: Loi du 12 juillet 1973 sur la conservation de la nature.

BRUSSEL: Order on Nature Conservation, 1/03/2012.

Hooks

Yes, fully

Please indicate the legislation under which the mode of taking is prohibited

>>> Different legislation per region, but consistent through the whole of the country:

FLANDERS: Decree on species protection and species management d.d. 15/05/2009.

BELGIAN PART OF THE NORTH SEA: Royal Decree concerning the species protection in the maritime regions under the jurisdiction of Belgium d.d. 21 December 2001.

WALLONIA: Loi du 12 juillet 1973 sur la conservation de la nature.

BRUSSEL: Order on Nature Conservation, 1/03/2012.

Live birds which are blind or mutilated used as decoys

Yes, fully

Please indicate the legislation under which the mode of taking is prohibited

>>> Different legislation per region, but consistent through the whole of the country:

FLANDERS: Decree on species protection and species management d.d. 15/05/2009.

BELGIAN PART OF THE NORTH SEA: Royal Decree concerning the species protection in the maritime regions under the jurisdiction of Belgium d.d. 21 December 2001.

WALLONIA: Loi du 12 juillet 1973 sur la conservation de la nature.

BRUSSEL: Order on Nature Conservation, 1/03/2012.

Tape recorders and other electronic devices

Yes, fully

Please indicate the legislation under which the mode of taking is prohibited

>>> Different legislation per region, but consistent through the whole of the country:

FLANDERS: Decree on species protection and species management d.d. 15/05/2009.

BELGIAN PART OF THE NORTH SEA: Royal Decree concerning the species protection in the maritime regions under the jurisdiction of Belgium d.d. 21 December 2001.

WALLONIA: Loi du 12 juillet 1973 sur la conservation de la nature.

BRUSSEL: Order on Nature Conservation, 1/03/2012.

Electrocuting devices

Yes, fully

Please indicate the legislation under which the mode of taking is prohibited

>>> Different legislation per region, but consistent through the whole of the country:

FLANDERS: Decree on species protection and species management d.d. 15/05/2009.

BELGIAN PART OF THE NORTH SEA: Royal Decree concerning the species protection in the maritime regions under the jurisdiction of Belgium d.d. 21 December 2001.

WALLONIA: Loi du 12 juillet 1973 sur la conservation de la nature.

BRUSSEL: Order on Nature Conservation, 1/03/2012.

Artificial light sources

Yes, fully

Please indicate the legislation under which the mode of taking is prohibited

>>> Different legislation per region, but consistent through the whole of the country:

FLANDERS: Decree on species protection and species management d.d. 15/05/2009.

BELGIAN PART OF THE NORTH SEA: Royal Decree concerning the species protection in the maritime regions under the jurisdiction of Belgium d.d. 21 December 2001.

WALLONIA: Loi du 12 juillet 1973 sur la conservation de la nature.

BRUSSEL: Order on Nature Conservation, 1/03/2012.

Mirrors and other dazzling devices

Yes, fully

Please indicate the legislation under which the mode of taking is prohibited

>>> Different legislation per region, but consistent through the whole of the country:

FLANDERS: Decree on species protection and species management d.d. 15/05/2009.

BELGIAN PART OF THE NORTH SEA: Royal Decree concerning the species protection in the maritime regions under the jurisdiction of Belgium d.d. 21 December 2001.

WALLONIA: Loi du 12 juillet 1973 sur la conservation de la nature.

BRUSSEL: Order on Nature Conservation, 1/03/2012.

Devices for illuminating targets

Yes, fully

Please indicate the legislation under which the mode of taking is prohibited

>>> Different legislation per region, but consistent through the whole of the country:

FLANDERS: Decree on species protection and species management d.d. 15/05/2009.

BELGIAN PART OF THE NORTH SEA: Royal Decree concerning the species protection in the maritime regions under the jurisdiction of Belgium d.d. 21 December 2001.

WALLONIA: Loi du 12 juillet 1973 sur la conservation de la nature.

BRUSSEL: Order on Nature Conservation, 1/03/2012.

Sighting devices for night shooting comprising an electronic image magnifier or image converter

Yes, fully

Please indicate the legislation under which the mode of taking is prohibited

>>> Different legislation per region, but consistent through the whole of the country:

FLANDERS: Decree on species protection and species management d.d. 15/05/2009.

BELGIAN PART OF THE NORTH SEA: Royal Decree concerning the species protection in the maritime regions under the jurisdiction of Belgium d.d. 21 December 2001.

WALLONIA: Loi du 12 juillet 1973 sur la conservation de la nature.

BRUSSEL: Order on Nature Conservation, 1/03/2012.

Explosives

Yes, fully

Please indicate the legislation under which the mode of taking is prohibited

>>> Different legislation per region, but consistent through the whole of the country:

FLANDERS: Decree on species protection and species management d.d. 15/05/2009.

BELGIAN PART OF THE NORTH SEA: Royal Decree concerning the species protection in the maritime regions under the jurisdiction of Belgium d.d. 21 December 2001.

WALLONIA: Loi du 12 juillet 1973 sur la conservation de la nature.

BRUSSEL: Order on Nature Conservation, 1/03/2012.

Nets

Yes, fully

Please indicate the legislation under which the mode of taking is prohibited

>>> Different legislation per region, but consistent through the whole of the country:

FLANDERS: Decree on species protection and species management d.d. 15/05/2009.

BELGIAN PART OF THE NORTH SEA: Royal Decree concerning the species protection in the maritime regions under the jurisdiction of Belgium d.d. 21 December 2001.

WALLONIA: Loi du 12 juillet 1973 sur la conservation de la nature.

BRUSSEL: Order on Nature Conservation, 1/03/2012.

Traps

Yes, fully

Please indicate the legislation under which the mode of taking is prohibited

>>> Different legislation per region, but consistent through the whole of the country:

FLANDERS: Decree on species protection and species management d.d. 15/05/2009.

BELGIAN PART OF THE NORTH SEA: Royal Decree concerning the species protection in the maritime regions under the jurisdiction of Belgium d.d. 21 December 2001.

WALLONIA: Loi du 12 juillet 1973 sur la conservation de la nature.

BRUSSEL: Order on Nature Conservation, 1/03/2012.

Poison

Yes, fully

Please indicate the legislation under which the mode of taking is prohibited

>>> Different legislation per region, but consistent through the whole of the country:

FLANDERS: Decree on species protection and species management d.d. 15/05/2009.

BELGIAN PART OF THE NORTH SEA: Royal Decree concerning the species protection in the maritime regions under the jurisdiction of Belgium d.d. 21 December 2001.

WALLONIA: Loi du 12 juillet 1973 sur la conservation de la nature.

BRUSSEL: Order on Nature Conservation, 1/03/2012.

Poisoned or anaesthetic baits

Yes, fully

Please indicate the legislation under which the mode of taking is prohibited

>>> Different legislation per region, but consistent through the whole of the country:

FLANDERS: Decree on species protection and species management d.d. 15/05/2009.

BELGIAN PART OF THE NORTH SEA: Royal Decree concerning the species protection in the maritime regions under the jurisdiction of Belgium d.d. 21 December 2001.

WALLONIA: Loi du 12 juillet 1973 sur la conservation de la nature.

BRUSSEL: Order on Nature Conservation, 1/03/2012.

Semi-automatic or automatic weapons with a magazine capable of holding more than two rounds of ammunition

Yes, fully

Please indicate the legislation under which the mode of taking is prohibited

>>> Different legislation per region, but consistent through the whole of the country:

FLANDERS: Decree on species protection and species management d.d. 15/05/2009. Jachtvoorwaardenbesluit van 25 april 2014.

BELGIAN PART OF THE NORTH SEA: Royal Decree concerning the species protection in the maritime regions under the jurisdiction of Belgium d.d. 21 December 2001. No hunting allowed at all.

WALLONIA: Loi du 12 juillet 1973 sur la conservation de la nature. - Arrêté du Gouvernement wallon de 22 septembre 2005 réglementant l'emploi des armes à feu et de leurs munitions en vue de l'exercice de la chasse, ainsi que certains procédés ou techniques de chasse.

BRUSSEL: Order on Nature Conservation, 1/03/2012. No hunting allowed at all.

Hunting from aircraft, motor vehicles, or boats driven at a speed exceeding 5 km p/h (18 km p/h on the open sea)

Yes, fully

Please indicate the legislation under which the mode of taking is prohibited

>>> Different legislation per region, but consistent through the whole of the country:

FLANDERS: Decree on species protection and species management d.d. 15/05/2009.

BELGIAN PART OF THE NORTH SEA: Royal Decree concerning the species protection in the maritime regions under the jurisdiction of Belgium d.d. 21 December 2001. No hunting allowed at all.

WALLONIA: Loi du 12 juillet 1973 sur la conservation de la nature.

BRUSSEL: Order on Nature Conservation, 1/03/2012. No hunting allowed at all.

Other non-selective modes of taking

Yes, fully

Please specify which other non-selective modes of taking have been prohibited

>>> FLANDERS: the Governmental Decree of 15 May 2009 on species protection and species management (Soortenbesluit) prohibits under article 16 §1 any other non-selective mode of taking, even when not mentioned as such in the listed prohibited modes of taking in annex 2A of this Decree.

WALLONIA: According to Article Art. 8. of the Hunting Act, it is prohibited, at all times, to transport and use nets, "foot snare traps", leghold traps", "snares", poisoned or non poisoned baits or any other mean for taking, destroying or facilitate the capture or destruction of any game. The possession, sale and offer for sale of "pièges à machoires" are prohibited. Hunting from a motored vehicle is prohibited.

BELGIAN PART OF THE NORTH SEA: Art 5 of the Royal Decree concerning the species protection in the maritime regions under the jurisdiction of Belgium (d.d. 21/12/200) prohibits taking of in the wild living birds

BRUSSELS REGION: Order on Nature Conservation, 1/03/2012: No taking of wild birds is allowed at all.

Please indicate the legislation under which the mode of taking is prohibited

>>> FLANDERS: the Governmental Decree of 15 May 2009 on species protection and species management (Soortenbesluit) prohibits under article 16 §1 any other non-selective mode of taking, even when not mentioned as such in the listed prohibited modes of taking in annex 2A of this Decree.

WALLONIA: According to Article Art. 8. of the Hunting Act, it is prohibited, at all times, to transport and use nets, "foot snare traps", leghold traps", "snares", poisoned or non poisoned baits or any other mean for taking, destroying or facilitate the capture or destruction of any game. The possession, sale and offer for sale of "pièges à machoires" are prohibited. Hunting from a motored vehicle is prohibited.

BELGIAN PART OF THE NORTH SEA: Art 5 of the Royal Decree concerning the species protection in the maritime regions under the jurisdiction of Belgium (d.d. 21/12/200) prohibits taking of in the wild living birds

BRUSSELS REGION: Order on Nature Conservation, 1/03/2012: No taking of wild birds is allowed at all.

7. Has your country granted exemptions from any of the above prohibitions in order to accommodate livelihoods uses? (AEWA Action Plan, paragraph 2.1.2(b); AEWA Strategic Plan 2019-2027, Target 1.1)

No

8. Were any exemptions granted to the prohibitions required by paragraphs 2.1.1 and 2.1.2 of the AEWA Action Plan? (AEWA Action Plan, paragraph 2.1.3; AEWA Strategic Plan 2019-2027, Target 1.1)

Notice: Before clicking on the above hyperlink, please keep pressing the **Ctrl button** on your keyboard to open the link in a new tab.

Yes

Please provide information on each species for which exemption was granted

Belgium

Exemption for Mute Swan / *Cygnus olor*

Purpose of exemption (from the AEWA Action Plan)

(a) To prevent serious damage to crops, water and fisheries

(b) In the interests of air safety, public health, public safety, or other imperative reasons of overriding public interests, including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance to the environment

Number of individuals for which exemption was granted

>>> For crop damage: 40 individuals. For airport safety: precautionary exemption, no numbers specified.

Territorial coverage of the exemption

Guidance: Name the territory(ies) covered by the exemption

>>> Limited to the very specific area where damage reduction/airport safety cannot be met otherwise.

Time span of the exemption

Guidance: indicate the period for which the exemption is/was valid

>>> 2018, 2019

Year when the exemption was granted

>>> 2016, 2018

Exemption for Barnacle Goose / *Branta leucopsis*

Purpose of exemption (from the AEWA Action Plan)

(a) To prevent serious damage to crops, water and fisheries

(c) For the purpose of research and education, of re-establishment and for the breeding necessary for these purposes

Number of individuals for which exemption was granted

>>> 914

Number of eggs for which exemption was granted

>>> 68

Territorial coverage of the exemption

Guidance: Name the territory(ies) covered by the exemption

>>> Limited to specific sites in Flanders

Time span of the exemption

Guidance: indicate the period for which the exemption is/was valid

>>> 2018, 2019

Year when the exemption was granted

>>> 2018, 2019

Additional information on this exemption (alternatively provide a web link or attach a file)

>>> Specimens/populations involved are of feral origin (escapes from waterbird collections). Taking occurs during the summer period, when wild specimens are not present in Belgium.

Exemption for Common Shelduck / *Tadorna tadorna*

Purpose of exemption (from the AEWA Action Plan)

(d) To permit under strictly supervised conditions, on a selective basis and to a limited extent, the taking and

keeping or other judicious use of certain birds in small numbers

Number of individuals for which exemption was granted

>>> 2

Number of eggs for which exemption was granted

>>> 0

Territorial coverage of the exemption

Guidance: Name the territory(ies) covered by the exemption

>>> One specific site in Flanders.

Time span of the exemption

Guidance: indicate the period for which the exemption is/was valid

>>> 2018

Year when the exemption was granted

>>> 2018

Additional information on this exemption (alternatively provide a web link or attach a file)

>>> Regularisation of birds kept in captivity that can't be released in the wild again.

Exemption for Mallard / *Anas platyrhynchos*

Purpose of exemption (from the AEWA Action Plan)

(b) In the interests of air safety, public health, public safety, or other imperative reasons of overriding public interests, including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance to the environment

(c) For the purpose of research and education, of re-establishment and for the breeding necessary for these purposes

Number of individuals for which exemption was granted

>>> 36

Territorial coverage of the exemption

Guidance: Name the territory(ies) covered by the exemption

>>> Limited to the specific airport, test-fields, ...

Time span of the exemption

Guidance: indicate the period for which the exemption is/was valid

>>> 2018, 2019

Year when the exemption was granted

>>> 2018, 2019

Additional information on this exemption (alternatively provide a web link or attach a file)

>>> Very limited to air safety on airports, prevent damage on agricultural test-fields, research into impact of windturbines (keeping dead specimens).

Exemption for Western Water Rail / *Rallus aquaticus*

Purpose of exemption (from the AEWA Action Plan)

(c) For the purpose of research and education, of re-establishment and for the breeding necessary for these purposes

Number of individuals for which exemption was granted

>>> 1 stuffed animal - no number for scientific research permit

Time span of the exemption

Guidance: indicate the period for which the exemption is/was valid

>>> 2019-2020

Year when the exemption was granted

>>> 2019

Additional information on this exemption (alternatively provide a web link or attach a file)

>>> Keeping of 1 stuffed specimen for educational purposes on 1 place.

The other derogation is granted to allow scientific banders to capture young birds in their nest and to equip them with rings.

