

REPORT OF THE 12th MEETING OF THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE¹

3 - 6 March 2015, Bonn, Germany

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¹ Report finalised after a process of consultation with the Technical Committee and other participants of TC12.

Agenda item 1. Opening

1. The Chair of the Technical Committee (TC), Mr David Stroud opened the meeting, welcoming the participants. He particularly welcomed Mr Jacques Trouvilliez, the new AEWA Executive Secretary, and Ms Lizanne Roxburgh, who was the new Regional Representative for Southern Africa; this was the first Technical Committee Meeting for both.

2. He stressed that there was a substantial amount of work to get through, which was critical for the preparation of meeting documentation for the 10th Meeting of the AEWA Standing Committee in July 2015 (StC10) and the 6th Session of the Meeting of the Parties to AEWA (MOP6) in November 2015.

Agenda item 2. Welcome Addresses

3. Mr Jacques Trouvilliez welcomed the participants to the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat's premises at the UN Campus in Bonn. He had been involved with AEWA for over 20 years, representing France. He felt proud to lead such a dedicated Secretariat team, and thanked the team for all the hard work in preparation of this meeting. He also stressed the very busy schedule and wished all those present a fruitful and productive meeting.

Agenda item 3. Adoption of the Agenda and Work Programme

4. Before asking the TC to adopt the Provisional Agenda (TC 12.2 Rev.1) and Work Programme (TC 12.3), Mr Stroud proposed the following changes in the schedule:

- To move the item on the Multi-species Action Plan for the Benguela upwelling system coastal seabirds from *Agenda item 9. AEWA International Species Action Plans and Management Plans*, to *Agenda item 10. Seabirds*;
- To move the item on TC Working Group 10 *Emerging Issues* from *Agenda item 12* to *Agenda item 14*;
- To move the discussion on *bird poisoning* from *Agenda item 14* to *Agenda item 16. Other Draft Resolutions for MOP6*; and
- To deal with the planned concurrent workshops of TC Working Groups 1 (Lead, hunting & trade) and 5 (CEPA & Communication Strategy), in plenary under *Agenda item 13*.

Decision:	The Meeting adopted the Agenda and Work Programme with the above-mentioned amendments
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5. He went on to confirm that the TC11 Meeting Report had already been adopted by the Committee after consultation via the Technical Committee Workspace. He reminded those present of the mandate of the Technical Committee and that throughout the meeting, the focus would be on working towards providing accurate technical advice of an appropriate scientific quality to MOP6, aligned to conservation priorities and needs and keeping in mind that the outputs should reflect the requirements of the Parties in the tasks they had to implement on the ground.

6. Because of the heavy schedule, there would be no time to re-draft documents during the meeting. He requested those present to raise issues of concern during the meeting and to provide detailed drafting comments to the respective lead authors, enabling the final drafts to be produced after the Meeting. The aim would be to finalise as many documents as possible by the end of March 2015.

Agenda item 4. Admission of Observers

7. Mr Stroud reported that Mr Baz Hughes, representing the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust (WWT) was also representing the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) at the Meeting. Mr Sharif Aljbour, Regional Representative for Southwestern Asia had sent apologies. He went on to welcome the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat staff members present and the opportunity for them to engage closely with the meeting participants.

Decision: The Meeting agreed to admit the Observers present (see Annex 1 – document TC Inf. 12.15).

Agenda item 5. Report of the Technical Committee to MOP6

8. Mr Stroud introduced the document TC12.4, the draft report for the 6th Session of the Meeting of the Parties to AEWA (MOP6), which represented a summary of the work of the TC in the last three years. It also captured the analysis of the brainstorming session at TC11, i.e. an assessment of AEWA effectiveness and future needs including key threats and issues identified, which the TC should be addressing, as well as an item-by-item assessment of the delivery of the TC work plan for the past triennium.

Action:	Mr Stroud will adjust this report after the meeting and post it on the TC Workspace to enable the whole committee to contribute.
Deadline:	Comments: 23 March 2015

9. He stressed the need to ensure consistent reflection of the needs identified across three of the papers being discussed at this meeting; the Report of the Technical Committee to MOP6, which included a list of key threats (TC12.4), the draft Resolution on the Update on AEWA's Contribution to Delivering the Aichi 2020 Biodiversity Targets (TC 12.54) and the Technical Committee Work Plan 2016-2018 and Modus Operandus (TC 12.52).

Agenda item 6. Reports by the Regional Representatives (See Annex I)

10. The Reports by the Regional Representatives on the implementation of AEWA in their respective regions are available in Annex II.

Agenda item 7. Report by the Secretariat

11. Mr Trouvilliez briefly presented Document TC 12.5 *Report by the Secretariat for the period August 2012 to January 2015*.

12. He reported that nine Range States had become Contracting Parties² since 2012 and progress had been made in the accession process in the Russian Federation and Belarus, as well as a number of African countries.

13. He went on to mention the activities under the strategic cooperation with other organisations, such as the [Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna](#) (CAFF) and the Arctic Migratory Bird Initiative (AMBI), which is a project designed to improve the status and secure the long-term sustainability of declining Arctic breeding migratory bird populations.

14. The Secretariat was also working closely with BirdLife International and the [Royal Society for the Protection of Birds](#) (RSPB) in the United Kingdom with regard to activities on seabirds, power lines and renewable energy impacts, agrochemicals, poisoning, lead shot, bird taxonomy, streamlining the conservation status review, AEWA International Single Species Action Plans, communication and the annual awareness-raising campaign, [World Migratory Bird Day](#) (WMBD).

15. The vacant post of Associate Programme Officer (Coordinator of the African Initiative) should be filled in May 2015, following a lengthy recruitment process.

16. Mr Trouvilliez thanked the Norwegian Environmental Agency for supporting the Associate Programme Officer for Single Species Action Plan Support and the Coordination and Implementation of the Lesser White-fronted Goose ISSAP and the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building

²Including Mauritania as of 1 May 2015.

and Nuclear Safety for supporting the position of Programme Assistant for the African Initiative until the end of 2015.

17. Referring to the funding situation, which had become increasingly difficult, Mr Trouvilliez reported that the funds necessary for the preparation of all the mandatory documents for MOP6 could not be mobilised through voluntary contributions, so that the Site Network Review³ had to be cancelled and two other reviews (ISSAP Implementation and the status of non-native species) were being produced in-house, despite limited resources.

18. MOP6 was scheduled to take place from 9 - 14 November 2015 in Bonn, Germany on the premises of the UN Campus. Due to the lack of a host, the Secretariat had been actively fundraising and thanks to Germany and other donors, the funding gap had decreased but funds were still needed to be able to support the attendance of as many Range States as possible.

19. The year 2015 also marked the 20th Anniversary of AEWA. To highlight the anniversary, the Secretariat was featuring a series of '*people behind the Agreement*' on the AEWA website to highlight the work and dedication of the stakeholders in the wider AEWA network, as well as producing a coffee table book featuring 20 AEWA-listed species.

20. Mr Trouvilliez went on to thank his predecessor, Mr Marco Barbieri for all his work during his term of office as Acting Executive Secretary of AEWA, and particularly for organising the 5th Session of the Meeting of the Parties to AEWA in La Rochelle, France in 2012.

