



24th MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE
04 July 2024, Virtual Meeting Format

**THE EASTERN AND SOUTHERN AFRICAN REGIONAL REPORT
TO THE 24th AEWA STANDING COMMITTEE**

Information for the reports was collated by Regional Representatives from the Contracting Parties of their respective region as per see Annex 1 through the National Focal Points or other useful contacts.

1. **Number of Contracting Parties in the region / number of Range States in the region. New accessions since the previous StC meeting**

Eastern and Southern African Range State and Contracting Parties	
Eastern Africa (11 countries - 8 Contracting Parties)	Southern Africa (14 countries - 7 Contracting Parties)
Total of Range State	25
Contracting Parties	15
New accessions	0
Burundi	Angola
Djibouti	Botswana
Eritrea	Comoros
Ethiopia	Eswatini
Kenya	Lesotho
Rwanda	Madagascar
Somalia	Malawi
South Sudan	Mauritius
Sudan	Mozambique
Uganda	Namibia
United Republic of Tanzania	Seychelles
	South Africa
	Zambia
	Zimbabwe

2. **Number of Contracting Parties that provided feedback for the report**

- 5 Parties provided feedback (challenge might be email addresses but confirmed with Evelyn)

Eastern and Southern African Range State and Contracting Parties	
Eastern Africa (2 Parties)	Southern Africa (4 Parties)
• Kenya	• Botswana
• Sudan	• eSwatini
	• South Africa

3. Has the Regional Representative actively promoted accession to AEWA among the Range States in their region? If so, how has accession been promoted by the Regional Representative and what was the feedback received?
- No further accessions in this region since the previous STC meeting which took place in 26-27 June 2023.
4. Which developments regarding the implementation of AEWA have taken place in the region since the last Meeting of the Parties?

Reporting Party	Progress
Botswana	<p>1. Activities to implement AEWA Single Species Action Plans (e.g., on the Slaty Egret and the Lesser Flamingo)</p> <p>The Implementation of the Slaty Egret Action Plan</p> <p>a) Hosting of the Slaty Egret International Working Group.</p> <p>Botswana hosted the Slaty Egret International Working Group at Maun on the 13th – 15th of September 2024. The workshop was attended by participants from Angola, Namibia, Botswana, Zambia, Zimbabwe and South Africa. The purpose of the workshop was to update the Regional Slaty Egret Action Plan and for range States to domesticate the plan. The second objective of the workshop was for participants to appreciate the slaty egret habitat as well as have an experience of observing the endangered bird in the field. In Botswana, slaty egrets are found in the Okavango Delta and the Chobe-Linyanti ecosystem. A one day excursion into the slaty egret stronghold in the Okavango Delta was made so as for participants to observe the Slaty egret and appreciate its habitat.</p> <p>b) The formation of the National Slaty Egret Working Group (NSEWG)</p> <p>It is critical that Botswana produce a map of the breeding areas of slaty egret in the Okavango Delta, the stronghold of the slaty egret in Botswana. In addition, a distribution map of the slaty egret in the Okavango Delta that takes into cognisance the dynamic flooding regime of the delta is essential.</p> <p>i) As a result, the National Slaty Egret Working Group (NSEWG) has been formed to steer the implementation of the Slaty egret Action Plan.</p> <p>c) The Slaty Egret Count Day in the Okavango Delta – 15 September 2024</p> <p>The NSEWG has planned for a Slaty Egret Count Day in the Okavango. The Slaty Egret Count Day will take place on the 15th of September 2024. The NSEWG is currently planning in collaboration with Tour Operators, such that on this day all or most of the Tour Operators (professional tour guides, dug-out canoe polers, boat drivers) will count individual Slaty egret they observe in their areas of operation in the Okavango Delta, record breeding sites and capture their GPS coordinates. At the end a map of the breeding sites will be produced as well as the distribution map of the slaty egret in the Okavango Delta.</p> <p>d) The Piloting of the Slaty Egret Day Count on 15 June 2024</p>

The NSEWG engaged a few Tourism Operator to collect data as a pilot exercise to test what is going to happen on the 15th of September 2024. The pilot exercise took place on the 15th of June 2024. Four critical wetland bird species were counted and the results of the sightings of the individual birds are as follows; Slaty egret 32, Wattled Crane 72, Saddle-billed Stork 34, Pels fishing owl 9. The main objective of the pilot exercise was not to be accurate but to appreciate lessons learnt from the few Tour Operators who participated in the pilot survey so as to shape the future survey.