Exemption for Common Moorhen / Gallinula chloropus

Purpose of exemption (from the AEWA Action Plan)

(c) For the purpose of research and education, of re-establishment and for the breeding necessary for these purposes

Number of individuals for which exemption was granted

>>> 1

Time span of the exemption

Guidance: indicate the period for which the exemption is/was valid

>>> 2019

Year when the exemption was granted

>>> 2019

Additional information on this exemption (alternatively provide a web link or attach a file)

>>> Keeping of 1 stuffed animal for educational purposes.

Exemption for White Stork / Ciconia ciconia

Purpose of exemption (from the AEWA Action Plan)

(c) For the purpose of research and education, of re-establishment and for the breeding necessary for these purposes

(e) For the purpose of enhancing the propagation or survival of the populations concerned

Number of individuals for which exemption was granted

>>> 1 individual - also a number of nests involved

Territorial coverage of the exemption

Guidance: Name the territory(ies) covered by the exemption

>>> Exemptions are given to move artificial nests to more stable location just aside. Other for ringing young birds or keeping a stuffed specimen for educational purposes.

Time span of the exemption

Guidance: indicate the period for which the exemption is/was valid

>>> 2018, 2019

Year when the exemption was granted

>>> 2018, 2019

Exemption for Eurasian Spoonbill / Platalea leucorodia

Purpose of exemption (from the AEWA Action Plan)

(c) For the purpose of research and education, of re-establishment and for the breeding necessary for these purposes

Number of individuals for which exemption was granted

>>> 7

Time span of the exemption

Guidance: indicate the period for which the exemption is/was valid

>>> 2018, 2019

Year when the exemption was granted

>>> 2018, 2019

Additional information on this exemption (alternatively provide a web link or attach a file)

>>> Exemption for transport of 7 specimens kept in captivity from one zoo to the other.

Exemption for Black-crowned Night-heron / *Nycticorax nycticorax*

Purpose of exemption (from the AEWA Action Plan)

(c) For the purpose of research and education, of re-establishment and for the breeding necessary for these purposes

Number of individuals for which exemption was granted

>>> 3

Territorial coverage of the exemption

Guidance: Name the territory(ies) covered by the exemption

>>> Transport between 2 zoo's.

Time span of the exemption

Guidance: indicate the period for which the exemption is/was valid

>>> 2018, 2019

Year when the exemption was granted

>>> 2018, 2019

Additional information on this exemption (alternatively provide a web link or attach a file)

>>> Transport of specimens held in captivity between two zoo's.

Exemption for Grey Heron / *Ardea cinerea*

Purpose of exemption (from the AEWA Action Plan)

(a) To prevent serious damage to crops, water and fisheries

Number of individuals for which exemption was granted

>>> 70

Territorial coverage of the exemption

Guidance: Name the territory(ies) covered by the exemption

>>> Specific fish farm or fish ponds, or specific spawning ground in a river - all in Wallonia.

Time span of the exemption

Guidance: indicate the period for which the exemption is/was valid

>>> 2018, 2019, 2020

Year when the exemption was granted

>>> 2018, 2019

Exemption for Purple Heron / *Ardea purpurea*

Purpose of exemption (from the AEWA Action Plan)

(c) For the purpose of research and education, of re-establishment and for the breeding necessary for these purposes

Number of individuals for which exemption was granted

>>> 4

Territorial coverage of the exemption

Guidance: Name the territory(ies) covered by the exemption

>>> Transport between 2 zoo's.

Time span of the exemption

Guidance: indicate the period for which the exemption is/was valid

>>> 2018, 2019, 2020

Year when the exemption was granted

>>> 2018, 2019

Exemption for Little Egret / *Egretta garzetta*

Purpose of exemption (from the AEWA Action Plan)

(c) For the purpose of research and education, of re-establishment and for the breeding necessary for these purposes

Number of individuals for which exemption was granted

>>> 6

Time span of the exemption

Guidance: indicate the period for which the exemption is/was valid

>>> 2018, 2019

Year when the exemption was granted

>>> 2018, 2019

Additional information on this exemption (alternatively provide a web link or attach a file)

>>> Keeping of stuffed specimens, transport between zoo's.

Exemption for Great Cormorant / *Phalacrocorax carbo*

Purpose of exemption (from the AEWA Action Plan)

(a) To prevent serious damage to crops, water and fisheries

Number of individuals for which exemption was granted

>>> 772

Territorial coverage of the exemption

Guidance: Name the territory(ies) covered by the exemption

>>> At specific sites (spawning grounds, fish ponds, fish farms, ...) in Wallonia.

Time span of the exemption

Guidance: indicate the period for which the exemption is/was valid

>>> 2018, 2019, 2020

Year when the exemption was granted

>>> 2018, 2019

Exemption for Pied Avocet / *Recurvirostra avosetta*

Purpose of exemption (from the AEWA Action Plan)

(c) For the purpose of research and education, of re-establishment and for the breeding necessary for these purposes

Number of individuals for which exemption was granted

>>> 17

Time span of the exemption

Guidance: indicate the period for which the exemption is/was valid

>>> 2018, 2019

Year when the exemption was granted

>>> 2018, 2019

Additional information on this exemption (alternatively provide a web link or attach a file)

>>> Exemption for transport of specimens held in captivity between 2 zoo's.

Exemption for Black-winged Stilt / *Himantopus himantopus*

Purpose of exemption (from the AEWA Action Plan)

(c) For the purpose of research and education, of re-establishment and for the breeding necessary for these purposes

Number of individuals for which exemption was granted

>>> 2

Time span of the exemption

Guidance: indicate the period for which the exemption is/was valid

>>> 2018, 2019

Year when the exemption was granted

>>> 2018, 2019

Additional information on this exemption (alternatively provide a web link or attach a file)

>>> Transport of specimens between 2 zoo's.

Exemption for Northern Lapwing / *Vanellus vanellus*

Purpose of exemption (from the AEWA Action Plan)

(b) In the interests of air safety, public health, public safety, or other imperative reasons of overriding public interests, including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance to the environment

(c) For the purpose of research and education, of re-establishment and for the breeding necessary for these purposes

Number of individuals for which exemption was granted

>>> Precautionary exemption for airports. 1 stuffed animal for education

Territorial coverage of the exemption

Guidance: Name the territory(ies) covered by the exemption

>>> Limited to airports or to educational facility for stuffed animal.

Time span of the exemption

Guidance: indicate the period for which the exemption is/was valid

>>> 2018, 2019

Year when the exemption was granted

>>> 2018, 2019

Additional information on this exemption (alternatively provide a web link or attach a file)

>>> At airports no number of individual can be predicted on forehand - reporting learns that around 30 specimens are killed at airports yearly.

Exemption for Ruff / *Calidris pugnax*

Purpose of exemption (from the AEWA Action Plan)

(c) For the purpose of research and education, of re-establishment and for the breeding necessary for these purposes

Number of individuals for which exemption was granted

>>> 13

Time span of the exemption

Guidance: indicate the period for which the exemption is/was valid

>>> 2018, 2019

Year when the exemption was granted

>>> 2018, 2019

Additional information on this exemption (alternatively provide a web link or attach a file)

>>> Exemption for transport of specimens held in captivity between 2 zoo's.

Exemption for Eurasian Woodcock / *Scolopax rusticola*

Purpose of exemption (from the AEWA Action Plan)

(c) For the purpose of research and education, of re-establishment and for the breeding necessary for these purposes

Number of individuals for which exemption was granted

>>> 4

Time span of the exemption

Guidance: indicate the period for which the exemption is/was valid

>>> 2018

Year when the exemption was granted

>>> 2018

Additional information on this exemption (alternatively provide a web link or attach a file)

>>> 4 exemptions for keeping a stuffed animal for educational purposes.

Exemption for Common Snipe / Gallinago gallinago

Purpose of exemption (from the AEWA Action Plan)

(c) For the purpose of research and education, of re-establishment and for the breeding necessary for these purposes

Number of individuals for which exemption was granted

>>> 1

Time span of the exemption

Guidance: indicate the period for which the exemption is/was valid

>>> 2018-

Year when the exemption was granted

>>> 2018

Additional information on this exemption (alternatively provide a web link or attach a file)

>>> Keeping of a stuffed animal for educational purposes.

Exemption for Common Redshank / Tringa totanus

Purpose of exemption (from the AEWA Action Plan)

(c) For the purpose of research and education, of re-establishment and for the breeding necessary for these purposes

Number of individuals for which exemption was granted

>>> 4

Territorial coverage of the exemption

Guidance: Name the territory(ies) covered by the exemption

>>> Transport of specimens kept in captivity between 2 zoo's.

Time span of the exemption

Guidance: indicate the period for which the exemption is/was valid

>>> 2018-2019-2020

Year when the exemption was granted

>>> 2018, 2019

Exemption for Black-headed Gull / Larus ridibundus

Purpose of exemption (from the AEWA Action Plan)

(b) In the interests of air safety, public health, public safety, or other imperative reasons of overriding public interests, including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance to the environment

Number of individuals for which exemption was granted

>>> Precautionary permit at airports - no number stated.

Territorial coverage of the exemption

Guidance: Name the territory(ies) covered by the exemption

>>> Within the boundaries of the airports.

Time span of the exemption

Guidance: indicate the period for which the exemption is/was valid

>>> 2018, 2019

Year when the exemption was granted

>>> 2018, 2019

Additional information on this exemption (alternatively provide a web link or attach a file)

>>> Around 400 specimens killed at airports yearly.

Exemption for Mediterranean Gull / *Larus melanocephalus*

Purpose of exemption (from the AEWA Action Plan)

(c) For the purpose of research and education, of re-establishment and for the breeding necessary for these purposes

Time span of the exemption

Guidance: indicate the period for which the exemption is/was valid

>>> 2018, 2019

Year when the exemption was granted

>>> 2018, 2019

Additional information on this exemption (alternatively provide a web link or attach a file)

>>> Permit for scientific ringing of nestyoung.

Exemption for Mew Gull / *Larus canus*

Purpose of exemption (from the AEWA Action Plan)

(c) For the purpose of research and education, of re-establishment and for the breeding necessary for these purposes

Number of individuals for which exemption was granted

>>> 1

Time span of the exemption

Guidance: indicate the period for which the exemption is/was valid

>>> 2019

Year when the exemption was granted

>>> 2019

Additional information on this exemption (alternatively provide a web link or attach a file)

>>> Keeping of a stuffed individual for educational purposes.

Exemption for Lesser Black-backed Gull / *Larus fuscus*

Purpose of exemption (from the AEWA Action Plan)

(b) In the interests of air safety, public health, public safety, or other imperative reasons of overriding public interests, including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance to the environment

Number of eggs for which exemption was granted

>>> 1300

Territorial coverage of the exemption

Guidance: Name the territory(ies) covered by the exemption

>>> At specific airports and urbanised areas where the species breeds on the rooftops.

Time span of the exemption

Guidance: indicate the period for which the exemption is/was valid

>>> 2018, 2019, 2020

Year when the exemption was granted

>>> 2018, 2019, 2020

Exemption for European Herring Gull / *Larus argentatus*

Purpose of exemption (from the AEWA Action Plan)

- (b) In the interests of air safety, public health, public safety, or other imperative reasons of overriding public interests, including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance to the environment
- (c) For the purpose of research and education, of re-establishment and for the breeding necessary for these purposes

Number of individuals for which exemption was granted

>>> Precautionary exemptions at airports without fixed number.

Number of eggs for which exemption was granted

>>> 1350

Territorial coverage of the exemption

Guidance: Name the territory(ies) covered by the exemption

>>> Specific airports, cities, ...

Time span of the exemption

Guidance: indicate the period for which the exemption is/was valid

>>> 2018, 2019

Year when the exemption was granted

>>> 2018, 2019

Additional information on this exemption (alternatively provide a web link or attach a file)

>>> Precautionary exemption for airports. Precautionary exemption for nest-removal on rooftops: no good prediction possible on forehand how much specimens involved and in which stage (nest, egg, young). At airports some 60-75 individuals are shot yearly.

Exemption for Common Tern / *Sterna hirundo*

Purpose of exemption (from the AEWA Action Plan)

- (c) For the purpose of research and education, of re-establishment and for the breeding necessary for these purposes

Number of eggs for which exemption was granted

>>> 20

Territorial coverage of the exemption

Guidance: Name the territory(ies) covered by the exemption

>>> Eggs are collected at a specific colony.

Time span of the exemption

Guidance: indicate the period for which the exemption is/was valid

>>> 2018, 2019

Year when the exemption was granted

>>> 2018, 2019

Additional information on this exemption (alternatively provide a web link or attach a file)

>>> Marine Strategy Directive requires monitoring of certain pollutants in eggs of *Sterna hirundo*.

9. Has a review of enforcement of and compliance with the domestic legislation relevant for AEWA implementation, [in particular the legislation which caters for the obligations under paragraphs 2.1 and 4.1 of the AEWA Action Plan], been undertaken in your country after MOP7? (AEWA Strategic Plan 2019-2027, Actions 1.1(c) and 2.2(c))

No

Please explain the reasons

>>> Legislation was already in line, few infringements were reported.

Was a review undertaken before MOP7?

No

Please explain the reasons

>>> Legislation was already in line, compliance is assessed as satisfactory.

10. Has your country used the AEWA Conservation Guidelines on National Legislation for the Protection of Species of Migratory Waterbirds and their Habitats?

Notice: Before clicking on the above hyperlink, please keep **Ctrl button** on your keyboard to open the link in a new tab.

No

Please explain the reasons. What other guidance has been used instead?

>>> Legislation was already covering the recommendations of the Guidelines.

Optionally you can provide additional information on section 4.1. Legal Measures

>>> FLANDERS: The Flemish Governmental Decree of 15 May 2009 on species protection and species management has a provision that allows the competent authority (the Agency for Nature and Forests) to grant derogations to differ temporarily from the initial protection of wild birds, if there is no other satisfactory solution.

WALLONIA: The Government can give exemptions to bird species protection measures (art. 5. §1er). The exemption is only given if no other satisfactory measure exists and if the exemption will not be of any danger for the population of that species. All wild birds of the European continent, normal or mutant, alive, dead or stuffed are strictly protected (art. 2. of the Natura 2000 Decree).

The following actions are prohibited for these species:

all forms of deliberate capture and deliberate killing;

the deliberate disturbance of wild birds, particularly during the period of breeding, rearing and hibernation;

the deliberate destruction or taking of eggs and nests from the wild or keeping these eggs and nests ;

to possess, to trade, to sell, to give, to buy, to transport, even for transit, birds, eggs, clutch, feathers, part of the animal, or any product made of a bird easily identifiable or any product with a packing telling it contains protected species, except for importation, exportation and transit on non indigenous species

These prohibitions are not valid for poultry, for domestic pigeons, for hunted species and for mutants and hybrids of *Serinus canarius* with a non-protected species.

A Government bill regulates the breeding of birds in order to guarantee the bird's protection.

BRUSSELS: In the Brussels Region, all birds species whose actual or historical natural dispersion area lay within Europe are strictly protected (Order on Nature Conservation, 1/03/2012).

The Brussels Government can give exemptions to this protection measures if no other satisfactory measures exist (art. 83).