21. He concluded by thanking the Technical Committee members for their hard work, commitment and support to the Secretariat.

22. Mr Stroud went on to congratulate all the Secretariat staff for the huge volume of work mastered in preparation for this Meeting and the many productive activities carried out, which were a credit to each of them.

23. He mentioned the [Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services](#) (IPBES), where the economics of migratory species were an issue. Two of the CMS Scientific Council members were a representatives on the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel (MEP) of this body. Working Groups were currently being set up to lead the work and it was crucial that the TC and Parties were given the opportunity to provide input during this phase. Mr Marco Barbieri, CMS Scientific Adviser was working on this issue on behalf of the CMS Family.

24. Ms Evelyn Parh Moloko, Coordinator of the AEWA African Initiative introduced document TC 12.6 *The Report of the on the Implementation of the African Initiative and the Plan of Action for Africa (PoAA), document*.

25. She reported that all activities had been carried out in close collaboration with the Secretariat and the *Technical Support Unit*, a team of experts offered by the Government of France, which provided valuable technical advice on the implementation of the Plan of Action for Africa. Sub-regional Coordinators complemented the work by strengthening coordination in their respective regions.

26. The Coordination of the African Initiative was reliant on voluntary contributions and the Swiss Government had been very supportive. Through Resolution 5.2, a 50% Coordinator Position had been established at the UN P2 level. The position of Programme Assistant had been enabled by the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety (BMUB) until the end of 2015. Both these positions were crucial to the effective coordination of the African Initiative.

27. A list of AEWA-listed populations by country had been compiled by the Secretariat for Africa. This had been a complicated exercise because of partly outdated information. The Secretariat would review this list according to the amendments approved by MOP6 in November 2015 and distribute it to the TC and experts in

³ A preliminary version of this report had been presented to MOP5.

the region in order to update it further and would subsequently distribute it to the AEWA Parties to help them improve their legislation.

28. Implementation of the PoAA was well underway on many fronts, including support for International Waterbird Census coordinators, Training of Trainers workshops (including one for the Portuguese-speaking countries), World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD) activities, supporting countries with the accession process, as well as projects in Africa through the AEWA Small Grants Fund.

29. Mr Stroud thanked Ms Parh Moloko for the comprehensive report, congratulating her on the tremendous success with regard to accessions.

Action:	The Secretariat would work on finalising the population lists per country, thereby incorporating the amendments approved by MOP6.
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30. On the subject of the AEWA Small Grants Fund (SGF), Mr Stroud noted that this was a key mechanism, albeit whereby relatively limited funds were being disbursed through a time-consuming procedure, causing a large overhead in staff costs.

31. This was reiterated by Mr Sergey Dereliev, AEWA Technical Officer. After several SGF cycles, it was evident that this was not really a very efficient mechanism. One alternative could be a simplified application process and lowered maximum amount of the grants per project, allowing more projects to be supported per year (currently it was only two). There may also be a need to resign from this mechanism altogether, depending on the Parties' decision on the AEWA budget at MOP6.

32. Mr Stroud summarised by confirming that the TC should have a critical look at the SGF, leaving the StC to decide on the way forward. He also referred to a Ramsar leaflet, which served as a guide to the different types of Focal Points (national, technical, CEPA) and their individual functions – a similar guide could be useful for the AEWA stakeholders.

Decision:	The Meeting took note of both reports.
Action:	The TC would consider the current SGF procedure and the need to improve its efficiency.

Agenda item 8. Conservation Status Report (6th Edition) and Draft Amendments to the Agreement and its Annexes

33. Mr Dereliev introduced this item (TC 12.7), which was one of the most important outputs of the work of the Committee to MOP6.

34. Representing Wetlands International, Mr Szabolcs Nagy pointed out a mistake in the executive summary, Status of Knowledge; not 19 but *17 out of 26 waterbird family trend estimates do not exist or are based on only partial information.*

35. This report represented the result of three years of systematic collaborative work. He pointed out that the formal assessment of indicators painted a more negative picture than was actually the case, whereby some indicators were on the way to reaching their targets, indicating that some progress had been made.

36. Appreciation was shown for the huge amount of very thorough work. The format of the report was considered to be easily readable.

37. It was stressed that the focus should be on portraying clear messages, with the aim of reaching audiences beyond the technical ones. For this, as well as other reports, a more detailed executive summary would be useful for readers who do not necessarily have time to read the whole report.

38. The suggestion to make the graphics from the report available for others to use as a resource in their presentations was welcomed. A further suggestion was to produce short briefing documents for species not

prioritised for the development of ISSAPs, but needing a better assessment and identification of possible action.

39. Mr Stroud stressed the importance of the CSR because it underpinned many of AEWA's processes. Gaps in assessment could only be improved by involving Parties and establishing monitoring schemes in data-deficient regions where assessments were currently dependent upon expert opinion only.

40. Introducing document TC 12 11, and referring to Resolution 5.22 on the establishment of a long-term basic structural funding regime for the international waterbird census in the African-Eurasian region, Mr Nagy reported that the approach of the [African-Eurasian Waterbird Monitoring Partnership](#) had proven successful in fundraising and in terms of implementing a jointly formed work programme. The number of countries providing monitoring data had increased substantially, due to a series of projects supporting the implementation of counts. Another positive development related to the time needed for data trend analyses and their publication, which had been reduced from five to two years.

41. Ongoing data acquisition and curation was funded by Wetlands International, however the project-based funding provided no guarantee of long-term sustainability, i.e. there was currently no funding in place for count support in low-income countries and for flyway level coordination.

42. Document TC 12.11 listed four options to improve the predictability of funding, including the creation of a Waterbird Monitoring Fund under AEWA to invite voluntary contributions from donor Parties and a Waterbird Fund, jointly established by the organisations participating in the Waterbird Monitoring Partnership, enabling donor Parties to decide according to their individual regulations and priorities for funding.

43. Mr Nagy stressed that this work did take an enormous amount of resources and that the investment had amounted to 900,000 EUR over the past four years, which had enabled the improvements in implementation, and online data gathering.

44. Mr Stroud suggested the report should begin with a summary, highlighting two to three key messages of what had been achieved followed by the recommendations. Since the data was easily accessible and had already been used by research centres in Aarhus, Denmark and Helsinki, Finland, he suggested adding that the data had been used to feed important scientific work.

Action	Mr Nagy would incorporate the above-mentioned suggestions as well as any further comments submitted and would post a final version of the CSR6 report on the TC Workspace.
Deadline:	Comments: 13 March 2015

45. Mr Stroud introduced document TC 12.12 – *Draft Resolution on Strengthening Monitoring of Migratory Waterbirds*, which responded to the related resolutions from the last MOP, took account of the CSR and noted progress made. The operational part referred to the decision to create a Waterbird Monitoring Fund under AEWA and the invitation to the organisations participating in the Waterbird Monitoring Partnership to jointly establish a fund to raise money to support waterbird monitoring. Further descriptions of these initiatives would be added in annexes to the draft resolution.