2. Emergency situations that affected waterbirds/their habitats that have occurred in the past two years and responses to them (e.g. drought or disease outbreaks)

There are no emergency situations that affected waterbirds except climate-change related aspects such as the loud general drying of the delta in some parts which may negatively affect the breeding of some birds.

3. Waterbird species re-establishment initiatives

There have been no Waterbird species re-establishment initiatives

3. Activities on the eradication or other type of action regarding alian species

Botswana does not have an alien waterbird species. The routine control of the alien weed *Salvinia molesta*, however, is ongoing in the Okavango Delta.

4. Activities on habitat (site) inventory, conservation, or restoration and rehabilitation of waterbird habitats

There are annual national waterbird counts in the northern part of Botswana in the Okavango Delta and the Chobe ecosystem. The same surveys take place and in the central and southern part of Botswana in dams and ephemeral rivers. These surveys are facilitated by Birdlife Botswana in collaboration with the Department of Wildlife and National Parks officers. They are done by citizens in January and July every year.

- a) There are bi-annual waterbird counts in all the important waterbird areas across the country by Birdlife Botswana (BLB) in collaboration with the Department of Wildlife and National Parks (DWNP). The Waterbird monitoring program involves DWNP and BLB staff as well as individual volunteers. The bi-annual bird counts are done in January and July. The program targets countrywide monitoring but currently most of the monitoring is done in the Southern-eastern part of the country as well as part of the central district with low participation in the upper central and north regions which are wetlands rich. The DWNP research office in Maun has liaised with BirdLife Botswana and are currently identifying wetlands to be monitored in the north.

5. Progress in phasing out the use of lead shot for hunting in wetlands

- a) A National Wildlife Poisoning Working Group has been established and has produced wildlife poisoning protocols. The Wildlife Poisoning Working Group addresses lead poisoning and advocates for the phasing out of use of lead shot for hunting in wetlands.

- b) A Lead Poisoning Advocacy Workshop was held in Gaborone on the 11-12th of October 2023. In addition, a follow-up National Lead Poisoning Action Plan Validation Workshop was held in Gaborone on the 16th of February 2024.

6. Research and monitoring activities on waterbirds and waterbird habitats

- b) There is an on-going PhD research on Wattled Crane in the Okavango Delta.

Education and information activities on waterbirds, waterbird habitats and AEWA

Communicating the public the migratory bird conservation message on the World Migratory Bird Day Commemoration

The public education and information activities on migratory waterbirds have been done by the Department of Wildlife and National Parks (DWNP) and Birdlife Botswana through the World Migratory Bird Day Commemoration (WMBD). In Botswana, the WMBD was conducted on the **8th of June 2024 in Hukuntsi village** in the Southwestern part of Botswana. The education and information activities on the WMBD were spread through and targeted.

- a) Communicating the WMBD message to Schools and through Schools
- b) A total of six schools were engaged. The schools were made up of four Primary Schools and two Secondary Schools. Twelve participants from each school (made up of ten students and two teachers) attended the WMBD commemoration making a total of 60 students and 12 teachers or 72 participants in total from schools. During the day, students recited poems related to wetland migratory birds and to this year's theme. There was traditional dances too related to migratory birds and the theme.
- c) Communicating the WMBD message to the Public

The aim is to raise public awareness regarding the conservation of migratory wetland birds. A public awareness walk was conducted in the main roads of Hukuntsi village celebrating and educating the public on the conservation of migratory waterbirds. T-Shirts were printed through the collaboration of DWNP and Birdlife. Students, Teachers, DWNP officers and Birdlife Botswana officials donned on the T-Shirts as they spread the public awareness message through the public awareness walk. Local authorities including the Member of Parliament for the area, Counsellors and Chiefs were invited to the venue where speeches and traditional dances showcasing the commemoration of the World Bird Migratory Celebrations were made.