BELGIAN PART OF THE NORTH SEA: Royal Decree concerning the species protection in the maritime regions under the jurisdiction of Belgium d.d. 21/12/2001 has a provision that allows the minister competent for the marine environment to differ temporarily from the initial protection of birds in the marine areas, if there is no other satisfactory solution.

4.2. Species Action and Management Plans

11. Please report on the progress of turning the International Single Species Action and Management Plans (ISSAP and ISSMP), as well as International Multi-species Action Plans (IMSAP), listed below, into National Action or Management Plans. (AEWA Action Plan, paragraph 2.2; AEWA Strategic Plan 2019-2027, Action 1.2 (d))

Please report on all listed ISSAP, ISSMP and IMSAP

Barnacle Goose / *Branta leucopsis*

National Plan for Barnacle Goose / *Branta leucopsis*

No NP, but actions implemented

Please explain the reasons for having no NP in place

>>> Numbers of barnacles are relative modest compared to other goose species, other geese (e.g. pinkfooted goose) are more the driver for the actions, barnacles go along.

Please provide a description of the actions implemented

>>> The role of BE in the international perspective is small and is mostly to be a safe haven in the southern part of the wintering range. With good quality of semi-natural foraging areas for the hibernating population. This is also so for other goose species as the pinkfeet, for which habitat restoration projects have been done, where barnacles also benefit from.

Please rate the degree of current implementation of the plan taking into account the time schedule of the ISSAP

Advanced implementation - most of the actions are underway as per the time schedule of the ISSAP

Please provide details and reasons for the high degree of implementation.

>>> The efforts for this species can lift to an important extent with efforts that are already in place for other goose species.

Greylag Goose / Anser anser **National Plan for Greylag Goose / Anser anser**

No NP, but actions implemented

Please explain the reasons for having no NP in place

>>> For the greylag goose population targets for Flanders have been set in 2010 as part of the implementation of the EU Natura2000-policy (Birds Directive). These population goals are directive for actions in Flanders and have been so since 2010. Later on the ISSMP came along and was tuned with these national goals.

Please provide a description of the actions implemented

>>> Site protection, wetland restoration, damage compensation, ...

Please rate the degree of current implementation of the plan taking into account the time schedule of the ISSAP

Moderate implementation - some of the actions are underway as per the time schedule of the ISSAP

Please provide details and reasons for the lower degree of implementation.

>>> As there has been a delay in describing the Favourable Reference Values for the population, this had impact on the speed of the process overall.

Pink-footed Goose / Anser brachyrhynchus **National Plan for Pink-footed Goose / Anser brachyrhynchus**

No NP, but actions implemented

Please explain the reasons for having no NP in place

>>> For the pinkfooted goose, population targets for Flanders have been set in 2010 as part of the implementation of the EU Natura2000-policy (Birds Directive). These population goals are directive for actions in Flanders and have been so since 2010. Later on the AEWA-plan came along and was tuned with these national goals.

Please provide a description of the actions implemented

>>> As the focus in Belgium lies on the conservation of the species rather than on its management, actions deal mostly about habitat restoration, education, goose-based tourism, counting, reporting of neckbands, ...

Please rate the degree of current implementation of the plan taking into account the time schedule of the ISSAP

Advanced implementation - most of the actions are underway as per the time schedule of the ISSAP

Please provide details and reasons for the high degree of implementation.

>>> Actions fit well within a broader policy of nature conservation and align with the birdwatching initiatives that are already present in the field.

Corncrake / Crex crex **National Plan for Corncrake / Crex crex**

NP in place, but not being implemented properly or at all

Please explain the reasons for the lack if implementation. When was the plan approved and published?

Please provide a web link or attach a file, if available.

>>> The Species Protection Plan for Flanders was approved in 2015 and published in 2016. It ran until 2020. On the local level, several initiatives were initiated, and there has been significant progress towards the habitat restoration in several sites. But due to the lack of a national coördinator, overarching actions (monitoring, habitat-typology, study for site fidelity ...) were not picked up.

Tundra Swan / *Cygnus columbianus*

National Plan for Tundra Swan / *Cygnus columbianus*

No NP, but actions implemented

Please explain the reasons for having no NP in place

>>> The species only hibernates irregularly and in smaller numbers (and is mostly feeding on crop remains). The species benefits from actions that target the restoration of the semi-natural habitat for other waterbirds.

Please provide a description of the actions implemented

>>> Restoration of areas with wet grasslands (floodplains, polders, ...).

Black-tailed Godwit / *Limosa limosa*

National Plan for Black-tailed Godwit / *Limosa limosa*

NP in place and being implemented

When was the plan approved and published? Please provide a web link or attach a file, if available. Please provide contact details for any person or organisation coordinating its implementation. Please list any activities and/or achievements over the past triennium.

>>> In the end of 2020 a Species action plan for wet grassland breeding birds, with Black-Tailed Godwit and Eurasian Curlew as umbrella-species, has been approved. It was published in 2021.
<https://www.natuurenbos.be/sbpweidevogels>

Please rate the degree of current implementation of the plan taking into account the time schedule of the ISSAP

Moderate implementation - some of the actions are underway as per the time schedule of the plan

Please provide details and reasons for the lower degree of implementation.

>>> The national plan has been drafted in 2019-2020; its implementation starts in 2021. Although in some nature reserves, actions have been done for this species for a long period.

Eurasian Curlew / *Numenius arquata*

National Plan for Eurasian Curlew / *Numenius arquata*

NP in place and being implemented

When was the plan approved and published? Please provide a web link or attach a file, if available. Please provide contact details for any person or organisation coordinating its implementation. Please list any activities and/or achievements over the past triennium.

>>> In the end of 2020 a Species action plan for wet grassland breeding birds, with Black-Tailed Godwit and Eurasian Curlew as umbrella-species, has been approved. It was published in 2021.
<https://www.natuurenbos.be/sbpweidevogels>

Please rate the degree of current implementation of the plan taking into account the time schedule of the ISSAP

Moderate implementation - some of the actions are underway as per the time schedule of the plan

Please provide details and reasons for the lower degree of implementation.

>>> The national plan for Flanders has been drafted in 2019-2020; its implementation starts in 2021.

White-headed Duck / *Oxyura leucocephala*

National Plan for White-headed Duck / *Oxyura leucocephala*

No NP, but actions implemented

Please explain the reasons for having no NP in place

>>> The only thing that can be done in Belgium, as the country is not part of the range of the species, is to help reduce the risk of hybridisation with the ruddy duck by eradicating this species.

Please provide a description of the actions implemented

>>> The 'national plan' consists of only 1 action namely the eradication of the ruddy duck in order to prevent its

spread to the native populations of the whiteheaded duck in southern Europe.

Please rate the degree of current implementation of the plan taking into account the time schedule of the ISSAP

Full implementation – all actions are underway as per the time schedule of the ISSAP

Please provide details and reasons for the full implementation.

>>> The only thing that can be done in Belgium is to help reduce the risk of hybridisation with the ruddy duck by assisting in the eradication of the latter.

Eurasian Spoonbill / Platalea leucorodia National Plan for Eurasian Spoonbill / Platalea leucorodia

No NP, but actions implemented

12. Has your country provided assistance for the coordination and implementation of International Species Action or Management Plans through funding of AEWA International Species Working and Expert Groups? (Resolution 7.5)

Yes

Please provide details, including amount of funds donated

>>> Through the European Goose Management Platform Belgium assisted through financial support of the data center and through delivering information on the necessary parameters (e.g. population counts).

13. Has your country provided financial or in-kind assistance for the development of new International Species Action or Management Plans? (Resolution 7.5)

Yes

Please provide details, including amount of funds donated

>>> Through the European Goose Management Platform Belgium assisted through financial support of the data center and through delivering information on the necessary parameters (e.g. population counts).

14. Has a review and prioritization been undertaken in your country of the resources needed to develop national action plans in response to ISSAPs, implement those plans and coordinate their implementation? (AEWA Strategic Plan 2019-2027, Action 1.2(g))

No

Please explain the reasons.

>>> Priority goes to the implementation of the species of the EU Birds Directive and more specific to the species from Annex I whose populations are in unfavourable condition. Some of those are overlapping though with the AEWA ISSAP species (e.g. Corncrake).

15. Does your country have in place or is your country developing a National Single Species Action Plan for any species/population for which an AEWA ISSAP has not been developed? (AEWA Action Plan, paragraph 2.2.2)

Yes

Please provide information on each species for which relevant action has been undertaken

Belgium

Corncrake / Crex crex

National Single Species Action Plan for Corncrake / Crex crex

NSSAP in place and being implemented

Please provide details

>>> FLANDERS: NSSAP running from 2016 to 2020, now in review to relaunch for a next period of 5 years.

Eurasian Bittern / Botaurus stellaris

National Single Species Action Plan for Eurasian Bittern / Botaurus stellaris

NSSAP in place and being implemented

Please provide details

>>> FLANDERS: NSSAP running from 2017 tot 2021.

Eurasian Curlew / Numenius arquata

National Single Species Action Plan for Eurasian Curlew / Numenius arquata

NSSAP in place and being implemented

Please provide details

>>> FLANDERS: NSSAP (in fact a broader SAP for wet grassland breeding waders) has been developed in 2019-2020, being implemented from 2021 on, running for 5 years.

Black-tailed Godwit / Limosa limosa

Please provide details

>>> FLANDERS: NSSAP (in fact a broader SAP for wet grassland breeding waders) has been developed in 2019-2020, being implemented from 2021 on, running for 5 years.

Lesser Black-backed Gull / Larus fuscus

National Single Species Action Plan for Lesser Black-backed Gull / Larus fuscus

NSSAP in development

Please provide details

>>> NSSAP in development (together with herring-gull) to provide a framework for a sustainable breeding population while taking into account conflicts related to nesting near human settlements or near human activities (harbour).

European Herring Gull / Larus argentatus

National Single Species Action Plan for European Herring Gull / Larus argentatus

NSSAP in development

Please provide details

>>> NSSAP in development (together with lesser black-backed gull) to provide a framework for a sustainable breeding population while taking into account conflicts related to nesting near human settlements or near human activities (harbours).

16. Has your country used the AEWA Conservation Guidelines for the preparation of National Single Species Action Plans for migratory waterbirds?

Notice: Before clicking on the above hyperlink, please keep pressing the **Ctrl button** on your keyboard to open the link in a new tab.

No

Please explain the reasons. What has been used instead as a basis for the preparation of NSSAPs?

>>> FLANDERS: an own quality handbook for 'species protection or species management programmes' is used. It also takes in account the legal requirements on species protection and management programmes as foreseen in the own regional legislation.

Optionally you can provide additional information on section 4.2. Single Species Action Plans

>>> FLANDERS: all official species action plans can be found at www.natuurenbos.be/sbp.

4.3 Emergency Measures

17. Please report on any emergency situation that has occurred in your country over the past triennium and has threatened waterbirds. (AEWA Action Plan, paragraph 2.3)

Please indicate whether an emergency situation threatening waterbirds, such as botulism, chemical pollution, earthquake, extreme weather, fire, harmful algal bloom, infectious disease, introduction of alien species, lead poisoning, nuclear accident, oil spill, predation, volcanic activity, war or other emergency (please specify), has occurred in the country over the past triennium.

No emergency situation has occurred

18. Are there any other emergency response measures, different from the ones applied in response to the emergency situations reported above, that were developed and are in place in your country so that they can be used in future in emergency cases?

No

19. Has your country used the AEWA Conservation Guidelines on identifying and tackling emergency situations for migratory waterbirds?

Notice: Before clicking on the above hyperlink, please keep pressing the **Ctrl button** on your keyboard to

open the link in a new tab.

No

Please explain the reasons. What was used instead as a basis for dealing with emergency situations?

>>> FLANDERS, WALLONIA and BRUSSELS REGION: Most of the emergency situations that can occur, will affect more than only the waterbirds. We have or are developing systems for diseases in wild animals, introduction of alien species and fire. On sea there's a oil spill intervention plan for birds that can be activated alongside other measures to prevent environmental pollution after big oil spills.

BRUSSELS: In the Brussels Region protocols exist for monitoring zoonoses or diseases caused by waterbirds.

4.4 Re-establishments

20. Is your country maintaining a national register of re-establishment projects occurring or planned to occur wholly or partly within your country? (Resolution 4.4)

Yes

Please provide details on the register

>>> FLANDERS: For re-introduction a derogation from the regional legislation has to be given. Therefore re-introduction programs are listed in the register of derogations. No re-establishment projects concerning waterbirds or wetlands have taken place.

WALLONIA:

- No re-introduction project has taken place concerning waterbirds.

- Re-introductions prohibited by article 5 ter of the law on nature conservation

BRUSSELS REGION:

- No re-introduction project has taken place

BELGIAN PART OF THE NORTH SEA:

- No re-introduction project has taken place

21. Is there a regulatory framework for re-establishments of species, including waterbirds, in your country (AEWA Action Plan, paragraph 2.4)?

Yes

Please provide details

>>> FLANDERS: the Government of Flanders Decree concerning species protection and species management regulates the re-establishment of species in the wild.

WALLONIA: Art. 5ter of Law on Nature Conservation : it is forbidden to re introduce any indogenous species into the wild. A derogation system exists for this article.

In Wallonia the articles 5 and 5 bis of the nature conservation law give the possibility to derogate from some of the bans of this law (i.e. to capture, to hold, to transport some individuals). It is necessary to respect the three conditions fixed by the birds directive (no other satisfactory solution, respect the aim, not to put the species in danger).

BRUSSELS REGION: the Order concerning Nature Conservation (1/3/2012) regulates the re-establishment of species in the wild.

BELGIAN PART OF THE NORTH SEA: Royal Decree concerning the species protection in the maritime regions under the jurisdiction of Belgium d.d. 21/12/2001 regulates the re-establishment of species in the wild

22. Has your country considered, developed or implemented re-establishment projects for any species/population listed on AEWA Table 1? (AEWA Action Plan, paragraph 2.4)

No

23. Has your country used the AEWA conservation Guidelines on the translocation of waterbirds for conservation purposes?

Notice: Before clicking on the above hyperlink, please keep pressing the **Ctrl button** on your keyboard to open the link in a new tab.

Not applicable

Please explain

>>> No re-establishments of waterbird species were planned or took place

4.5 Introductions

24. Does your country have legislation in place, which prohibits the introduction into the environment of non-native species of animals and plants which may be detrimental to migratory waterbirds? (AEWA Action Plan, paragraph 2.5.1)

Yes, and being enforced

Please provide the following details: title of legislation, year of adoption, institution that adopted it, institution that enforces it. Please clarify whether legislation applies to/is consistent throughout the entire country or only to particular states/provinces.

>>> BELGIUM: Regulation (EU) No 1143/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 October 2014 on the prevention and management of the introduction and spread of invasive alien species , adopted in 2014, enforced from 2015

FLANDERS: the Government of Flanders Decree concerning species protection and species: Art. 17 prohibits the deliberate introduction into the wild of species under the scope of this Decree, while Art. 21 states that specific derogations for the introduction of alien species can be granted, provided that a prior investigation of the impact demonstrates that there is no chance on adverse consequences for the natural habitats in their range of distribution in the Flemish Region or for animal or plant species that naturally occur in the wild in the Flemish Region. Adopted in 2009, enforced by the Nature Inspection of the Agency for Nature and Forests and the federal judiciary when necessary

WALLONIA: Art. 5ter. of the law on nature conservation : The introduction of non-indigenous species or indigenous species of non-indigenous origin in nature is forbidden except for species used for agriculture and forestry.