46. It was pointed out that since a 13% UNEP overhead had to be added to any AEWA funding, savings could be made by paying into the Waterbird Monitoring Fund. It was also pointed out that since the Ramsar Convention also had an interest in migratory waterbird monitoring, the importance of this issue for Ramsar Parties should also be reflected.

Action:	Further comments should be sent to Mr Dereliev.
Deadline:	Comments: 13 March 2015

47. Mr Dereliev briefly provided an update on the background and the outcome of the CMS Scientific Council process on reviewing bird taxonomy and nomenclature. The CMS Scientific Council (ScC) Chair had been given the task of bringing together all relevant stakeholders to discuss the possibility of harmonisation of the bird taxonomies across the MEAs; the recommendation of the AEWA TC had been to follow the BirdLife Checklist of the Birds of the World as the standard reference. The decision of the 18th Meeting of the CMS ScC was to also recommend the BirdLife taxonomy and this had been subsequently adopted by COP11.

48. The resulting amendments to AEWA Annex 2 (the list of species to which AEWA applies) and to Table 1 were summarized together with the routine proposed changes of categorization and column-listing of populations following the conclusions of CSR6, in document TC 12.13.

Decision:	The TC re-confirmed its recommendation to adopt the BirdLife international taxonomy; this will be reflected in the draft resolution on amendments to the Agreement and its annexes (TC 12.15).
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49. Document TC 12.13 was a spreadsheet representing the recommended amendments to Table 1 of the AEWA Action Plan based both on the routine proposed changes of categorization and column listing of populations following the conclusions of the CSR6, as well as the proposed amendments to Table 1 following a possible adoption of the Birdlife Checklist of the Birds of the World as the official taxonomic reference for AEWA.

50. Mr Nagy pointed out one correction: *Glareola pratincola* moved from 3C to 1 because the population size is declining.

51. Following a discussion on how to treat populations listed in both a higher and a lower column, it was decided to take the highest category and add some explanation to make this approach transparent to Parties.

Decision:	In cases where a population is listed in a higher column and also meets the criteria for a category in a lower column, it should be listed in the higher column only. An explanation for this approach should be provided.
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52. Referring to Document TC 12.15 *Draft Resolution on the Adoption of Amendments to the AEWA Annexes*, Mr Dereliev explained that a clean version of Annex 2 to the Agreement, incorporating all the amendments would be annexed to the resolution (Appendix I) and Table 1 of the Action Plan and explanatory text would be provided in Appendix II. All amendments indicated in track changes would be available in relevant MOP6 Meeting documents.

53. Responding to suggestions made regarding the presentation of this information, he agreed that populations moving to higher categories could be filtered out and presented in a separate table to the MOP to improve the overview.

Agenda item 9. AEWA International Species Action Plans and Management Plans

54. Referring to Document TC 12.25 *Draft 2nd Review of the Stage of Preparation and implementation of International Single Species Action Plans*, Ms Nina Mikander, AEWA Associate Programme Officer for Single Species Action Plans reported that no voluntary contributions had been received for the preparation of this review, so the Secretariat had taken on this task in-house to reflect all the ongoing work.

55. A questionnaire had been submitted to the TC for comments and lists of relevant plans to be reported on had been sent to Parties. The AEWA International Species Working Groups (IWGs) and Species Expert Groups would be coordinating the input provided for each ISSAP, which was due by the end of March 2015. The subsequent analysis would be circulated to the TC for comments.

56. The Meeting considered this document to be extremely comprehensive and useful.

57. Ms Melissa Lewis, TC Expert on Environmental Law offered to re-word the part on the legal status of Action Plans, i.e. that they were not directly binding but linked to the binding obligations for the Parties. She would also amend the relevant paragraph on national legislation in the *Draft Guidelines on National Legislation for the Protection of Species of Migratory Waterbirds and their Habitats* (TC 12.20) respectively.

58. Mr Nagy pointed out one problem throughout was the method used for estimating a population size, i.e. by a range of 1 – 10.000, the mid-point was used. This was inconsistent with the methodology for classification for Table 1. Previous TC discussions had led to the conclusion that the geometrical mean was a better estimator.

Decision:	Comments should be sent to Ms Mikander.
Deadline:	Comments: 13 March 2015

59. Mr Dereliev briefly introduced Document TC12.32 *Prioritising AEWA populations for Action and Management Planning and Retirement as well as Guidance on the Definition of Principal Range States in Action Plans*. He explained that the need to present these criteria to the Parties in the form of an overview had been identified.

60. Referring to the issue of retirement of ISSAPs, Mr Dereliev explained that some plans had been around for over 10 years, whereas others did not seem to be actively implemented. In order to address this, it would be useful to introduce a process for retirement; possible criteria for assessment were described in the paper.

61. Responding to a question regarding the impact of retiring an International Action Plan on a related National Action Plan, Mr Dereliev confirmed that this should not prevent a country in continuing with the implementation of a National Action Plan.

62. Due to a number of concerns and suggestions, it was decided that a breakout group should meet to discuss the details of the criteria for the prioritisation of International Single Species Management Plans and the criteria for the retirement of ISSAPs in more detail.

Recap of the discussions of the breakout Group

63. Mr Dereliev presented the outcome of the breakout group.

64. The list of criteria for the assessment of ISSAPs for revision or retirement was replaced by a flow chart, reflecting the criteria and the order in which they should be applied. In the case of joint plans with other legal frameworks, AEWA was usually the leading framework. In the case of a disagreement, each framework takes a decision, i.e. AEWA could retire a plan, whereas the other framework could retain it.

65. Three categories were proposed for defining the geographical scope and determining the subsequent Principal Range States for species with large global coverage; Principal Range States, Survey Range States and Consultation Range States. The definition of Principal Range States was based on the criterion that they regularly support a set percentage (between 1 and 5% of the biogeographic population) breeding and/or non-breeding numbers of the species/subspecies and ideally not exceeding 20 countries.

66. These criteria would be tested before presentation to MOP6.

Decision:	Document 12.32 Rev. 1 was approved for submission to MOP6 pending any changes as a result of the test-run.
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67. Ms Mikander went on to introduce the draft ISSAP for the Grey-crowned Crane (TC 12.26 Rev. 1) which had already been consulted with the TC and the Range States and represented a final draft.

68. For the Draft ISSAPs for the Taiga Bean Goose (TC 12.27), Long-tailed Duck (TC 12.28) and Eurasian Curlew (TC 12.29), the consultation process was still ongoing; the deadline for comments from the Range States was 31 April 2015.

69. The Lesser White-fronted Goose Action Plan, adopted by MOP4 in 2008 was up for revision in 2013. This process was kicked off at the LWfG IWG meeting in 2012, where the action planning framework was revised. A first draft was distributed to the IWG and Committee on Reintroduction, Supplementation and Captive Breeding of Lesser White-fronted Geese (RECAP) in 2013 and early 2014 respectively.

70. After no conclusion had been reached, a bilateral discussion between Norway and Sweden had been ongoing for a number of months. The draft presented was the latest compromise proposal from Norway and Sweden. This draft, which would ultimately be a joint AEWA/CMS Action Plan (the IWG decided that the plan should include the populations in Japan and China, covered by CMS) had not yet been circulated to the Range States.