- d) Communicating the WMBD message through social media (Visual and Audio)

On the eve of the WMBD, there was live streaming of interviews on both TV and radio fielded by both the Department of Wildlife and National Parks officers and Birdlife Botswana officials. The whole objective was to communicate the message to the public regarding the conservation of migratory wetland birds and the theme of the day.

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

There are no problematic cases threatening waterbirds or their habitats

	<p>Annex <u>Annexure 1: World Migratory Bird Day 2024 commemoration Pictures</u> <i>All pictures credit to BirdLife Botswana and DWNP officers.</i></p>
Kenya	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Finalization of the Grey Crowned Crane Single Species Conservation Action Plan and now awaiting its official launch. This plan is designed to ensure the protection of the crane through targeted strategies, representing a significant step toward safeguarding this iconic species for future generations. ▪ Water bird Census carried out in January/ February 2024 and covered all major wetlands in the country
South Africa	<p>National Implementation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The development of the AEWA National Implementation Plan - South Africa through the Department of Forestry Fisheries and the Environment appointed BirdLife South Africa. To develop the National AEWA Implementation. Plan. The draft plan was developed through a consultative process and is being finalized and will be taken through internal approval processes and then later submitted to the Secretariat for record purposes <p>Activities to implement this ISSAP include, inter alia, the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The White-winged flufftail ISSAP - Through the established National White-winged flufftail Working Group - South Africa continuously coordinates the annual reporting and submit implementation report to the Secretariat every year the last report was submitted on 17 May 2024. The last meeting of the National Working Group took place on 16 August 2023 and the next one is also planned for mid-August 2024. • Middelpunt Nature Reserve was declared on the 14 October 2022. Grey Crowned Crane ISSAP- South Africa is finalizing the establishment of the National Grey Crowned Crane Working Group/Task Team - the first meeting took place on 15 June 2023 where the Terms of Reference were discussed. There are discussions to develop a combined Crane (Grey Crowned, Blue and Wattled) species plan in terms of the National Environmental Management Biodiversity Act (Act 10 of 2010). • Slaty Egret ISSAP - South Africa nominated two officials (Renira Boodhraj AND Doug Harebottle) to be part of the International Working Group. Doug participated in this meeting on behalf of South Africa in Botswana in September. South Africa also provided inputs to the 1st AEWA Slaty Egret IWG Meeting National Working Groups/draft Implementation Plan/Seed-Grants. and submitted these to the Secretariat for consideration - February 2024 • Benguela Upwelling System Coastal Seabirds MSAP - The first meeting of the AEWA Benguela Coastal Seabirds International Working Group took place in March 2021. The meeting developed a Rolling Work Plan for the period 2021-2025. Unfortunately, however, lack of capacity (both funding and human capacity) has hampered the coordinated implementation of this work plan. <p>Awareness raising campaigns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • World Migratory Birds Day celebration: Annual media campaigns have been run around World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD). – an awareness raising campaign on Migratory Species was hosted by the DFFE together with BirdLife SA on 16 October 2023. The Minister of the DFFE also issued a statement on 11 May 2024 <p>Waterbirds counts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinated Waterbird Counts (CWAC) - took place in various parts of South Africa annually