BRUSSELS REGION: Art. 77. of the Order on nature conservation (1/12/2015) : The introduction of non-indigenous invasive species is forbidden. Art. 75.: the introduction of non-indigenous species is submitted to an authorization.

BELGIAN PART OF THE NORTH SEA:

Law regarding the protection of the marine environment, 1999, article 11, legal prohibition to deliberately introduce invasive species / legal ground for the King to prohibit the undeliberate introduction of invasive alien species via ballast water, adopted by Parliament, enforced by authorities having a competency at sea (MUMM, DG Environment, Navy, Shipping Police, DG Shipping), applicable to the Belgian maritime area;

Royal Decree concerning the species protection in the maritime regions under the jurisdiction of Belgium d.d. 21/12/2001

The Ballast water convention has also been implemented in Belgian law;

Royal Decree in execution of the Ballast water convention, 2017, enforced by DG Shipping, applicable to the Belgian maritime area.

25. Does your country impose legislative requirements on zoos, private collections, etc. in order to avoid the accidental escape of captive animals belonging to non-native species which may be detrimental to migratory waterbirds? (AEWA Action Plan, paragraph 2.5.2)

Yes, and being enforced

Please provide the following details: title of the document, year of adoption, institution that adopted it, institution that enforces it. Please clarify whether legislation applies to/is consistent throughout the entire country or only to particular states/provinces.

>>> - Article 3 of the Royal decision of 10/08/1998 on the recognition of zoos states that all animal enclosures must be designed and kept in a way that in all circumstances escaping of animals is impossible and the safety of the animals, visitors and staff is guaranteed at all times. Enforcement in Flanders by the Animal welfare Service of the Government of Flanders and in the Brussels Region by the Service of Animal Welfare of Brussels Environment.

- Regulation (EU) No 1143/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 October 2014 on the prevention and management of the introduction and spread of invasive alien species , adopted in 2014, enforced from 2015, states in Article 8 that licences for researching or keeping alien species are subject to the condition that they are physically isolated and cannot escape and that an emergency plan in case of escape should be made by the applicant. Enforcement in Flanders by the Nature Inspection of the Agency for Nature and Forests; in Wallonia by the Public Service of Wallonia, in Brussels by Environment Brussels and at the Federal level by the Federal Public Service Health, Food Chain Safety and Environment.

WALLONIA: Government bill of 14 January 2014 on the captivity conditions for non pets alien animal species: it specifies the measures for zoos and other animal parks; Its article 3 is on the the infrastructures and buildings to host those animals and to prevent their escape.

You have attached the following documents to this answer.

[AR_10-08-1998_0_823592_nl.pdf](#) - FED - Royal Decision on recognition of zoos

26. Has your country considered, developed or implemented programmes to control or eradicate non-native species of waterbird so as to prevent negative impacts on indigenous species? (AEWA Action Plan, paragraph 2.5.3)

Yes

Please provide information on each species for which relevant action has been undertaken

Ruddy Duck / *Oxyura jamaicensis* **For Ruddy Duck / *Oxyura jamaicensis***

Control or eradication programme developed and being implemented

27. Has your country considered, developed or implemented programmes to control or eradicate other non-native species (in particular aquatic weeds and terrestrial predators) so as to prevent negative impacts on migratory waterbirds? (AEWA Action Plan, paragraphs 2.5.3 and 4.3.10 and Resolution 5.15)

Yes

Please list the non-native species for which relevant action has been undertaken

>>> FLANDERS: Although no formal program has been implemented with regards to invasive, aquatic plants so far, numerous public authorities have engaged in its control, especially in response to the listing of such species on the Union list in 2016 (EU Regulation nr. 1143/2014). Target species for eradication/management are: *Lagarosiphon major*, *Elodea callitrichoides*, *Elodea canadensis*, *Elodea nuttallii*, *Egeria densa*, *Hydrilla verticillata*, *Crassula helmsii*, *Lemna minuta*, *Lemna turionifera*, *Azolla filiculoides*, *Hydrocotyle ranunculoides*, *Ludwigia grandiflora*. Also without formal programme coordinating actions have been taken to prevent the establishment of the sacred-ibis, to protect native bird species from nest-predation.

Please provide further information for each relevant programme

>>> FLANDERS: Information on management of these aquatic plants is disseminated via the website www.ecopedia.be and a technical handbook on the management on invasive alien plants, available in print and pdf.

BELGIUM:

Awareness raising on invasive alien plants in the horticultural sector at national level (federal + Regions): Life+ project "AlterIAS" (ALTERnatives to Invasive Alien Species, see: <http://www.alterias.be/>): Development of public awareness tools: update of the brochure "SOS invasions", new brochure on alternative plants to IAS, DVD, development of a code of conduct on invasive alien plants in Belgium, the ALTERIAS project resulted in a website with guidelines for alternatives for invasive alien plant species.

Development of black/grey lists of invasive alien species based on a standardised impact assessment protocol (ISEIA) (see: <http://ias.biodiversity.be>),

BELGIUM: An early warning system is installed on www.waarnemingen.be/exoten. Information on invasive species and their assessment on native biodiversity is gathered on <https://ias.biodiversity.be/harmoniaplus>.

WALLONIA:

Preventive and control actions against invasive alien species are coordinated through a dedicated interdepartmental unit (CiEi) that has been established in 2009 within the strategic plan of the Administration. This unit is in charge of the following tasks:

. Identify priority pathways and develop preventive and regulatory measures accordingly, including guidelines for plantations, soil movement, green waste management, etc.

. Prepare a coherent legislative framework to regulate preventive and control actions against invasive alien species in Wallonia.

. Set up an early warning system in cooperation with the other regions in the country and nature conservation NGOs.

. Identify and disseminate best practices for the management of invasive alien plants and animals;

. Coordinate control action plans against priority species like giant hogweed, Japanese mosquito, Canada goose or muskrat.

. Conduct studies to assess non-native species invasiveness in the field and compile information for risk analyses of priority species.

. Communicate and develop capacity building actions towards field managers and the general public.

Nature Parks, many River Contracts and cities which have either a Municipality Plan for Nature Conservation or a 'Roadside management plan' actively manage invasive alien species at a local scale.

BRUSSELS REGION: participation on the Early Warning/Rapid Response installed on the Belgian Level by waarnemingen.be/observations.be. Daily management of invasive alien species in urban parks, Natura 2000 sites and nature reserves.

28. Has your country used the AEWA Conservation Guidelines on avoidance of introductions of non-native waterbird species?

Notice: Before clicking on the above hyperlink, please keep pressing the **Ctrl button** on your keyboard to open the link in a new tab.

No

Please explain the reasons. What was used instead as a basis for dealing with the issue?

>>> There is no specific approach for waterbirds. The EU regulation is now operative and the prohibition on the introduction of species, including non-native waterbird species, is legally already anchored as mentioned

under 14.

In Wallonia the law on nature conservation already forbids the introduction in nature of non native species. These dispositions will be specified to fully encounter the EU regulation.

4.6 Seabirds

The country has maritime territories and the AEWA seabird conservation priorities are relevant for the country:

Yes

29. Does your country have comprehensive data on seabird by-catch? (Resolution 7.6)

No

Please explain the reasons.

>>> There is no monitoring for the by-catch of seabirds because the risk of by-catch is very limited for the used gear-types (mainly trawling).

When and how do you plan to fill these data gaps?

>>> No actions planned. A desktop assessment has been done on the effects of fisheries on seabirds indicating no significant risk for the methods used. See: Depestele, J.et al. (2008). WAKO: Evaluatie van de milieu-impact van WARrelneten boomKOrvisserij op het Belgisch deel van de Noordzee: Eindrapport. ILVO-Visserij.

30. Have you assessed the impact of by-catch by artisanal fisheries to AEWA-listed seabirds? (Resolution 7.6)

No

Please explain the reasons.

>>> The risk of by-catch is very limited for the methods used by recreational fisheries (fishing rod, small-scale shrimp trawlers; ...).

When and how do you plan to do that?

>>> As the risk is assessed low, no immediate actions are planned.

31. Have you assessed the impact of artisanal/recreational fisheries on seabirds' prey? (Resolution 7.6)

No

Please explain the reasons.

>>> Recreational fisheries target other species than seabirds do.

When and how do you plan to do that?

>>> As the impact is assessed low, no immediate actions are planned.

32. Has your country undertaken steps towards the adoption/application of measures to reduce the incidental catch of seabirds and combat Illegal, Unregulated and Unreported (IUU) fishing practices in the Agreement Area? (Resolution 3.8)

No

Please explain the reasons

>>> Incidental catch was assessed a very low risk with the fishing methods that are used by professional and recreational fisheries.

Field for additional information (optional)

>>> For an assessment of the impacts see: Depestele, J.et al. (2008). WAKO: Evaluatie van de milieu-impact van WARrelneten boomKOrvisserij op het Belgisch deel van de Noordzee: Eindrapport. ILVO-Visserij.

33. Does your country have comprehensive data on hunting and egg harvesting (both legal and illegal) of AEWA-listed seabirds? (Resolution 7.6)

Not Applicable

Please explain the reasons.

>>> No hunting or egg harvesting is allowed.

34. Have you assessed the impact of hunting and egg harvesting (both legal and illegal) on AEWA-listed seabirds? (Resolution 7.6)

Not Applicable

Please explain the reasons.

>>> No hunting or egg harvesting is allowed.

35. Have you identified those seabird colonies at risk from invasive non-native species? (Resolution 7.6)

Yes

Please provide details, including references or attach a file, if available.

>>> As there are only few seabird colonies, these are all monitored well and all kinds of risks are assessed continuously.

Have you prioritised them for action?

No

Please explain the reasons.

>>> As there are only few seabird colonies, these are all monitored well and all kinds of risks are assessed continuously. If needed, a rapid response towards the risk of invasive non-native species can be carried out. In this sense all colonies can be considered first priority.

36. Have you identified the key coastal and at-sea areas where responses to oil spills would be most urgently required in relation to the presence of AEWA-listed seabirds? (Resolution 7.6)

No

Please explain the reasons.

>>> Areal surveillance is carried out for the whole Belgian Part of the North Sea, whether relevant for waterbirds or not. This caused a significant decrease in illegal oil spills since 1991; there is a continuous readiness for oil response for the whole Belgian Part of the North Sea. Besides that, the most important sites with presence of important numbers of seabirds are known, so in case of oil spills a risk assessment can be made according to the location that is being hit.

When and how do you plan to do that?

>>> Readiness for oil spill response is general for the whole Belgian Part of the North Sea. The most important sites with presence of important numbers of seabirds are known, so in case of oil spills a risk assessment can be made according to the location (and time) that is being hit and an intervention plan for oilspill-birds can be activated accordingly.

37. **(Applicable only to countries bordering the North or Baltic Sea)** Has your country undertaken a program of data-collection to validate models of population level impacts of offshore windfarms in the North and Baltic Seas on AEWA seabirds? (Resolution 7.6)

Yes

Please provide details, including references or attach a file, if available.

>>> The licence of offshore windfarms is linked with an extensive monitoring program of the environmental impact (incl effects on birds). This monitoring program is coordinated by the Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences (RBINS).

https://odnature.naturalsciences.be/downloads/winmonbe2013/winmonbe_report.pdf

38. Have you identified priority sites by filling gaps in the Critical Site Network for seabirds (breeding, non-breeding, pelagic and coastal areas)? (Resolution 7.6)

Not Applicable

Please explain the reasons.

>>> Priority sites were already identified.

Pressures and Responses

5. Habitat Conservation

5.1 Habitat Inventories

39. Has your country identified the network of all sites of international and national importance for the migratory waterbird species/populations listed on Table 1? (AEWA Action Plan, paragraph 3.1.2; AEWA Strategic Plan 2019-2027, Action 3.1(a))

Yes

Please provide full reference, e.g. title, year, authors, etc. or a web link

>>> FLANDERS: In 2007, an extensive book about nature in a European Union Natura 2000 context in Flanders and the Belgian North Sea has been published by the Institute for Nature and Forest Research (INBO). Most sites of international importance have been designated as SPA in the framework of the EU Birds Directive, some also in the framework of the Ramsar convention.

Based on the results of waterbird monitoring projects, a list of internationally important waterbird sites in Flanders is yearly updated by INBO. These sites are also listed as Important Bird Areas although a formal update of these is needed and planned in the near future. There are no clear criteria for sites of national importance, although most of them are part of an ecological network and designated as nature reserves.

WALLONIA:

- There are 4 sites registered on the Ramsar List of wetland's of international importance in Wallonia: "Les Marais d'Harchies Hensies Pommeroeel", the "Vallée de la Haute-Sûre", the "Hautes Fagnes" and the "Grotte des Emotions" which are respectively marshes, a transboundary wetland, peatlands and a karst. The 3 first sites are particularly important for migratory birds.

Besides these, there are Nature reserves (government nature reserve and chartered nature reserve) and wetland's of biological interest.

- Several initiatives have been carried out since the late 70's in order to have an inventory of the biological resources of the Walloon Region. These initiatives have led to the creation of lists of sites of great biological value ("Sites de Grand Intérêt Biologique" or SGIB). These lists of major sites are of major importance to the elaboration of the ecological network and in order to have a basis for political negotiation. The high biological value of these sites is due to the presence of protected or threatened habitats or species or even sites or species considered as having a great interest by naturalists.

- Natura 2000 sites are also of great importance in Wallonia for migratory waterbirds

Brussels Region

Lists exist of:

- sites of great biologic value

- N2000 sites

Federal level: Belgian marine territory : Two inventories have been made:

-- Derous S., Verfaillie E., Van Lancker V., Courtens W., Stienen E.W.M., Hostens K., Moulart I., Hillewaert H., Mees J., Deneudt K., Deckers P., Cuvelier D., Vincx M., Degraer S., 2007, A biological valuation map for the Belgian part of the North Sea: BWZee, Final report, Research in the framework of the BELSPO programme "Global chance, ecosystems and biodiversity"

- SPSP II, March 2007, pp. 99 (+ Annexes). - Courtens, W. en E.W.M. Stienen. 2006. Marine biological valuation of seabirds in the Belgian Part of the North Sea. INBO rapport A.2005.122: 25p

Have you reviewed, confirmed and communicated to the AEWA Secretariat after MOP7 the inventory of known nationally and internationally important sites in your country?

Yes

Please confirmed when this process was concluded and when the inventory was communicated to the AEWA Secretariat

>>> This process was concluded in the end of 2020. The inventory was communicated to the AEWA Secretariat on the 31th of December and again with more detail on January the 5th 2021 adding extra information as requested by the secretariat.

40. If your country has identified or is currently identifying the networks of sites of international and national importance, were the AEWA Conservation Guidelines on the preparation of site inventories for migratory waterbirds used?

Notice: Before clicking on the above hyperlink, please keep pressing the **Ctrl button** on your keyboard to open the link in a new tab.

Yes

Please provide details

>>> The review was done according to the method reached out by the secretariat.

Optionally, you can provide additional information on section 5.1. Habitat Inventories

>>> The site list is quite up to date but the species-list per site needs some update. This is planned in the near future but takes more dedicated work and time than was available during the review period.