Action	Comments should be submitted to Ms Mikander for subsequent consultation with the Range States.
Deadline:	Comments: 13 March 2015

71. Mr Dereliev introduced the draft revision of the Northern Bald Ibis ISSAP (TC12.31). The current draft was not ready for consultation with the Range States. The Northern Bald Ibis was one of five Critically Endangered Species under AEWA. Two ongoing translocation projects were being proposed, which required careful assessment before they could be associated with the AEWA process.

Action	Comments should be submitted to Mr Dereliev for subsequent consultation with the Range States.
Deadline:	Comments: 13 March 2015

72. Referring to all the ISSAPs, Mr Stroud added that it would be useful to take this opportunity to make reference to the body of conservation guidelines available, this could be easily done by adding an annex. A further step at a later stage could be to provide a link between the actions and the available guidance.

73. Ms Mikander introduced the Draft Resolution on Species Action Plans (document TC 12.33), which would need up-dating following the outcomes of the review. A reference to guidelines drafted under the Agreement would be included.

74. Referring to the guidelines on compiling ISSAPs, Mr Dereliev pointed out that many compilers struggle with the stated indicators. He suggested that the guidelines undergo a thorough revision with respect to their structure, with exact wording for actions. This could be a priority for the TC in the next triennium.

Additional Agenda item - Management plan for Greylag Goose (*Anser anser*) in Europe (Document Inf. TC 12.17)

75. Mr Trouvilliez introduced a proposal being made by France for the development of an International Single Species Management Plan (ISSMP) for the Greylag Goose in Europe. The UNEP/AEWA Secretariat had been approached in November 2014 about this because of crop damage and hunting issues related to the migratory population but also the sedentary population in the Netherlands. Because of the success of the ISSMP for the Pink-footed Goose, currently being coordinated by Professor Jesper Madsen at the Aarhus University in Denmark, Mr Trouvilliez had consulted him and he had confirmed that he would be interested in dealing with this more complex adaptive management issue. In January 2015, Mr Trouvilliez met the French Minister and other Ministry officials to introduce the AEWA action-planning process.

76. On behalf of the Ministère de l'Écologie et du Développement durable (MEDD), Mr François Lamarque confirmed the Ministry's strong support for this management plan. The [European Institute for the Management of Wild Birds and their Habitats](#) - OMPO had the necessary scientific and international experience and had agreed to develop this plan. French stakeholders had confirmed their financial support. Following a round of consultation with the range states, the initial feedback had been that they are in favour of this management plan being developed under AEWA.

77. Mr Størkersen confirmed that Norway was very interested in the development of this plan. He would welcome the opportunity to see a draft proposal to be able to comment in more detail. He reiterated that it would be good to draw on experience made with the Pink-footed Goose management plan. He noted that a great deal of resources had already flowed into that plan, where implementation had started three years ago. It could be an advantage if this plan were to be developed under the auspices of AEWA, while drawing on the experience of Aarhus University and OMPO, because it is easier for Parties to allocate funds to AEWA.

78. Mr Dereliev pointed out that this should be seen in the context of prioritisation of populations for management planning according to the criteria agreed on by this Meeting in Document TC 12.32 Rev.1. He suggested running a test for the Greylag Goose population against those criteria, however it was foreseeable that it would probably not be a top priority for AEWA.

79. Ms Crockford drew attention to a notification from the Executive Secretary of the [Convention on Biological Diversity](#) (CBD) requesting information from Parties on their conservation activities related to breeding arctic birds. CMS had sent a similar notification to its Parties and AEWA could theoretically follow suit. In the same context, she mentioned the [CAFF Arctic Migratory Bird Initiative](#) (AMBI), which related, among others, to the Lesser White-fronted Goose, and afforestation in Iceland. Ms Crockford would be pleased to answer any questions on the above.

80. Mr Trouvilliez confirmed that AEWA could also approach its Parties on this issue, which was linked to a CAFF meeting in December 2014. He would follow this up with AEWA Parties.

Agenda item 10. Seabirds

81. Mr Dereliev introduced the *Review of Potential Impacts of Marine Fisheries on Migratory Seabirds in the Afrotropical region* (TC 12.34), which had been on the TC Workspace for some time. This review had been outstanding from the past triennium. It had been commissioned to BirdLife South Africa in the framework of the BirdLife Seabirds Programme. The current report was a much more focussed and succinct version, already incorporating comments from the TC.

Decision:	The TC approved the Draft Review of Potential Impacts of Marine Fisheries on Migratory Seabirds in the Afrotropical region for submission to StC10 and MOP6.
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82. Mr Dereliev went on to give a short up-date on the status of preparation of the Multi-Species Action Plan for the Benguela upwelling system coastal seabirds. An action-planning workshop for the preparation of the ISSAP had been held in Namibia in September 2014 with the kind support of Switzerland and facilitated by Mr Nagy. The plan was based on nine priority species. This was the first attempt to produce a Multi-Species Action Plan and the workshop procedure had to be modified accordingly. The first draft would be sent to the workshop participants and to the TC during the course of March and April; the document should be finalised by early September 2015 in time for presentation to MOP6.

83. He went on to introduce the *Draft Review of the Status, Threats and Conservation Action Priorities for the Seabird Populations Covered by the Agreement* (TC 12.35), which was an outline of the final draft document and had been posted on the TC Workspace the previous week. AEWA had increased seabird-related activities since the addition of 20 seabird species in 2008. Careful consideration had to be given to identifying gaps (and the status of the 82 AEWA-listed seabirds), which AEWA could fill with appropriate action and avoid overlap with other frameworks.

84. On behalf of Mr Volke Veljo (Estonia) Mr Üllar Rammul (Estonia) suggested placing the tables of threats in the main text rather than in an appendix, or alternatively to include a summary of threats in the main part of the document. Regarding one of the threats listed for the Caspian Tern, i.e. hunting and consumption of eggs, he recommended consulting with BirdLife partners as there was no evidence of egg consumption in Estonia.

85. Patricia Cremona (UNEP/WCMC) recommended consulting the AEWA national reports to see where the relevant species had been mentioned.

Action	Any further comments should be submitted to Mr Dereliev. He would pass on the above-mentioned and any further comments regarding the structure of the review to the compilers. The first full draft would be posted on the TC Workspace for comments.
Deadline:	Comments: 13 March 2015

86. Mr Stroud introduced an information paper on the relationship of AEWA with the [Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels](#) (ACAP) on issues of common concern (TC 12.37). He had given a presentation on the work of AEWA at a recent ACAP Advisory Committee meeting. The focus of ACAP work was fisheries management organisation. Since fisheries were a politically complex issue, it would be advisable for AEWA to work through ACAP if it seeks to engage with government fishery-related processes. On the other hand, a number of AEWA guidance documents could be of value to ACAP. The Secretariat could provide a list of relevant Conservation Guidelines to the ACAP Secretariat.

87. He highlighted the fact sheets produced by ACAP, which were translated into multiple languages with simple graphics and proved a very effective way of disseminating advice and guidance.