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BIRDIE project - The project was successfully concluded and delivered to the funders (JRS Biodiversity Foundation) on 29 February 2024. The BIRDIE project developed a wetlands and waterbirds data-to-decision pipeline that uses state-of-the art statistical tools to extract policy relevant information from the South African Bird Atlas Project (SABAP), and the Coordinated Waterbird Counts (CWAC). BIRDIE is a cutting-edge data-to-decision pipeline with few equivalents in the biodiversity sector worldwide. With ever-increasing streams of biodiversity data, decision makers still often feel starved for information (MacFadyen et al 2022, Biological Conservation 274: 109736). Decision makers need high-level indicators, such as Essential Biodiversity Variables (Pereira et al 2013, Science 339: 277-278) including trends in population size and distributions of species. A few countries have started to implement operational workflows for periodically producing such indices at the national and subnational scale (e.g. the UK, Boyd et al 2023, Biological Reviews 98: 1492-1508). BIRDIE has put South Africa at the forefront in this regard. Funding still needs to be pursued further to maintain and grow the platform. This will be done together BirdLife South Africa, so that they can assist in taking the lead in reviving and managing the citizen science component which is critical to ensure that CWAC data stays relevant and updated.
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5. Overview of special activities and/or meetings related to AEWA

Reporting Party	Progress
Eswatini	Currently working on the wetlands policy which will be taken through cabinet approvals
Kenya	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback to stakeholders on AEWA MOP discussion provided by the National Focal Point • Marking at the national level, of the World Wetlands Day and World Migratory Bird Day. The Administrative Authority for AEWA and Ramsar hosted the Secretary General for Ramsar to engage on matters of wetlands management
Sudan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the survey of the Resource project for Khor abu Habil - report attached.

6. Overview of special issues that might be of interest to the StC 24

Reporting Party	Progress
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Kenya	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An energy and infrastructure workshop was held around Lake Elementaita in April 2024, focusing on critical sector developments. The main objectives were to ensure reliable power supply while considering wildlife habitats and to commit to protecting wildlife, particularly critically endangered species, from energy infrastructure harm. The insights and recommendations from this workshop will guide the country's future energy infrastructure development projects, ensuring a balance between energy development and wildlife conservation in line with AEWA's goals. • Engagement between the Government Ministries responsible for Wildlife and Energy and the Power companies and other relevant stakeholders regarding implementation of AEWA as an international obligation in relation to conservation of migratory species of birds. The discussions included - Engagement with the KPLC, KENGEN, GDC and Lake Turkana Wind Farm to discuss the concerns raised by the AEWA, and CMS, World Heritage Committee and Ramsar. • Kenya is part of a global project The Avian Sensitivity Tool for Energy Planning (AVISTEP) compiling relevant national data on birds to be incorporated into AVISTEP an open-access web-based portal for use by all stakeholders including developers and regulators in the energy sector. • The Government is considering inviting the Joint Mission of AEWA to visit Lake Elementaita for fact finding mission with objective of reviewing progress the country has made with respect to the concerns raised to close the Kenya's Case File for Lake Elementaita • Development of a Program of Work and bi-annual budgets for implementation of AEWA including on monitoring of waterbirds and development of species-specific Recovery and conservation Action Plans (SSAP) to include species such as Lesser and Greater Flamingos Madagascar pond heron sp. • Kenya has nominated her representatives to the International Working Groups of the Lesser Flamingo Single Species Action Plan and the Madagascar- Pond heron
South Africa	<p>Wildlife Poisoning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuous implementation of the National Wildlife Poisoning Prevention Working Group Implementation Plan and the LEAD Task Team • A Collaborative Collaboration Agreement with the University of Witwatersrand (Wits University), acting through its faculty of Science School of Chemistry to facilitate the implementation of the National Lead (PB) in the Wildlife Monitoring Programme.

7. **Any other relevant information**

Annexure 1: World Migratory Bird Day 2024 commemoration Pictures

All pictures credit to BirdLife Botswana and DWNP officers.



Figure 1. The public awareness walk through the main roads of Hukuntsi village



Figure 2. Students during the awareness march donning WMBD24 merchandise



Figure 3. The public awareness walk as directed by Botswana Police



Figure 4. Students during the awareness march donning WMBD24 merchandise.

Figure 5. The area Member of Parliament, Ms Talita Monnakgotla, giving the Keynote address on the theme and the importance of conservation of migratory waterbirds and their habitat.



Figure 6. The Chief Wildlife Officer, Ms Sennyne-Neo Mahupeleng gave the Director's Speech on the theme and the importance of conservation of migratory waterbirds and their habitat.