5.2. Conservation of Areas and Habitats

41. Has your country assessed the future implications of climate change for protected areas and other sites important for waterbirds (i.e. resilience of sites to climate change)? (Resolution 5.13)

For one or more single sites

No

Please explain the reasons

>>> FLANDERS: Climate change assessment on nature has thus far been general or has focused mainly on ecosystems/vegetation, not on single species e.g. waterbirds.

For the national protected area network

Yes

Please give details as to where relevant information about these assessments have been published (either as publications or web-link).

>>> FLANDERS: general implications of climate change on biodiversity have been assessed in the 2014 Nature Report by the Institute of Nature and Forest research

WALLONIA: Développement d'indicateurs de l'impact des changements climatiques sur les oiseaux en Wallonie; Aves, pôle ornithologique de Natagora - LAUDELOUT A., PAQUET J.Y.

BRUSSELS REGION: general implications of climate change on biodiversity have been assessed in the 2012 Nature Report by Brussels Environment.

42. Which sites that were identified as important, either internationally or nationally, for Table 1 migratory waterbird species/populations have been designated as protected areas under the national legislation and have management plans that are being implemented, including with the aim to increase resilience to the effects of climate change? (AEWA Action Plan, paragraph 3.2.1; AEWA Strategic Plan 2019-2027, Target 3.3)

Please report separately on internationally important sites, nationally important sites and buffer zones.

Reporting on designation and management of internationally important sites

All sites of international importance

(sites recognized as having international importance for migratory waterbirds following criteria of, for instance, the AEWA Critical Site Network, the Ramsar Convention, the EU Birds Directive (SPAs), the Bern Convention Emerald Network, the BirdLife International's Important Bird Areas)

Total number

>>> 30

Total area (ha)

>>> 168453

Number of internationally important sites under national protection designation

>>> 30

Area of international importance under national protection designation (ha)

>>> 168453

Please rate the effectiveness of the national protection designation

High

Please provide details and reasons for the high level of effectiveness.

>>> All plans or programmes that might have an impact on the birds or their habitat have to be assessed thoroughly. No significant impact is allowed.

Internationally important protected sites with a management plan in place which is being implemented

Number of sites

>>> 30

Area (in ha)

>>> 168453

Please rate the effectiveness of the management measures

Moderate

Please provide details and reasons for the lower level of effectiveness.

>>> Management plans offer clear objectives for the site but do not directly impose a certain management in the field.

Internationally important sites with a management plan in place which is being implemented and includes management objectives related to maintaining or increasing the resilience of existing ecological networks, including resilience to climate change

Number of sites

>>> 30

Area (in ha)

>>> 168453

Please rate the effectiveness of the climate resilience measures

Moderate

Please provide details and reasons for the lower level of effectiveness.

>>> Management objectives for the site do not imply directly water management outside of the sites. For low-lying areas that depend on water supply from above, the water management upstreams, especially in longer dry periods, may have a significant impact.

DESIGNATION GAP FILLING

Being developed

Please provide starting date and expected date of finalisation

>>> Designation of internationally important sites is considered ok. A review of the nationally important and other IBA's is foreseen in the coming years. Exact timing depends on finding funding for dedicated staff to do this task.

MANAGEMENT GAP FILING

No

Please explain the reasons

>>> A review of the nationally important and other IBA's is foreseen in the coming years. Exact timing depends on finding funding for dedicated staff to do this task. Only after this review, the need of filling management gaps can be assessed.

44. Is the network of nationally and internationally important sites for migratory waterbirds integrated into your country's water- and land-use policies and planning and decision-making processes? (AEWA Strategic Plan 2019-2027, Target 3.4)

Yes, partially

Please provide details and reasons for partial integration

>>> Internationally important sites have a formal status and are integrated through the implementation of the EU Birds Directive.

There is no formal status for nationally important sites giving them a general protection, although specific sites are often protected as nature reserves.

45. Has your country used the AEWA Conservation Guidelines on the management of key sites for migratory waterbirds?

Notice: Before clicking on the above hyperlink, please keep pressing the **Ctrl button** on your keyboard to open the link in a new tab.

No

Please explain the reasons. What guidance has been used instead?

>>> Since the reported sites of international importance are Natura 2000 sites, they will be managed based on EU guidance.

46. Has the Critical Site Network (CSN) Tool for the AEWA area been accessed and used in your

country? (Resolution 7.9)

Notice: Before clicking on the above hyperlink, please keep pressing the **Ctrl button** on your keyboard to open the link in a new tab.

Yes

Please give examples of how you have used the CSN Tool

>>> To have an overview of the relevant sites.

47. Following MOP7, has your country been involved in the establishment of innovative, international, multi-stakeholder partnerships to guide the development and implementation of habitat management, creation and restoration projects in the wider environment? (AEWA Strategic Plan 2019-2027, Action 4.4(a))

No

Please explain the reasons

>>> Larger projects were already running before MOP7 e.g. the SIGMA-project along the river Schelde, where large areas of wetland are being restored/created as part of a flood risk scheme. See: <https://sigmaplan.be/en/>

Optionally you can provide additional information on section 5.2. Conservation of Areas and Habitats

>>> The number of sites of international importance contains sites which completely or partly overlap. For the Flemish and Brussels region, Special Protection Areas under the Birds Directive and Sites of Community Importance under the Habitats Directive that protect at least one of the AEWA species have been listed and summed up. For the total area however, a GIS correction has been carried out to eliminate double counts of overlapping areas.

To select the sites of national importance in the Walloon region, the criteria used are at least 15 % of the total amount wintering birds of one species or at least 1000 birds counted. These sites include the sites of international importance in the Walloon region.

Pressures and Responses

6. Management of Human Activities

6.1. Hunting

48. Does the legislation of your country implement the principle of sustainable use of waterbirds, as envisaged in the AEWA Action Plan, taking into account the full geographical range of the waterbird populations concerned and their life history characteristics? (AEWA Action Plan, paragraph 4.1.1; AEWA Strategic Plan 2019-2027, Target 2.2)

Yes

Please provide details on how this is achieved and reference to the relevant legislation

>>> Hunting is only allowed on a limited number of abundant species. In Flanders, the most important region for migratory waterbirds, all hunting in sites of international importance for wintering waterbirds is suspended from 15 november on, so that the most important sites are free from hunting and/or hunting disturbance during the period with the biggest concentrations of waterbirds .

49. Does your country have an established system for the collection of harvest data, which covers the species/populations listed in Table 1? (AEWA Action Plan, paragraph 4.1.3; AEWA Strategic Plan 2019-2027, Action 2.1(b))

Yes

Does it cover the following? (tick where applicable and provide details)

Only some AEWA species occurring in your country

>>> Only for species with an open hunting season

FLANDERS: Anser anser and Anas platyrhynchos.

WALLONIA: hunting season was open only for 3 AEWA species: Anas platyrhynchos, Anas crecca, Fulica atra; .

Does it cover the following? (tick where applicable and provide details)

The whole territory of your country

>>> Every Region has his own similar system of collecting harvest data though.

Does it cover the following? (tick where applicable and provide details)

All forms of waterbird harvesting

Field for additional information (optional)

>>> FLANDERS: Flemish hunters are obliged to report annually on game numbers and bag statistics. This can be done through a webtool or old school on paper. The information is received and analyzed by a scientific institute from the Flemish government, the Institute for Nature and Forest Research.

In the Brussels region all hunting is prohibited since 1991.

BELGIAN PART OF THE NORTH SEA: all hunting is prohibited since 1999

WALLONIE: all hunting data are collected.

50. Has your country phased out the use of lead shot for hunting in wetlands? (AEWA Action Plan, paragraph 4.1.4; AEWA Strategic Plan 2019-2027, Action 2.2(d))

Fully

When was lead shot use in wetlands banned?

>>> FLANDERS: A total ban on the use of leadshot has been adopted in 2003.

WALLONIA: A ban on the use of leadshot in wetlands has been adopted in 2005.

BRUSSELS: Hunting is not allowed in the Brussels region.

BELGIAN PART OF THE NORTH SEA: All hunting is prohibited since 1999

What legislation is in place?

>>> FLANDERS: A total ban on the use of leadshot has been adopted in 2003, by a Flemish Government Decree from September 19, 2003, on the use of firearms and ammunition for hunting in the Flemish Region. The ban on leadshot is repeated in the Decision of the Flemish government of 25 april 2014 - holding the conditions for hunting practices. This law is enforced by Nature Inspection.

WALLONIA: Walloon Government arrest on the use of firearms and shots (05 october 2005). Article 3 of this arrest forbids the use of lead shots to shoot waterbird game species at less than 50 meters from a marsh, a lake, a pond, a water reservoir, a river or a canal.

BRUSSELS: Hunting is not allowed in the Brussels region. It is enforced by the Nature and Forest department.

BELGIAN PART OF THE NORTH SEA: all hunting is prohibited since 1999

Who enforces this legislation?

>>> FLANDERS: the Nature Inspection of the Agency of Nature and Forest.

WALLONIA: L'unité anti-braconnage (UAB) du Département de la Nature et des Forêts (DNF)

Has assessment of compliance with the legislation been undertaken?

Yes

Please explain how this was assessed.

>>> FLANDERS: Nature Inspection controls hunters in the field, amongst others, on the use of the appropriate munition and the species that have been shot.

Please explain what the compliance with legislation was found to be:

Good (almost full compliance)

Please indicate any known reasons for good compliance or any barriers to compliance. Please attach any published or unpublished references.

>>> FLANDERS: The fact that owning lead-shot is not forbidden (only the use for hunting practices is forbidden) makes it not easy to act strongly. Only lead-shot in the gun barrel or lead-pellets in the shot animal can lead to proper prosecution.

Has measurement of impact of the legislation been undertaken i.e. where there was a problem of lead poisoning in waterbirds, has this been reduced?

No

If appropriate, please explain the reasons for not doing this.

>>> FLANDERS: there is no information of sites with problems on lead poisoning in waterbirds.

51. Are there measures in your country to reduce/eliminate illegal taking? (AEWA Action Plan, paragraph 4.1.6; AEWA Strategic Plan 2019-2027, Action 2.2(e))

Yes

How would you rate the effectiveness of the measures?

High

Please provide details

>>> An expert group has been put in place by the Coordination Committee for International Environmental Policy (CCIEP) Working group on Nature, to identify the main gaps to combat wildlife trafficking in Belgium. This group sent his conclusions to the Interministerial Conference on Environment.

52. Does your country maintain an adequate system for making realistic estimates of the number of waterbirds taken illegally? (AEWA Strategic Plan 2019-2027, Action 2.1(b))

Partially

Please provide details

>>> Indications of illegal take can be reported easily to the authorities. There is no indication that it concerns more than isolated cases or considers significant numbers of birds.

53. Is legally binding proficiency testing for hunters, including amongst other things bird identification, in place in your country? (AEWA Action Plan, paragraph 4.1.8; AEWA Strategic Plan 2019-2027, Target 2.2)

Yes

Please provide details and reference to the relevant legislation

>>> Hunters have to pass an exam before being able to hunt. Bird identification is part of the test.

54. Are best practice codes and standards for hunting in place in your country in support of enforcement of hunting laws and regulations? (AEWA Action Plan, paragraph 4.1.7; AEWA Strategic Plan 2019-2027, Target 2.3)

Yes

What do these cover?

Club Affiliation

Emergency closure of hunting in cases of exceptionally unfavourable or endangering conditions

Optional [Please upload links or examples]

>>> FLANDERS, WALLONIA: Hunters need to pass a hunting exam before being entitled to a hunting licence.

This exam consists of a theoretical part, including bird identification, and a practical part, including safety procedures and shooting competence.

Independent hunters and game management units need to provide a 'fauna management plan' which contains population goals for each huntable species, data on habitat quality and quantity, measures for a sustainable game management, ... In the 'game report', game management units and independent hunters also need to report the estimated spring population state of game species within their hunting ground.

FLANDERS: club affiliation is encouraged as not affiliated hunters have (limited) restrictions on hunting opportunities.

Please rate the degree of application of these best practice codes and standards:

High (almost always applied)

Please provide details and reasons for the high degree of application

>>> Most hunters are affiliated in clubs.

Please rate the effectiveness these best practice codes and standards in supporting enforcement of hunting laws and regulations:

High (very effective in supporting enforcement of hunting laws and regulations)

Please provide details and reasons for the high degree of effectiveness

>>> Hunting clubs stimulate self-control of the hunters and high standards for the hunting practice.

55. Has your country used the AEWA Conservation Guidelines on sustainable harvest of migratory birds?

Notice: Before clicking on the above hyperlink, please keep pressing the **Ctrl button** on your keyboard to open the link in a new tab.

Yes

Please provide details

>>> FLANDERS: Participation in the AEWA International Species Management Plan for the Svalbard population of the pink-footed goose, Greylag Goose and Barnacle Goose. Reporting of the number of harvested species mentioned is required for the operational plans.

In other regions of Belgium: no hunting of these birds.

6.2. Ecotourism

56. Is wetland- and waterbird-related ecotourism integrated into your country's national tourism development strategies or other relevant national strategies? (AEWA Action Plan, paragraph 4.2.1; AEWA Strategic Plan 2019-2027, Action 2.5(c))

Yes

Please describe and provide details

>>> In general ecotourism and biodiversity is gaining interest in national tourism strategies. Only for a few sites, waterbirds are the USP.

57. Are there existing ecotourism initiatives in your country specifically based on migratory waterbirds and their habitats? (AEWA Strategic Plan 2019-2027, Target 2.5)

Yes

Please describe how many initiatives are in place and provide details for each of them

>>> Visitors centers around larger wetlands focusing on wetlands and migrating waterbirds as USP: Zwin, Blankaart, Uitkerkse Polders.

Please rank the degree to which these initiatives are designed to deliver both conservation and community benefits:

Low

Please provide details and explain the reasons

>>> Initiatives come mostly from the nature reserve management; the rural community surrounding it is often not very involved in the design of the ecotourism initiatives and sometimes do not support (publicly) the nature conservation initiatives as it sometimes conflicts with agriculture. On the other hand, initiatives come out independently from the local community without involving the nature reserve management.

Please rank the degree to which these dual benefits are being delivered in practice:

Medium

Please provide details and the reasons for successful delivery and barriers to fuller delivery
>>> Ecotourism has a seasonal component, especially when based on seasonal presence of birds. For investors a year-round approach is generally more economic.

6.3. Other human activities

58. Have restrictions on use of lead fishing weights been introduced in your country? (AEWA Action Plan, paragraph 4.3.12). When answering this question please also consider question 78 in chapter 7 - Research and monitoring.

No

If appropriate, please provide further details.

>>> Although no official restrictions have been introduced, the Advising Interparliamentary Council of the Benelux has requested the governments to promote the use of ecological and degradable alternatives in sport fishing practice and to sensitize all actors involved in sport fishing for the problems and harmful consequences of lead weights.

You have attached the following documents to this answer.

[Benelux 10 juli 2014 alternatieven lood.pdf](#)

59. Does your country have legislation in place, which provides for Strategic Environmental Assessment/Environmental Impact Assessment (SEA/EIA) of activities potentially negatively affecting natural habitats or wildlife? (AEWA Action Plan, paragraph 4.3.1; AEWA Strategic Plan 2019-2027, Target 3.5)

Yes and being implemented

Does this legislation apply to the entire country or only to particular states/provinces thereof?