88. ACAP also ran a secondment programme, whereby travel and subsistence costs for individuals from Contracting Parties working in research institutions or agencies were covered to enable them to work abroad, thus helping to advance particular items of work which were a priority for the Agreement.

89. Mr Dereliev noted that the AEWA Secretariat was provided by UNEP, where the regulations would limit the possibility of accepting secondments, whereas ACAP was independent and free to decide on issues of this kind.

90. Mr Stroud would work on producing an information paper for ACAP summarising ongoing AEWA initiatives of interest to ACAP Parties.

Actions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr Stroud would produce a paper on relevant ongoing AEWA initiatives for ACAP. • The Secretariat would provide ACAP with a list of relevant Conservation Guidelines.
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91. Referring to the draft resolution on seabird conservation (TC 12.38), Mr Stroud reported that this had been drafted by BirdLife International and would eventually be informed by the seabird scoping review.

92. The TC was asked to consider possible options for tools to focus on this group of birds. An MSAP would need to address common underline threats, which may not be an option for 82 species.

93. Mr Olivier Biber stressed that it was clear that AEWA could not work alone on this issue but must put emphasis on synergies with existing instruments. He suggested that the preamble could include a paragraph on the possible engagement with the *UN General Assembly Ad Hoc Open-ended Informal Working Group to study issues relating to the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity beyond areas of national jurisdiction*⁴.

Action	Comments should be submitted to Mr Dereliev. The draft would be finalised after submission of the seabird scoping review.
Deadline:	Comments: 20 March 2015

Agenda item 11. Renewable Energy

94. Mr Dereliev introduced the *Review of the Occurrence and Magnitude of the Conflict between Migratory Animals of all Taxa and Renewable Technologies Deployment* (TC 12.43). The review was the result of a joint initiative between the Secretariats of CMS, AEWA the [International Renewable Energy Agency](#) (IRENA); and the [BirdLife International UNDP/GEF Migratory Soaring Birds project](#). The TC had been consulted with regard to the terms of reference and during the preparatory phase of the review, which summarised current knowledge on impacts for all migratory animals.

Decision:	The TC approved the review for submission to StC10 and MOP6.
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⁴ <http://www.un.org/depts/los/biodiversityworkinggroup/biodiversityworkinggroup.htm>

95. He went on to introduce the *Renewable Energy Technologies and Migratory Species: Guidelines for Sustainable Deployment* (TC 12.44). He reported that some work to adjust certain texts was still ongoing with IRENA. Once the guidelines have been revised, they would be presented to the TC on the TC Workspace.

Action	Comments should be forwarded to Mr Sergey Dereliev. The revised document will be posted on the TC Workspace for final comments.
Deadline:	Comments: 27 March 2015

96. Mr Dereliev briefly introduced the draft resolution on Renewable Energy and Migratory Waterbirds (TC 12.45), reporting that AEWA will be closely involved with the CMS-led *Energy Task Force*, the establishment and meetings of which were being kindly sponsored by the German Government.

97. Mr Florian Keil, AEWA Information Officer and Coordinator of the Common Information Management, Communication and Outreach Team of the UNEP/CMS and UNEP/AEWA Secretariats, reported that this year's World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD) theme *Energy – make it bird friendly*, centred around the subject of renewable energies.

98. He requested the TC to take a look at the WMBD website and provide input wherever possible to the information provided and on ways of presenting it.

99. Mr Nagy pointed out that the slogan could be misleading; it was not clear what the message was.

100. Mr Trouvilliez explained that the slogan should be understood to mean that energy was not bird-friendly, despite the existence of some good examples of environmental assessment; renewable energy is supposed to be 'green' but can, in fact, be detrimental to biodiversity.

101. Mr Keil agreed that energy cannot be made fully bird-friendly and that the purpose of the campaign was to raise this important issue and point to available guidance.

102. Mr Stroud suggested producing a briefing document to avoid any misinterpretation; this could consist of six key messages to optimise the potential of this campaign to disseminate AEWA's message clearly. This could be produced with the help of the TC.

103. Ms Crockford suggested involving BirdLife International's expert on energy to develop this.

Action	Comments on the draft resolution on Renewable Energy and Migratory Waterbirds should be forwarded to Mr Sergey Dereliev.
Deadline:	Comments: 27 March 2015

Agenda item 12. TC Working Group 7- Climate Change

TC Working Group 7 – Climate Change

104. Mr Stroud introduced the document *Climate Change with Regard to Site Management* (TC 12.42), which was the result of a request through Resolution 5.13, whereby the TC should summarise relevant studies and policies related to climate change with regard to site management.

105. He pointed out that there was still much to do regarding the AEWA guidance framework, with regard to new information available, such as the global assessment of the [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change](#) (IPPC), which should be brought to the attention of the Parties.

106. Mr Nagy reported on some very recent developments, addressing Resolution 5.13⁵ and two of the relevant International Implementation Tasks (IIT) (3 and 4)⁶, whereby Wetlands International had been working very

⁵ http://www.unep-aewa.org/sites/default/files/document/res_5_13_climate_change_0.pdf

⁶ http://www.unep-aewa.org/sites/default/files/document/res_5_3_iit_12-15.pdf

closely with the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat and the Government of Germany in connection with a project proposal for a 3,8 million Euro project, which had been submitted to the [International Climate Initiative](#) of the Federal Ministry for the Environment Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety.

107. The proposal related to the assessment of the impact of climate change on critical sites, whereby the resulting information would be transferred into a new [Critical Site Network Tool](#) (CSN Tool). In the framework of the project, both anglophone and francophone African countries would be able to visit pilot sites and participate in climate change adaptation training using the new CSN Tool. The development of a guidance document for running the process was also planned.

108. Mr Stroud reiterated that this was a very useful initiative. He was conscious that the proposed revised framework document for MOP drew solely on English-language guidance. It would be very useful if references to French guidance could be added. He suggested that Mr Trouvilliez and Mr Jean-Yves Mondain-Monval (TC Expert on Game Management) could contribute to this.

109. Mr Trouvilliez confirmed that he was aware of a synthesis on the subject in French and would follow-up on this.

Actions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Comments should be forwarded to Mr Stroud.• Mr Trouvilliez will follow up on French climate change-related synthesis.
Deadline:	Comments: 27 March 2015

110. Mr Stroud introduced the document *How to Address Regional Multi-Species Declines* (Document TC 12.41), which had also been requested by MOP5 and represented a first attempt to develop this work.

111. Mr Dereliev stressed that an understanding of the underlying threats should be in place before this could be presented to the MOP. A technical overview of the information available and more fine-tuned analysis would be necessary before any conclusions could be made on how to address these declines.

112. Suggestions were made to look at existing action plans where work on threats and common factors had already been analysed (e.g. Long-tailed Duck ISSAP) and to consider habitats before species. The CSR could also feed into this work.

113. In this context, Ms Crockford referred to the EU LIFE Euro SAP multi-species project grant. [Euro SAP](#) was Europe's most ambitious bird species project to identify the conservation needs of 16 charismatic species across 10 countries and initiate better coordination between AEWA, the EU and the Bern Convention with regard to species action and management plans. Mr Dereliev had been closely involved in the application process on behalf of AEWA. The budget for the project was still short of 67,000 EUR; any proposals to fill this funding gap would be very welcome.