Entire country

Please provide details

>>> Each region has its own legislation, based on European Directives.

Do the SEA/EIA processes consider waterbirds and habitats on which they depend?

Yes

Please provide details

>>> European directive 2001/42/CE of 27 June 2001 ensures that plans and programmes likely to have significant effects on the environment are made subject to an environmental assessment, prior to their approval or authorisation. Consultation with the public is a key feature of environmental assessment procedures.

FLANDERS: Decree concerning general provisions relating to environmental policy Decree of 5 April 1995 concerning general provisions relating to environmental policy and the Government of Flanders Decree of 10/12/2004 provide the procedure and a list of activities for which an Environmental Impact Report has to be written.

According to art. 36ter of the Decree for Nature Conservation, for every activity, plan or program that needs to be licenced and that might have a negative impact on a SPA, there has to be made an appropriate assessment.

Federal level: Belgian marine territory: royal Decrees (in pursuance of the MMM law of 20/01/1999): the RD of 09/09/2003 establishing the rules related to the environmental impact assessment and the royal decree of the 07/09/2003 establishing the procedures for granting permits and authorisations for some activities in the marine spaces.

WALLONIA: Environmental assessments of plans and programs are under the Walloon environmental code. This directive has been transposed in the BCR in the order of 18 March 2004.

Brussels Region: Ordonnance du 1er mars 2012 relative à la conservation de la nature, Titre II, Chapitre 5 'Evaluation appropriée des incidences des plans et projets sur les sites protégés et critères de décision', which covers the appropriate impact assessment of plans and projects on Natura 2000 sites and natural and forest reserves + art. 85 appropriate impact assessment on derogations of article 47 §2 and of article 48.'

Do the SEA/EIA processes include public participation?

Yes

Please provide details

>>> The European Union has established a mix of mandatory and discretionary procedures to assess environmental impacts. European Union Directive on Environmental Impact Assessments (known as the EIA Directive) has been codified in Directive 2011/92/EU of 13 December 2011. Under the EU directive, an EIA must provide certain information to comply. This Directive has been transposed in Regional policy, and is

applied through the environmental and the urbanistic permit procedures.

Assessment of the plans and projects in relation to NATURA 2000 sites is provision of the European Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC), in particular its article 6(3) and 6(4). The aim of these articles is to reveal negative impacts of plans and projects to coherence of NATURA 2000 network through appropriate assessment (AA) of their possible effects on integrity of the NATURA 2000 sites and in particular in regards to their effect on species and habitats that are sites target features. If impacts are detected such plans and projects have to be either avoided or amended, or if imperative reasons of overriding public interest are proved compensatory measures in favour of NATURA 2000 have to be taken to ensure overall coherence of the NATURA 2000 network.

FLANDERS, WALLONIA: EIA are required under the Environmental code or regional decree (environment and urban permits required).

BRUSSELS: Transposed in the order of 1st March 2012, this principle of the directive has been extended in the Brussels Capital Region to the nature and forest reserves.

FLANDERS: The procedure for the Environmental Impact Report includes public consultation. The request for a licence that might have an influence on a SPA is published for public consultation together with the appropriate assessment.

FEDERAL:

Belgian marine territory: royal Decrees of 09/09/2003 establishing the rules related to the environmental impact assessment and of the 07/09/2003 establishing the procedures for granting permits and authorizations for some activities in the marine spaces clearly specify in which cases a public consultation has to be organized.

60. Are there any other legal and/or administrative measures in your country to avoid, mitigate and compensate for adverse impacts of development activities on the sites of national and international importance for migratory birds? (AEWA Strategic Plan 2019-2027, Target 3.5)

No

Please explain the reasons

>>> The measures in place cover the needs.

61. In the last three years, has your country used SEA/EIA for all relevant projects, including energy sector projects such as renewable energy developments and power lines installation, to assess the impact of proposed projects on migratory waterbird species listed on Table 1 and/or habitats/sites on which they depend? (AEWA Action Plan, paragraph 4.3.1, Resolution 5.11 and Resolution 5.16; AEWA Strategic Plan 2019-2027, Action 3.5(b))

Yes, all proposed projects

Please provide information on the outstanding cases

>>> FLANDERS: Projects from the list in the Government of Flanders Decree of 10/12/2004 were subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment following the procedure described in the Decree of 5 April 1995 concerning general provisions relating to environmental policy. This lists includes power lines installation and the installation of hydropower facilities and the procedure requires to include the assessment of possible effects on biodiversity, fauna and flora. Plans or programmes that relate to energy, amongst others, and that form the framework for permits for projects from the above mentioned list and plans or programmes for which it could not be demonstrated that it will not have significant environmental impacts were subject to a Strategic Environmental Assessment.

An appropriate assessment has been made for every activity, plan or program that needed to be licenced and that could have had a negative impact on a special protection area, according to art. 36ter of the Decree for Nature Conservation.

WALLONIA: The environmental code lists the projects subject to EIA, part V, chapitre II « Système d'évaluation des incidences des plans et programmes sur l'environnement » and chapitre III « Système d'évaluation des incidences de projets sur l'environnement ».

In Wallonia the decision of the wallon government of 04/07/2002 concerns the environmental impact assesment. This decision gives a list of acts and projects which require an environmental impact assessment and fixes the minimal information that these studies must include. This list includes power lines installation and the installation of hydropower facilities and the procedure requires to include the assesment of possible effects on biodiversity, fauna and flora.

An appropriate assessment has to be made for every plan or program that needs a licence and that could have had a negative impact on a special protection area (Natura 2000 site), according to art. 28, §1er of the Nature Conservation Law of 12/07/1973.

All the birds species except the game species are protected in Wallonia. The Nature Conservation Law forbids to deteriorate or to destroy the habitats of the protected species and to deliberately capture, disturb or kill individuals. It is possible to get a derogation for allowing one or several of these actions. This derogation can be delivered only if it is established that the derogation won't have a detrimental impact on the species conservation status. Therefore an environmental impact assesment of the project on the potentially impacted species needs to be realised.

Where an SEA/EIA has identified a likelihood of significant negative impacts on migratory waterbirds, have steps been taken to avoid these impacts, including avoidance of protected areas and other sites of importance for migratory waterbirds?

Yes

Please describe the measures put in place

>>> Where planned powerlines are crossing an area with importance for waterbirds, the area was avoided or the powerline was put underground.

Field for additional information (optional)

>>> Under EU legislation it is mandatory to avoid significant negative impact.

62. Do you maintain a record of the cases of adverse impacts of development activities and other pressures on sites of national and international importance for migratory waterbirds in your country? (AEWA Strategic Plan 2019-2027, Action 3.5(a)?)

No

Please explain the reasons.

>>> Adverse impacts or adverse impacts of development activities are dealt with on an ad hoc basis, they are not generally centralised.

Please estimate the number of sites of national and international importance for migratory waterbirds in your country that are subject to adverse impact of development activities or other pressures. Please list those sites with their names, central geographic coordinates and observed impacts.

>>> Through EIA adverse impacts of development activities are assessed and dealt with.

Please estimate the number of sites of national and international importance for migratory waterbirds in your country where no effective avoidance, mitigation or compensation has been implemented for adverse impact of development activities or other pressures. Please list those sites with their names, central geographic coordinates and observed impacts.

>>> Effective avoidance, mitigation or compensation is implemented everywhere if it is part of the EIA in order to get a permit.

63. Has your country used the AEWA Conservation Guidelines on how to avoid, minimize or mitigate impact of infrastructural developments and related disturbance affecting waterbirds?

Notice: Before clicking on the above hyperlink, please keep pressing the **Ctrl** button on your keyboard to open the link in a new tab.

No

Please explain the reasons. What other guidance has been used instead?

>>> FLANDERS: The Flemish Government has published own methodological guidance documents, e.g. on EIA for thermic power plants (2009) and infrastructure (above ground power lines, 2007; underground tubes, 2007; railways, 2007, roads, 2007).

64. Please report on the implementation of Resolution 5.11 on Power Lines and Migratory Waterbirds.

64.1. Are relevant stakeholders, including government agencies, scientific bodies, nongovernmental organisations and the energy sector, being regularly consulted in order to monitor jointly the impacts of power lines on waterbirds and to agree on a common policy of action?

Yes

Please provide details

>>> Elia, the manager of the high-voltage electricity transmission system in Belgium, has required the nature ngos Aves, Natuurpunt and Vogelbescherming Vlaanderen as well as the Flemish Research Institute for Nature and Forest (INBO) to produce a report "Reducing bird mortality caused by high- and very-high-voltage power lines in Belgium" and map the 'black lines' on the power line network. The first report with national sensitivity map was published in 2012. All available data from bird monitoring projects were put together to build this map. Bird species were classified according to their specific collision risk. According to the local abundance of each species, a "Bird Collision Risk" score has been calculated for each line section. Most of the dangerous power lines are located in areas where major concentrations of waterbirds occur. Elia will use the sensitivity map to adjust the network by placing markers or "diverters" on the lines with high risk in order to try to reduce the number of collision fatalities drastically. For the power lines with the highest risk on the sensitivity map, mitigation measures are progressively applied. The results of the gradual applied mitigation measures is

also monitored and evaluated. The project is regularly evaluated and updated.

64.2. Has a baseline of waterbird distribution, population sizes, migrations and movements (including those between breeding, resting and feeding areas) been established as early as possible in the planning of any power line project, over a period of at least five years, and with particular emphasis on those species known to be vulnerable to electrocution or collision?

Yes

Please provide details

>>> FLANDERS: Methodology is described in the guidelines for EIA for above ground power lines (Richtlijnenboek Bovengrondse Hoogspanningsleidingen; Dienst MER; oktober 2007; 62pag.). Basis is the setting up of a population-ecological modelling and population structure for the baseline situation which then should be compared with the situation after the establishment of the power line.

In Flanders a bird-collision risk atlas has been made where waterbird concentrations and seasonal/dayle movements are visualised. This atlas can be consulted any time on <https://geo.inbo.be/windturbines/> in order that early on in every project one can evaluate the possible impact/risks at a given site.

WALLONIA: SEA and EIA are applicable for power lines and is supposed to take this information into account.

64.3 If such studies, as described in the question above, have identified any risks, has every effort been made to ensure these are avoided?

Yes

Please provide details.

>>> In the single relevant case, the powerline went underground on the passing through the sensitive area.

64.4. Have the location, route and direction of new power lines been designated on the basis of national zoning maps?

Yes

Please provide details

>>> Location of power lines must be integrated in national zoning maps and the system of land use planning. This process must always be accompanied by a SEA at the level of the spatial planning and EIA for the concrete project.

64.5. Has, wherever possible, the construction of power lines along major migration flyways and in habitats of conservation importance* been avoided, where such construction is likely to have significant effects on waterbirds?

* such as Special Protection Areas under the EU Birds Directive, Important Bird Areas, protected areas, Ramsar sites, the West/Central Asian Site Network for Siberian Crane and other waterbirds and other critical sites as identified by the Critical Site Network (CSN) Tool for the African-Eurasian region.

Not applicable

Please explain the reasons.

>>> The situation of new construction of powerlines has not occurred in the reporting period.

64.6. Are bird-safe designs in the construction of new power infrastructure, including measures designed to reduce electrocution and collisions being used in your country?

Yes

Please provide details

>>> Balls, curls and firefly's on the power lines are and will be progressively being installed on the most sensitive stretches of high-voltage power lines.

64.7. Have those sections of existing power lines that are causing relatively high levels of waterbird injury and/or mortality due to electrocution and/or collision been identified?

Yes

Please provide details

>>> This is an ongoing process. Based on the monitoring of bird mortality due to high- and very-high-voltage power lines in Belgium, a sensitivity map was prepared, indicating those sections that are causing relatively high levels of (water)bird injury and/or mortality due to electrocution and/or collision. The report with national sensitivity map was published in 2012 (see web link). Elia, the manager of the high-voltage electricity transmission system in Belgium, will use the sensitivity map to adjust the network by placing markers or "diverters" on the most dangerous lines in order to try to reduce the number of collision fatalities drastically.

For the power lines with the highest risk on the sensitivity map, in 2014 a field study was performed to determine the actual risk, so that Elia can prioritize mitigation measures further. The results of the gradual applied mitigation measures are also monitored and evaluated on a project level.

64.8. Where sections of existing power lines have been identified to cause relatively high levels of waterbird injury and/or mortality due to electrocution and/or collision, have they been modified as a matter of priority?

Partially

Please provide details.

>>> The modification process is ongoing. First the trajectories with the highest risks are modified, others follow step by step.

64.9. Is there in your country regular monitoring and evaluation of the impact of power lines on waterbird populations at the national scale?

Partial

Please provide details.

>>> Through the citizen-science portal www.waarnemingen.be / www.observations.be, it is possible to report power line victims. Where a lot of victims are reported, a more detailed assessment of the risk can be performed.

64.10. Is there in your country regular monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of mitigation measures put in place to minimise the impact of power lines on waterbird populations?

Partial

Please provide details.

>>> Before and after modification of some powerlines, the impact of the modification is assessed.

64.11. Have the measures contained in Resolution 5.11. been included in your country's National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans and relevant legislation?

No

Please explain the reasons. What are the constraints preventing implementation of this activity?

>>> Strategic Environmental Assessment for power lines is already covered by legislation in force. No budget could be allocated for monitoring specifically related to power lines. Other aspects of Resolution 5.11 are covered by the Elia project (see 37.5).

65. Has your country used the AEWA Conservation Guidelines on how to avoid or mitigate impact of electricity power grids on migratory birds in the African-Eurasian region?

Notice: Before clicking on the above hyperlink, please keep pressing the **Ctrl button** on your keyboard to open the link in a new tab.

No

Please explain the reasons. What other guidance has been used instead?

>>> FLANDERS: The Flemish Government has published own methodological guidance documents on EIA for above ground power lines, 2007 and underground tubes, 2007.

66. Please report on the implementation of Resolution 5.16 on Renewable Energy and Migratory Waterbirds.

66.1. Has a national sensitivity and zoning mapping to avoid overlap of renewable energy developments with areas of importance for migratory waterbirds been developed in your country?

Yes

Please provide details

>>> FLANDERS: The Research Institute for Nature and Forest (INBO) has produced an update report of the bird sensitivity map in 2015. The instrument includes information and recommendations concerning the possible effects of planned wind turbines on birds and bats in Flanders. The instrument makes clear what essential steps have to be undertaken for new projects and plans of wind farms, and where the necessary information can be found to proceed these steps. The sensitivity map has several component maps, and can be consulted in a geographical web application on the INBO website.

WALLONIA: the impacts of Wind mills and Wind mill farms are included in EIA;

BELGIAN PART OF THE NORTH SEA: impacts of windmills and windmill farms are included in the EIA

66.2. Have any international environmental guidelines, recommendations and criteria been followed in your country for impact assessment of renewable energy developments and the utilization of renewable energy sources?

Yes

Please describe which guidelines, recommendations and criteria have been followed.

>>> FLANDERS: The risk atlas that was already made for Birds (to evaluate windfarm risks), has been enlarged in order to also cover bat collision risks. For this the Eurobats-guidelines provided a major input.

66.3. Is post-construction monitoring being undertaken of the renewable energy installations and associated infrastructure in your country?

Yes

Has adverse effect on migratory waterbirds and their habitats been identified?

No

66.4. Where damage cannot be avoided or mitigated, has compensation for damages to biodiversity been provided?

Yes

Please provide details

>>> For some planned wind farms, compensation of meadow and farmland bird habitat was introduced, because of an estimated local-scale disturbance effect from the turbines.

Operate wind farms in ways that minimise bird mortality, for example by introducing shortterm shutdowns during peak migration and minimising lighting in wind farms.

Not applicable

Please explain the reasons

>>> Windfarms are placed outside migration corridors, so that there is no need for operational shutdowns.

Dismantling of wind turbines in existing installations, should waterbird mortality have an effect on the population status of a species and other mitigation measures have proved insufficient.

Not applicable

Please explain the reasons

>>> No situations have been detected that would require dismantling or greater operational changes. Throughout the building permit process, places with big risks are avoided.

Focusing research efforts on alleviating the negative effects on waterbirds from wind farms, such as the mapping of the main migration corridors and migration crossings for waterbirds also allowing the optimising of wind farm layouts.

Yes

Please provide details

>>> FLANDERS: The areas with important waterbird concentrations, migration corridors and crossings have been mapped and are available as a risk atlas via a web application (<https://geo.inbo.be/windturbines/>)

66.6. Have any specific measures been put in place to assess, identify and reduce potential negative impacts of biofuel production on migratory waterbirds and their habitats?

No

Please explain the reasons. What are the constraints preventing implementation of this activity?

>>> Priority is given to a general approach on the impact of biofuel production on biodiversity. This has been included in the National Biodiversity Strategy: 'Belgium will defend a position aiming at the compulsory inclusion of new environmental criteria within the framework of the revision of Renewable Energy Directive 2009/28/EC. Incentives should be restricted to the promotion of biofuels produced from feedstock that do not create an additional demand for land and do not compete with other uses like food, materials, biodiversity.'

66.7. Have the measures contained in Resolution 5.11. been included in your country's National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans and relevant legislation?

Yes

Please provide details

>>> Biodiversity 2020 - Update of Belgium's National Strategy: 4c.8 Ensure that the production of plants for renewable energy does not negatively impact on biodiversity

67. Has your country used the following AEWA Conservation Guidelines - Renewable Energy Technologies and Migratory Species: Guidelines for Sustainable Deployment (Resolution 6.11)?

Notice: Before clicking on the above hyperlink, please keep pressing the **Ctrl button** on your keyboard to open the link in a new tab.

No

Please explain the reasons. What other guidance has been used instead?

>>> EU guidances on renewable energy and nature.

68. Is by-catch of waterbirds in fishing gear taking place in your country? (Resolution 3.8) (Please respond to this question only with respect to species, which are NOT considered seabirds. Seabird by-catch is dealt with in section 4.6 Seabirds)

Not applicable

Please explain

>>> In freshwater only the fishing line is authorized which has a low risk of by-catch as it is always supervised.

Pressures and Responses

7. Research and Monitoring

71. Does your country have in place waterbird monitoring schemes for the AEWA species? (AEWA Strategic Plan 2019-2027, Actions 1.4(a) and 1.4(b))

Yes

Covering the breeding period

Guidance: Including pre- and post-breeding sites of concentration, such as moulting sites close to breeding areas

Fully [Guidance: Coverage is full when all waterbird species are covered by monitoring schemes that yield statistically robust estimates of breeding population size and trend at least once in every triennium.]

Please provide details.

>>> FLANDERS: rare breeding birds and colony-breeders are followed up on a yearly basis through the project Bijzondere Broedvogels. More numerous and frequent breeders are monitored in the project Algemene Broedvogels through statistically based plots scattered over the region which are followed up every 3 years.

Is information on drivers of population trends also being collected?

Yes

Please provide details

>>> Partially: monitoring of different trophic levels for the European Water Directive. Land use, crops, water levels, meteorological parameters ...

Covering the passage period

Fully [Guidance: Coverage is full when all internationally and nationally important sites for passage birds are comprehensively covered at least monthly in the passage period.]

Please provide details.

>>> FLANDERS: all sites with important concentrations of waterbirds are monitored through mid-monthly waterbird counts (15 october - 15 march). Passing birds outside this period are not fully covered, but counts are then performed at the most important stop-over sites.
BELGIAN PART OF THE NORTH SEA: monitoring of seabirds is included in the monitoring program established under the EU-Marine Strategy (MSFD)

Is information on drivers of population trends also being collected?

Yes

Please provide details

>>> Partially - Land use, crops, water levels, meteorological parameters ...

Covering the non-breeding/wintering period

Fully [Guidance: Coverage is full when all internationally and nationally important non-breeding/wintering sites are covered at least by one comprehensive annual count.]

Please provide details.

>>> FLANDERS: all sites with important concentrations of waterbirds are monitored through mid-monthly waterbird counts (15 october - 15 march).
BELGIAN PART OF THE NORTH SEA: monitoring of seabirds is included in the monitoring program established under the EU-Marine Strategy (MSFD)

Is information on drivers of population trends also being collected?

Yes

Please provide details

>>> Land use, crops, water levels, meteorological parameters ...

72. Is data collected through the International Waterbird Census or other relevant monitoring schemes being actively used in your country to inform national-level implementation of AEWA? (AEWA Strategic Plan 2019-2027, Action 1.5(a))

Yes

Please provide details

>>> In particular for the European Goose Management Platform activities the monitoring schemes are directly used.

73. Has your country supported, technically or financially, other Parties or Range States in designing appropriate monitoring schemes and developing their capacity to collect reliable waterbird population data? (Resolution 5.2)

No

Please explain the reasons

>>> No opportunity arose to set up such kind of support. Through the European Goose Management Platform however Flanders contributed financially to the datacenter to collect and process distribution data.

74. **Has your country used the AEWA Conservation Guidelines on waterbird monitoring?**

Notice: Before clicking on the above hyperlink, please keep pressing the **Ctrl button** on your keyboard to open the link in a new tab.

No

Please explain the reasons. What guidance has been used instead?

>>> Monitoring programs were existing at the time the guidelines were established. It is possible to use the Guidelines in future monitoring protocols.

FLANDERS: Waterbird monitoring has been organised since 1967 in the framework of the 'International Waterbird Census', coordinated by Wetlands International, to which monitoring schemes are optimised.

BELGIUM (federal): Since 1992 regular counts of seabirds are done from ships following standardized methods on an ad hoc basis, for research projects and in the framework of WinMon, a monitoring program to assess the impact of windmills that started in 2005.

Since 1997 monitoring of nesting gulls and terns is organized in the framework of ecological quality objectives of OSPAR. The monitoring of seabirds is included in the monitoring program established under the EU-Marine Strategy (MSFD) since 2014.

WALLONIA: Trends in common birds numbers in Wallonia: through the environment dashboard in Wallonia, 75 species of birds are monitored. Though only representing 43% of the breeding species found in Wallonia, they account for 96% of the total bird population.

75. Has your government provided over the past triennium funds and/or logistical support for the International Waterbird Census and/or other waterbird monitoring scheme at international or national level? (Resolution 6.3)

Yes

Nationally

Yes

Please provide details

>>> FLANDERS: the Institute of Nature and Forest research is coordinating a network of professionals and skilled volunteers in order to have a good coverage of breeding rare waterbirds and wintering waterbirds.

Internationally

No

Please explain the reasons

>>> No budget available.

76. Has your country donated funds to the African-Eurasian Waterbird Fund in the past triennium (Resolution 6.3, Resolution 7.7)?

Notice: Before clicking on the above hyperlink, please keep pressing the Ctrl button on your keyboard to open the link in a new tab.

No

Please explain the reason

>>> No budget available.

78. Has the impact of lead fishing weights on waterbirds been investigated in your country? (AEWA Action Plan, paragraph 4.3.12). When answering this question please also consider question 58 in chapter 6 – Management of human activities.

No

Are there plans to investigate the impact of lead fishing weights on waterbirds in your country?

No

Please provide reason(s)

>>> no priority

Pressures and Responses

8. Education and Information

8.1. Communication, Education and Public Awareness

79. Has your country developed and implemented programmes for raising awareness and understanding on waterbird conservation and about AEWA specifically? (Strategic Plan 2009-2017, Objective 4, Target 4.3 and AEWA Action Plan, paragraphs 6.1-6.4, Resolution 3.10, Resolution 5.5; Resolution 6.10)

Guidance: Such programmes should consist of a series of established, long-term communication activities, which are guided by clearly defined goals, target audiences and communication channels. A programme does not constitute a single, one-off communication activity, product or event. In other words, an established national programme to raise awareness and understanding on waterbird conservation and about AEWA would ideally be a number of targeted communication activities which are guided by a communication plan and are backed by sufficient human and financial resources.

Yes, being implemented

Please describe the awareness programmes which have been developed. Please upload any relevant sample materials which have been developed and add contact details of a contact person for each programme.

>>> FLANDERS: The Agency for Nature and Forests participates in several nature visitor centers nearby important wetlands as the Zwin and the Yzer floodplains.

Nature conservation NGO's also pay attention to raising public awareness about nature conservation in general, including waterbirds and wetland ecosystems. Naturalists' associations can receive supplementary financial support on top of subsidies for proper management of nature reserves for organizing public awareness, education and the running of visitor's centres linked to nature reserves.

WALLONIA: The Nature and Forest Department organises CEPA activities (Philippe.vanasbroek@spw.wallonie.be);

- Naturalists' associations are financed in view to organize public awareness and education activities. Nature protection organizations such as the WWF, the 'Ligue Royale pour la Protection des Oiseaux' (LRBPO, protection.oiseaux@birdprotection.be), Natagora (info@natagora.be), "Ardenne et Gaume" (secretariat@ardenne-et-gaume.be), 'Les Cercles des Naturalistes de Belgique', 'Jeunes et Nature' and 'Forêt Wallonne' all have educational activities oriented towards nature conservation.

- Public education and awareness is one of the missions of Natural parks (info@fpnw.be)

BRUSSELS REGION: Naturalists' associations are financed in view to organize public awareness and education activities. Nature protection organizations such as the 'Ligue Royale pour la Protection des Oiseaux' (LRBPO, director Corentin Rousseau, corentin.rousseau@birdprotection.be), Natagora/Aves (director Philippe Funcken, philippe.funcken@natagora.be), Natuurpunt (director Chris Steenwegen, chris.steenwegen@natuurpunt.be), and many others all have educational activities oriented towards nature conservation. Public education and awareness is one of the missions of Brussels Environment, the regional administration for energy and environment.

• Federal level: Belgian marine territory:

- Raising public awareness concerning the different 'values' of the sea and the marine conservation needs is one of the tasks of the Federal Government.

- In 2012 a brochure has been published on the natural values of the sea to raise public awareness.

Contact: Federal Public Service (FPS) Health, Food Chain Safety and Environment, marien.milieu.marin@environment.belgium.be.

Does the programme specifically focus on AEWA and the provisions of its Action Plan?

No

80. Has a National AEWA Focal Point for Communication, Education and Public Awareness (CEPA) been designated by your country? (Resolution 5.5; Resolution 6.10)

No

Please explain the reasons

>>> CEPA is followed up by the National Focal Point, who informs the Regional Focal Points.

81. Have measures been taken by your country to implement the provisions related to "Education and Information" in the AEWA Action Plan over the last triennium? (AEWA Action Plan, Paragraphs 6.1-6.4)

Yes

Please indicate which measures have been taken:

a. National training programmes have been arranged for personnel responsible for implementing AEWA

No

Please explain the reasons

>>> No budget could be allocated for specific training programmes in the framework of AEWA. People involved in the awareness programmes are either trained professionals or volunteers that can follow various training programmes in their NGOs or through knowledge sharing institutions such as Natuurinvest (affiliate of the Flemish Agency for Nature and Forests). Those training programmes are usually situated in a broader biodiversity framework (e.g. the broader EU Natura2000 policy) that embrace the AEWA goals (in particular the EU Birds Directive).

b. Training programmes and materials have been developed in cooperation with other Parties and/or the Agreement Secretariat

No

Please explain the reasons

>>> Training programmes and materials related to waterbirds usually are part of a broader nature training, developed by nature NGOs or government administrations. For programmes and materials in Dutch, the language is an extra barrier for co-developing such materials.

c. AEWA related information and training resources have been exchanged with other Parties and/or shared with the Agreement Secretariat

No

Please explain the reasons

>>> No dedicated AEWA-specific related information and training resources were produced. Information and training resources related to waterbirds usually are part of broader nature information and training resources, developed by nature NGOs or government administrations. For information and resources in Dutch, the language is an extra barrier for exchanging these.

d. Specific public awareness campaigns for the conservation of populations listed in Table 1 have been conducted

Yes

How can the effectiveness of the measures be rated?

Other

>>> Not evaluated

Please provide details

>>> FLANDERS: In the framework of Natura2000 (Birds directive), public awareness for the conservation of populations of relevant waterbird species has been addressed by the website www.natura2000.vlaanderen.be. On the website www.ecopedia.be detailed ecological information of, amongst others, relevant waterbirds is available.

FLANDERS: For species where a species protection programma was established, specific communication was done. E.g. bittern, corncrake, ...

82. Have World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD) activities been carried out in your country during this reporting cycle? (Resolution 5.5)

Yes

Please describe the activity/activities briefly and upload any sample materials, links or photos available related to the activity/event.

>>> FLANDERS: At the Zwin, an intertidal wetland (with visitors centre) at the coast where large numbers of waterbirds stop over, World Migratory Bird Day is getting a steady place in the yearly activities programme. Overall, the timing of the event does not fit that well the bird-phenology in Belgium as most birds are by mid-may in the middle of the breeding season. The peak of bird migration passes through in march and april and overall the most visible experience to the greater public, where more activities focus upon, is linked to the large numbers of hibernating waterbirds in december-january.

83. Has your country provided funding and/or other support, as appropriate (e.g. expertise, network, skills and resources) towards the implementation of the AEWA Communication Strategy and/or towards priority CEPA activities in the AEWA Strategic Plan 2019-2027? Please consider both national and international funding and different types of support provided. (Resolution 6.10)

No

Please explain the reasons

>>> FLANDERS: Priority of communication lies in the national implementation of the EU Birds- and Habitats Directives. To some extent the goals of the Birds Directive and the AEWA go along off course.

Pressures and Responses

9. Implementation

84. Have you undertaken a national assessment of the resources needed for the delivery of the AEWA Strategic Plan 2019-2027? (AEWA Strategic Plan 2019-2027, Action 5.6.(b))

No

Please explain the reasons

>>> FLANDERS: for the national implementation focus lies on the implementation of the EU Birds (and Habitats) Directive, where in parallel a number of the AEWA species and their habitats are taken into account. The assessment of resources for these goals is implemented in the Flemish Natura2000 Programme (5 year programme - 2021-2025).

85. Has your country approached non-contracting party range states to encourage them to accede to the Agreement? (Resolution 3.10; AEWA Strategic Plan 2019-2027, Target 5.2)

Report only on activities over the past triennium

No

Please explain the reasons

>>> No opportunity arose to approach non-contracting parties on this issue.