Action	This issue would be discussed further on the TC Workspace in early summer 2015.
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Agenda item 13. TC Working Groups 1 (Lead, Hunting and Trade) and 5 (CEPA and Communication Strategy)

Working Group 1 – Lead, Hunting and Trade

114. Chair of Working Group 1 on Lead, Hunting and Trade, Mr Mondain-Monval introduced and moderated this agenda item, which involved five documents, the most important of which referred to the AEWA Sustainable Harvest Guidelines.

115. Mr Lorenz Serra (TC Regional Representative for Central Europe) began by introducing document 12.16 *Guidance to Parties on how to deal with look-alike species*. The document listed the species affected and the criteria for similarities. He briefly described the scope and approach of the guidance. Two tables had been compiled for species in columns A and B species, using colour coding to reflect the extent by which they may

be affected by accidental shooting. A third annex listed the ISSAPs where accidental shooting of look-alike species is mentioned.

116. This exercise was done for European species and populations only; much more time would have to be invested to produce a list for all AEWA species. He noted that exploiting the different times of occurrence of species/populations in a country emerged as being one of the most effective means of reducing hunting risk. More information would be required from Parties when further refining this assessment.

117. Mr Dereliev noted that the request to the TC was to produce guidance rather than guidelines. The document would have to be finalised by early May in time for presentation to StC10 and MOP6.

118. Ms Lehmann suggested dealing with this issue by adding a relevant chapter to the *Draft Guidelines on National Legislation for the Protection of Migratory Waterbirds and their Habitats*.

119. Mr Dereliev pointed out that Column A listing is not constant so that this guidance would have to be under regular review by the TC.

120. Mr Stroud suggested that this could be presented to MOP6 as 'work-in-progress'. What Parties were being asked to do in risk situations should be carefully defined, perhaps by producing six to seven key issues to help Parties identify potential risks.

121. Replying to the suggestion to refer to Column A species only, Mr Nagy noted that Column A species were not huntable in general and that what needed to be addressed was to avoid Column A species being mistaken for Column B or C species.

122. Mr Mondain-Monval added that there were documents available in some countries which could be helpful so that a literature list, including relevant information leaflets for hunters, should be added, which should also be regularly up-dated.

123. Mr John Harradine (BASC) stressed the importance of bringing together relevant information to give a balanced overview. He offered to revise the paragraph on modes of hunting, with respect to night hunting and shooting distance.

124. Mr Alexandre Czajkowski (OMPO) reported that OMPO had also done some work on this issue (he would provide this to Mr Serra) and that many publications had been prepared by hunting associations around the world; he particularly referred to a fairly recent and comprehensive Russian publication.

125. He noted the importance of local capacity in dealing with this issue. He was the manager of the French ringing database and was aware that even ringers were not always right. Efforts were being made to analyse a new collection of data for ducks and waders, where the risk of confusion was fairly high.

126. Mr Cy Griffin (FACE) remarked that regarding the ISSAP for the Lesser White-fronted Goose, some of the points had been updated in the revised version. For ISSAPs generally, it could be useful to specify the main regions concerned, i.e. flag up the relevant countries.

127. Mr Owusu commented that it would be difficult to implement this guidance in Africa where, for example, in Western Africa hunting was not organised at all.

128. Considering the options suggested, Mr Mondain-Monval concluded that the best way forward would be to present this to the MOP as an information paper rather than to incorporate it into the legislation guidelines, making it easier to up-date more regularly.

129. Mr Stroud reiterated that it would be best to keep this paper separate and perhaps add it to the body of guidelines in due course. A clear set of principles is what was needed together of an overview of experience and information available. He urged all the TC members to feed into this.

Action:	Comments should be forwarded to Mr Serra. The document would then be posted on the TC Workspace and finalised by mid-April as an information document geographically limited to the Western Palearctic, for submission to StC10 and MOP6.
Deadline:	Comments: 27 March 2015

130. Mr Dereliev introduced the document on *Guidance on Measures in National Legislation for Different Populations of the same Species, Particularly with Respect to Hunting and Trade* (Document TC 12.17), which had been drafted by the Secretariat in cooperation with the Federation of Associations for Hunting and Conservation of the EU (FACE) and in consultation with the TC expert on environmental law, Ms Melissa Lewis.

131. This was a draft proposal for recommendation to the Parties and the issue had also been taken up in the draft Guidelines on National Legislation for the Protection of Species of Migratory Waterbirds and their Habitats (Document TC 12.23). It also related to the discussion on look-alike species. He described the scope and approach; the analysis had been based on the CSN Tool. The proposed advice to countries related to measures in accordance with AEWA obligations, with respect to their hunting and trade legislation.

132. Mr Stroud stressed that the analysis must be absolutely clear for Parties to be able to identify the implications relevant to them.

133. Mr Dereliev noted that the analysis was as good as the CSN Tool on which it was based. Countries would have to decide on changes in legislation if overlaps were identified.

134. Mr Griffin added that Contracting Parties would have to review their list of huntable species applying the three points outlined in the proposal. FACE could provide the methodology and guidance for analysis.

135. Summarising suggestions made, Mr Stroud agreed that this guidance would help countries to narrow down the list. It would inform them of populations with possible overlap but they would have to carry out their own analysis, based on the information available to them. A regular review would have to be carried out after each MOP when the proposals for amendment to the annexes were adopted.

136. Mr Nagy added that the improved CSN Tool could provide an automatic update.

Decision:	The document will be finalised and presented to MOP6 as a guidance document.
Action:	Comments should be forwarded to Mr Dereliev and Mr Griffin. A revised version would be made available for last comments on the TC Workspace by the end of March.
Deadline:	Comments: 13 March 2015

137. Mr Stroud introduced documents TC 12.18 and 12.19 on the *Poisoning of Waterbirds by Lead Shot in Terrestrial Ecosystems* (drafted by Mr Stroud) and *Draft Guidelines for Dealing with the Accidental Shooting of Look-alike Species* (drafted by Mr Serra). Since the TC had been requested to address these issues, the CMS COP11 had adopted guidance for replacement of lead ammunition by non-toxic materials through [CMS Resolution 11.15](#). Thus there was no need for further review and this item could be closed and reported back to MOP6 noting the decision by the CMS Parties.

Decision:	The Meeting agreed that both these items could be closed and reported to MOP6 (via the TC report to MOP6) noting the guidance adopted by the CMS Parties.
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138. The next item, *Draft Guidelines on National Legislation for the Protection of Species of Migratory Waterbirds and their Habitats* (TC 12.20) was introduced by Ms Lewis (TC Expert on Environmental Law).

139. This was a revised version of the IUCN Law Centre guidelines from 2002. The original version had been long without a coherent structure. Much of the guidance had not been linked to legal obligations under AEWA. The revision had been produced by Ms Lewis and Ms Catherine Lehmann (AEWA Associate Programme Officer) in collaboration with the IUCN Law Centre.

140. The revised version had been completely re-structured, considerably shortened and included many samples of national legislation. Most importantly, it had been made more AEWA-specific. A guide to guidance had been provided at the end of the document.

141. Mr Mondain-Monval thanked the compilers for this excellent work and enquired whether a French version of the guidelines was planned.

142. Mr Dereliev explained that the documents for MOP6 had to be prioritised for translation since the resources available would not cover all translations; however guidelines would be on the priority list.

143. Mr Harradine also congratulated the compilers for this good and detailed summary of what the Agreement required to reach its objectives. Regarding Step 2 – Social and Cultural Factors, he suggested making more reference to economic factors, as well as placing more emphasis on the involvement of stakeholders, in order to achieve objectives. He would send suggested text on these points.

144. Mr Dereliev also very much welcomed these useful and user-friendly guidelines. He mentioned that the legal status of Action Plans should be aligned between this and the guidance on overlapping populations (TC 12.17). On p.23 where hunting quotas were discussed, the flyway quotation should be explained as a pre-requisite before it is considered in the national legislation. On p.56, regarding Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), it should not be dependent on national criteria but be mandatory for all activities which could impact migratory waterbirds. He finished by suggesting the addition of good examples of translocation projects on p. 64; this was a difficult issue for Parties to deal with.

145. Mr Stroud offered to send an example on translocation issues from the United Kingdom.

Action:	All the above-mentioned and any other comments should be forwarded to Ms Lewis and Ms Lehmann. The document would then be posted on the TC Workspace and finalised mid-April for submission to StC10 and MOP6.
Deadline:	Comments: 27 March 2015

Update on the Development of the AEWA Sustainable Harvest Guidelines

146. Mr Griffin gave an update on the development of the revised *AEWA Sustainable Harvest Guidelines*, the first version of which had been published in 2002 and revised in 2005. These guidelines had been considered a priority by the TC in the past triennium, however they had to be put on hold due to lack of funds.

147. The Terms of Reference for the revision had been published on the TC Workspace in February 2014. The work had been contracted out to a consortium coordinated by Professor Jesper Madsen, Aarhus University, Denmark. Most of the necessary funds had been secured (Fondation François Sommer). The guidelines would cover the whole African-Eurasian Flyway, looking at all types of harvest regardless of their legal background. A workshop was being convened for all the stakeholders later in March 2015 to kick-off the development process.

148. Replying to an enquiry from Mr Harradine on whether the guidelines addressed the ethical issues such as ballistics in shooting which could help hunters to minimise wounding and waste, Mr Griffin confirmed that this issue would be addressed.

149. Mr Nagy made a short announcement regarding another product of the [Waterbird Harvest Specialist Group](#) (WHSG), the Secretariat of which was provided by FACE. The development of this document was funded by the relevant EU LIFE grant to the European Association of Wetlands international. The document addressed the sustainable harvest process, giving detailed examples of population trends and sizes already in the CSR. Monitoring the level of harvest would be a challenge. Mr Nagy would provide details on the TC workspace in due course. There were plans to produce three articles from this work one of which would be a simplified version of the results of the paper.

150. Mr Mondain-Monval also referred to information from the AEWA national reports, which could feed into the guidelines. Case studies on sustainable development projects in Africa should be used. He was aware that

literature was also available in Eastern Europe, Northern Russia and Iran. He requested the TC to provide any links to relevant literature.

Working Group 5 – CEPA and Communication Strategy (CS)

151. Referring to the Draft Revised Communication Strategy (TC 12.39), Mr Stroud welcomed Ms Rachel Shutte the consultant who was developing the revised communication strategy and the colleagues from the Common Information Management, Communication and Outreach Team of the UNEP/CMS and UNEP/AEWA Secretariats.

152. MOP3 had adopted the first communication strategy for AEWA in 2005 and MOP5 had called for an update. This strategy was aimed at a variety of actors including the Secretariat and Parties, all of whom required communication skills. The TC was requested to feed ideas into the process and to engage fully with the strategy. Communication was absolutely critical and fundamental for implementing AEWA.

153. Mr Keil explained that the opportunity represented by the revision process would be used to develop strategically aligned communication strategies for both CMS and AEWA, which would also save costs.

154. Ms Schutte presented the approach being used for the revision process. The first step towards a common communication strategy was the creation of the Common Information Management, Communication and Awareness-raising Unit (IMCA), which had been launched as a pilot in 2014 in the framework of the CMS Future Shape process.

155. The approach was to focus on output-oriented communication plans with the emphasis on a few issues or topics of high importance for the next triennium (2015-2018), while considering the resources available.

156. The Global Communication Strategy for Migratory Species would be broader, representing a common CMS-Family vision relating to shared objectives and principles, e.g. meeting and communication needs of the Parties, drawing donor's attention to resource gaps and engaging with partners to improve impact and visibility.

157. Ms Schutte listed some of the obvious priority issues for AEWA, such as poisoning, wildlife crime, renewable energy infrastructure, climate change and ISSAPs for the most threatened species. The role of the TC would be to provide guidance on topics and issues to prioritise for communications purposes.

158. Mr Pierre Defos Du Rau (France) stressed the importance of intensive agriculture, which was by far the biggest threat to waterbird habitats.

159. Mr Stroud thanked Ms Schutte for her comprehensive presentation and stressed the need to identify the priority target groups for the CS, i.e. Parties, general public and NGOs and to align the CS to their needs.

160. Ms Cremona added that making the CS 'digestible' was important, helping stakeholders to do their jobs. They should be consulted, asked directly as to what would help them.

161. Mr Muchai agreed that it would be important to not only disseminate information but to get feedback from the Parties, since communication was a two-way thing. He pointed out that technically, communication was not always easy in Africa because of internet problems.

162. Mr Griffin stressed the importance of understanding the knowledge of the audience group and identifying which information they need.

163. Mr Stroud used the example of the eradication of the Ruddy Duck in the United Kingdom, which was at the outset was obviously not necessarily understandable to the public at large. A huge public outcry was however avoided due to specially designed publicity campaign which ran for a year before the programme took off. This explained the rationale behind this measure, focussing on the threats to the globally threatened White-headed Duck in Spain.

164. Mr Nagy agreed that Parties were a key audience however their abilities to communicate were, of course, very varied due to their very different cultural and economic backgrounds. When new guidelines or resolutions are approved they should be disseminated immediately and effectively.

165. It was highlighted that a range of tools should be available for the diversity of countries and that the priorities being communicated should be consistent throughout the AEWA framework.

166. Data overload should also be avoided and communication tools kept simple. AEWA topics for communication should be very carefully selected in order to gain most outcomes, i.e. not concentrating on threats alone; waterbird monitoring would, for example, profit greatly from communication efforts.

167. The Meeting participants discussed and listed priority issues for communication. The focus should be on areas where AEWA can make a unique contribution (i.e. renewable energy and poisoning could be dealt with mainly in the framework of the relevant CMS Task Forces). The values of migratory waterbirds should be included in the message and the reasons for conserving them in the first place, as well as AEWA success stories.

168. Guidance should be more user-friendly and should include more case studies; it should be adapted for different target groups to enable better management on the ground. Also the aspect of international cooperation throughout the flyway should remain an important aspect.