86. Does your country have in place a national coordination mechanism for implementation of AEWA, possibly linking to national coordination mechanisms for other biodiversity Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs)? (Strategic Plan 2019-2027, Action 5.3(b))

Guidance: Such mechanism can be a dedicated cross-institutional working group, involving representatives of the civil society and other relevant stakeholders, aimed at planning, coordinating and reporting the implementation of the Agreement in the country. Alternatively, the implementation of AEWA at national level can be coordinated as an extension of larger national coordination mechanisms for other MEAs, such as National Ramsar Committees or CBD NBSAPs coordination.

Yes, it is operational on a regular basis

Please provide details

>>> The Coordination Committee for International Environmental Policy (CCIEP) Working group on Nature ensures that Belgium brings well-argued opinions on environmental policy to the international scene. These coordinated standpoints require a preceding debate both at technical and political level. Representatives from all regions and the federal government for all international or european nature related agreements (CMS (and its daughter agreements), CITES, Ramsar, CBD, ...) and other stakeholders are represented.
https://www.health.belgium.be/sites/default/files/uploads/fields/fpshealth_theme_file/19102773/Brochure_CCIEP_A%20unique%20voice%20on%20the%20international%20environment%20scene_EN.pdf

Are priority capacity gaps addressed by the coordination mechanism?

Yes

Please provide details

>>> .

Please rank the effectiveness of the national coordination mechanism for AEWA implementation:

Medium

Please provide details and the reasons for the lower effectiveness

>>> As the main biodiversity (c.q. waterbird) conservation framework are the EU Birds and Habitats Directives, who cover to a large extent the goals of AEWA, this framework is more directive in the national coordination. However, AEWA implementation is to a large extent covered with this framework.

87. Have you undertaken a national assessment of the capacity needs for AEWA implementation? (AEWA Strategic Plan 2019-2027, Action 5.3.(e))

No

Please explain the reasons

>>> The focus on implementation of EU Birds Directive also cover the most important AEWA goals on the national level. The capacity needs for implementation of the Birds Directive are assessed as it is considered as a keystone of the work of the competent administrations.

88. Has your country concluded, or considered concluding, twinning schemes between sites with other

countries, the sites of which share common migratory waterbirds or conservation issues? (Resolution 5.20)

Yes

Please provide details on each twinning arrangement

>>> FLANDERS: Twinning results from transboundary sites with the Netherlands at 1) the Zwin Tidal Area: nature restoration, wetland expansion and recreation/ecotourism. 2) The Hedwige-Prosper project across the Dutch/Belgian border in the Scheldt Estuary: restoring and expanding waterbird intertidal habitat - now under the umbrella of the Grenspark Groot-Saeftinghe. 3) The Grensmaas where the river 'Maas' forms the border between BE and NL: river floodplain restoration.

Collaboration with the Netherlands and Germany in the tri-country Park: broad collaboration including landscape management.

89. Are those officers in your country's government responsible for AEWA implementation co-ordinated and engaged with national processes contributing towards the Aichi Targets and the assessment of achieving these targets? (AEWA Strategic Plan 2019-2027, Action 5.4(a))

Yes

Please provide details

>>> The Coordination Committee for International Environmental Issues / Nature takes this into account.

90. Are those officers in your country's government responsible for AEWA implementation co-ordinated and engaged with national processes contributing towards the relevant Sustainable Development Goals and the assessment of achieving these goals? (AEWA Strategic Plan 2019-2027, Action 5.4(a))

Yes

Please provide details

>>> The Coordination Committee for International Environmental Issues / Nature takes this into account.

91. Are those officers in your country's government responsible for AEWA implementation co-ordinated and engaged with national processes to implementation and assess the delivery of the Strategic Plan for Migratory Species 2015-2023? (AEWA Strategic Plan 2019-2027, Action 5.4(a))

Yes

Please provide details

>>> The Coordination Committee for International Environmental Issues / Nature takes this into account.

92. Are the AEWA priorities incorporated into your country's National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plan (NBSAP) and/or other similar strategic plans and policies (Resolution 6.3; AEWA Strategic Plan 2019-2027, Target 5.5)?

92.1 NBSAP

Yes

Please provide details

>>> The AEWA priorities are incorporated into the National Biodiversity Strategy albeit not always explicitly mentioned as such - some general principles are incorporated in different agreements.

Field for additional information (optional)

>>> In 2006, the Federal Committee for Sustainable Development approved the first Belgian National Biodiversity Strategy for a period of ten years (NBS 2006-16). In 2013, the Inter-ministerial Conference for the Environment, composed of the competent ministers of the federal government and the three regions, approved the updating and extension of the NBS until 2020. The extension, under the title "Biodiversity 2020, update of Belgian NBS", sought to align with the Aichi targets of the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). The updated plan can be found here:

https://www.health.belgium.be/sites/default/files/uploads/fields/fpshealth_theme_file/19104339/Strat%C3%A9gie%20nationale%20biodiversit%C3%A9%202013_EN.pdf

92.2 Other strategic plans and policies

Yes

Please name the other strategic planning processes

>>> FLANDERS: Indirectly the AEWA-priorities are incorporated through agreements with other administrations and organisations (agriculture, water management, traffic, economy, land management, ...) in the wider frame of the realisation of the Natura2000 goals from the SPA's of the EU Birds Directive. Where applicable these other sectors commit to support the conservation goals throughout their own projects/processes or at

least not to jeopardize them.

Please provide details

>>> .

Sustainable Development Goals

Yes

Please provide details

>>> Taken into account in the National Biodiversity Strategy, "Biodiversity 2020, update of Belgian NBS". Objective 10: ensure a coherent implementation of / and between biodiversity-related commitments and agreements. The updated plan can be found here:
https://www.health.belgium.be/sites/default/files/uploads/fields/fpshealth_theme_file/19104339/Strat%C3%A9gie%20nationale%20biodiversit%C3%A9%202013_EN.pdf

Aichi Targets

Yes

Please provide details

>>> Taken into account in the National Biodiversity Strategy, "Biodiversity 2020, update of Belgian NBS". Objective 10: ensure a coherent implementation of / and between biodiversity-related commitments and agreements. The updated plan can be found here:
https://www.health.belgium.be/sites/default/files/uploads/fields/fpshealth_theme_file/19104339/Strat%C3%A9gie%20nationale%20biodiversit%C3%A9%202013_EN.pdf

Strategic Plan for Migratory Species

Yes

Please provide details

>>> Taken into account in the National Biodiversity Strategy, "Biodiversity 2020, update of Belgian NBS". Objective 10: ensure a coherent implementation of / and between biodiversity-related commitments and agreements. The updated plan can be found here:
https://www.health.belgium.be/sites/default/files/uploads/fields/fpshealth_theme_file/19104339/Strat%C3%A9gie%20nationale%20biodiversit%C3%A9%202013_EN.pdf

94. How would your country suggest promoting further links between the biodiversity MEAs to which your country is a Contracting Party, so as to make your work more efficient and effective?

>>> By the harmonization of the reporting formats, harmonized cooperation between these conventions and agreements, use of harmonized indicators, ... Indicators could show how well which goals of the Agreement are being reached in a rather easy way, would allow a high degree of standardization in the reporting process. Sets of indicators have been developed at EU-level (in the framework of the EU Biodiversity Strategy) and in the framework of the new Strategy for Migratory Species under CMS. Those sets could form a basis for specific indicators for the AEWA Action Plan.

95. Has your country donated funds to the AEWA Small Grants Fund (SGF) over the past triennium? (Resolution 7.1)

No

Please explain the reasons

>>> There was no budget available.

96. Has your country donated other funding or provided in-kind support to activities coordinated by the Secretariat?

Yes

Please provide details, including amount of funds donated

>>> Contribution to the implementation of the European Goose Management Platform (35.000€ per year).

97. Has your country prioritised and allocated a Junior Professional Officer (JPO) to the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat for Technical Committee support or for any other area of work? (Resolution 7.11, Resolution 7.12)

No and has not been prioritised

Please explain the reasons

>>> Due to elections and a slow coalition-building between the political parties it was not possible to allocate a JPO as such JPO could not be allocated by a demissionary federal government. Moreover, there is an internal arrangement that JPO's are allocated to different UN-bodies with a rotation. UNEP wasn't at the turn...

98. Please report on the implementation of Resolution 6.21 on Resource mobilisation for the implementation of AEWA.

98.1 Did your country's government provide in the last triennium financial and/or in-kind resources to support national activities which are intended to achieve the objectives of this Agreement, particularly those in line with the AEWA Strategic Plan including the AEWA Plan of Action for Africa, and in accordance with your national plans, priorities and programmes?

Yes

Please describe the resources provided

>>> FLANDERS: Land owners are encouraged to establish nature reserves, restore and manage habitat in order to meet the nature conservation goals set for the different SPA under the EU Birds Directive. Some of these nature reserves are wetlands and support important sites for waterbird populations.

98.2 Does your country's government have unpaid dues to the AEWA Trust Fund (annual assessed contributions to the Agreement's budget as approved by each session of the Meeting of the Parties)?

No

98.3 Has your country's government provided funding to support developing countries, in particular least developed countries and small island developing States, as well as countries with economies in transition, to meet their obligations under AEWA, and the implementation of the AEWA Plan of Action for Africa 2019-2027? Under this question please report for support provided outside of formal and established intergovernmental cooperation. For the latter, please refer to the next question 98.4.

No

Please explain the reasons

>>> .

98.4 Does your country's government participate in any South-South, North-South or triangular cooperation to enhance financial and technical support for the successful implementation of AEWA activities?

No

Please explain the reasons

>>> .

98.5 Does your country's government use innovative financing mechanisms for implementing the AEWA Strategic Plan such as a (national) Migratory Waterbirds Fund?

Yes

Please describe each mechanism used

>>> FLANDERS: in 2020 an important programme has been launched, called the 'Blue Deal'. The aim is to address problems related to drought, with an important focus, amongst others, on restoring wetlands. Migratory waterbirds are not the main focus of this programme but can only benefit from habitat restoration supported by this programme. Moreover, the aim is to shift the public opinion that these habitats are not worthless wet sites but that they are valuably contributing through ecosystem services to address problems with climate change.

98.6 Does the implementation of AEWA in your country benefit from synergies between biodiversity-related conventions at national level, amongst others, through information sharing on potential funding opportunities and sharing of financial resources such as the Desertification Fund, Green Climate Fund, the Adaptation Fund, and the Global Environmental Facility?

No

Please explain the reasons

>>> .

Pressures and Responses

10. Climate Change

99. Please outline relevant climate change research, assessments and/or adaptation measures that are relevant to migratory waterbirds and which have been undertaken or planned in your country. (Resolution 5.13)

a. Research and studies of climate change impacts on waterbirds

Undertaken

Please provide references or weblinks to any such work so as to facilitate their use as potential case-studies to assist other Contracting Parties

>>> FLANDERS: Main focus in climate research lies on climate change effects on nature management and fire prevention. Projects focus on vegetation or ecosystems as a whole, not specific on direct effects on waterbirds or wetlands but they are part of the broader scope.

b. Assessment of the potential vulnerability to climate change of key habitats used by waterbird species (including those outside protected area networks) (Please note that the question asks about habitats, rather than sites. Question 41 in Section 5, sub-section 5.2 investigates vulnerability of sites to climate change)

Undertaken

Please provide references or weblinks to any such work so as to facilitate their use as potential case-studies to assist other Contracting Parties

>>> FLANDERS: There are 2 projects running with focus on river-ecosystems, which may be relevant: The project FutureFloodplains, carried out by different scientific partners, focuses on the modelling of changing ecosystem services of floodplains (including biodiversity), by considering different mid- and long-term scenarios of socio-ecological changes (including climate change). The research output is meant to help decision making in order to sustainably manage these floodplains. The project started in 2017 and will run uptill 2021.

The Life project Sparc (www.natuurenbos.be/sparc) studies climate change effects along the Scheldt river and focuses on enhanced flood safety by restoring flooding areas that are designed as wetlands with high nature values. The project started in 2017 an will run uptill 2022.

c. Assessment of the potential vulnerability of waterbird species to climate change.

No relevant activities

Please explain the reasons

>>> Assessment of the potential vulnerability of waterbirds to climate change is not a priority in climate change impact assessment. The focus has been given in the first place to an ecosystem approach in general. Through impacts on vegetation, water quantity and quality, the relevance to waterbirds is tackled..

d. Review of relevant national conservation policies relevant to waterbirds and climate change.

Undertaken

Please provide references or weblinks to any such work so as to facilitate their use as potential case-studies to assist other Contracting Parties

>>> The National Biodiversity Strategy has been reviewed. This is relevant to waterbirds and to climate change, although its scope is much broader.

e. National Action Plan for helping waterbirds adapt to climate change (as a separate implementation process or as part of a larger national framework for biodiversity adaptation to climate change. Please note that Question 42 in Section 5, sub-section 5.2 investigates national measures for increasing resilience of the ecological network for waterbirds to climate change).

No relevant activities

Please explain the reasons

>>> Climate Policy planning considers the impact on nature/environment in general, without specific focus on waterbirds but taking their habitats into the scope.

f. Other undertaken or planned relevant activities.

No

100. Has your country used the AEWA Conservation Guidelines on measures needed to help

waterbirds to adapt to climate change?

Notice: Before clicking on the above hyperlink, please keep pressing the Ctrl button on your keyboard to open the link in a new tab.

No

Please explain the reasons. What other guidance has been used instead?

>>> FLANDERS, WALLONIA, BRUSSELS: The Climate Action plan is a conceptual plan. At this stage it is not relevant to use specific guidelines for waterbirds. With the implementation at specific sites the local biodiversity (including waterbirds) will be taken into account.

Pressures and Responses

11. Avian Influenza

101. What issues have proved challenging in responding nationally to the spread of the Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) in the last triennium and what further guidance or information would be useful in this respect?

List challenges

>>> The main challenge is the organization of the surveillance in wild birds in order to submit for a laboratory analysis a sufficient number of carcasses of wild birds. The notification of such suspicions in wildlife is done by:

- professional wild life “workers” (e.g. ornithologists and employees of the regional nature authorities)
 - the general public through the use of a nationwide telephone number, free of charge, via which the public can notify suspicious cases of mortality in wild Birds. Suspicious cases are then further investigated.
- Moreover, the surveillance is expanded to birds that die in wild birds refuge centers.

List required further guidance or information

>>> No further guidance needed.

Field for additional information (optional)

>>> Examples of general communication in Flanders: <https://www.natuurenbos.be/beleid-wetgeving/overlast-schade/ziekten-bij-het-wild-levende-dieren/wat-te-doen-met-verzwakte-dode> and <https://www.favv-afscab.be/professionelen/dierlijkeproductie/dierengezondheid/vogelgriep/>

Optionally you can provide additional information on section 11. Avian Influenza

>>> Different administrations and scientific institutes collaborate to collect and analyse the dead birds found. The general public is informed as to have more 'eyes in the field' for suspicious cases.

12. Confirmation

Confirmation of information verification and approval for submission

Please confirm:

In addition a scanned copy of an official letter from the relevant state institution, approving the report for submission, can be attached.

I declare that the information provided in the Report on the implementation of AEWA for the period 2018-2020 has been verified and the report has been approved for submission by the appropriate state institution in the country.

Date of submission

>>> 08/04/2021