169. Mr Øystein Størkersen (Norway - Chair of the AEWA Standing Committee) stressed the importance of the senior decision-makers of the conventions to take the lead and be strategic when talking to governments, according to what were the current key issues. Media releases needed a long time for processing before being made public.

170. Mr Trouvilliez agreed and that flyway conservation should be promoted by increasing the visibility of AEWA on all levels. The Contracting Parties were definitely AEWA's communication priority.

171. The TC made suggestions for priority issues. Mr Keil reported that the issues most often mentioned included those relating to habitat and wetland management, sustainable use and monitoring. The main tools suggested were the use of (better packaged) guidelines, best practices, success stories, case studies and solutions.

17. It was pointed out that the value of waterbirds and wetlands should be included, i.e. that they were an indicator of ecosystem health. Also important was the cultural importance of birds for native populations in the Arctic region and Africa. The AEWA Plan of Action for Africa (PoAA) also included a number of relevant mandates.

173. Replying to Ms Schutte's question regarding the lack of mandate for AEWA with regard to intensive agriculture, Mr Stroud noted that this was an issue for many of the ISSAPs.

174. Mr Trouvilliez pointed out that the primary focus of the CS should be on flyway conservation and how to promote it and illustrate the AEWA solutions through international cooperation.

175. Mr Nagy agreed that only an intact network of sites can enable migration. Thus, solidarity along the flyway was of utmost importance – partners who did not have the necessary resources should be supported.

176. Mr Griffin suggested that the use of satellite imagery illustrating a bird travelling from North to South and what AEWA does with little resources and what is planned. This would be much more effective than a lot of text.

177. Mr Biber stressed the importance of getting feedback from the countries on what would be worthwhile communicating and the quality of the ongoing communication work with suggestions for improvement.

178. Mr Keil confirmed that a survey was planned, the outcomes of which would inform the CS. He thanked Mr Stroud and all those present for the wealth of input.

Actions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comments should be forwarded to Mr Keil. • Mr Keil would initiate a survey among the AEWA Contracting Party Focal Points on the Communication Strategy.
Deadlines:	Comments on Draft Resolution TC 12.40 <i>Draft Resolution on Communication Strategy</i> : 13 March 2015 Comments on Document TC 12.39 <i>Development of the Communication Strategy</i> : 27 March 2015

Agenda item 14. TC Working Groups 6 (Conservation guidelines), 9 (Disturbance) and 10 (Emerging Issues)

Working Group 10 – Emerging Issues

179. Mr Stroud introduced document TC 12.55 *Emerging Issues for the Conservation and Management of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds*. This paper represented an up-date of issues, which may have an impact on migratory waterbird conservation, previously considered. He went on to go through the list inviting suggestions from the Meeting.

1) *Emerging diseases*

This task was ongoing - AEWA was participating in the CMS/FAO Scientific Task Force on Wildlife Diseases. It was stressed that available guidance should be centrally accessible.

2) *Promoting waterbird conservation through 'non-traditional' sectors of society*

Sectoral groups such as women's and other community groups, who are not normally stakeholders in a conservation process should be addressed. Contracting Parties could play a role in this context by sharing best practice examples.

3) *Invasive species (including impacts of aquatic weeds)*

Mr Dereliev reported that following the review of the status of non-native species to MOP4 in 2008, it had not been considered a priority to produce an updated review. National reports to MOP6 would, however, provide data, which would be summarised for presentation to MOP6 in early summer 2015. A suggested structure for this document would be made available on the TC Workspace for comments. A resolution addressing the resulting recommendations, with a strong emphasis on the Ruddy Duck could subsequently be drafted.

180. Mr Nagy offered to look into how the IWC could also be used in that national coordinators could include non-natives in their reporting.

4) *Waterbirds in urban environments*

A synthesis of available guidance for urban authorities would be useful (native or non-native species).

5) *Traditional knowledge and harvest regimes*

and

6) *Ensuring consumptive harvests are sustainable*

181. Both these issues are being addressed by the AEWA Sustainable Harvest Guidelines. The scale of local harvest was also an issue. It was suggested to look into the CBD bushmeat discussions and the scope of this. Mr Nagy confirmed that the [Waterbird Harvest Specialist Group](#) could engage on this.

182. Mr Owusu pointed out that in Ghana, waterbirds were often killed for fun rather than food. Local knowledge should be included here as culture and traditional practice play an important role.

183. Mr Stroud concluded that this was a priority issue (it also addressed by the PoAA), whereby the Sustainable Harvest Guidelines could contribute as to how to take the issue forward.

7) *Impacts of pollution*

National monitoring schemes existed in some countries but it is not known if this information is collated.

8) *Seabird bycatch*

This was removed from this list since it is significant for the Agreement and is already being addressed.

9) *Impacts of agricultural chemicals in waterbirds*

Major work is already ongoing in the framework of the CMS-led [Working Group on Minimising the Risk of Poisoning to Migratory Birds](#). The CMS COP11 also adopted the [Review and Guidelines to Prevent the Risk of Poisoning of Migratory Birds](#).

10) *Extractive industries*

This issue was already being addressed under the report from Working Group 9 in connection with the outcome of the review undertaken together with the Ramsar STRP (Doc. TC 12.56).

11) *Waterbirds and corporate industry*

The issue of working with other sectors had been addressed in various contexts and could be looked into at some stage.

12) *Reducing airstrike risk from waterbirds*

This issue had already been addressed by the [AEWA Conservation Guidelines No. 8 - Guidelines on reducing crop damage, damage to fisheries, bird strikes and other forms of conflict between waterbirds and human activities](#).

13) *AEWA Conservation Guidelines*

A major review of style, accessibility and use of existing AEWA guidance documentation was planned for 2015 (see document TC 12.22).

14) *Conflicting renewable energy development*

CMS COP11 adopted Resolution 11.27 and endorsed the document [Renewable Energy Technologies and Migratory Species: Guidelines for Sustainable Deployment](#), which are the outcome of a joint CMS/AEWA/[International Renewable Energy Agency \(IRENA\)](#) project.

15) *Power line barriers*

MOP5 adopted the [Guidelines on how to Avoid or Mitigate the Impact of Electricity Power Grids on Migratory Waterbirds in the African-Eurasian Region](#) in May 2012.

16) *New forms of recreational disturbance*

Not a high priority issue. Water sports were one of the wide range of issues to be considered here.

17) *Impacts of new tracking technologies*

Mr Nagy pointed out that this would present an excellent opportunity to communicate what AEWA is about. Links to birds being tracked could possibly be provided to illustrate the vital knowledge gained through tracking birds as well as a wide range of issues.

18) *Conservation conflict zones*

This could be taken up with IUCN, which was active in the area of conservation in conflict zones.

19) *Global horizon scanning exercises and implications for AEWA*

Global scanning exercises had been assessed for issues of potential significance to AEWA and listed according to the nature of potential threats.

Other emerging issues:

184. Ms Crockford reported on a decision by the CBD COP to launch the [Caring for Coasts Initiative](#), which would focus on gathering global best practice on coastal restoration. This could be a useful tool and should be drawn to the attention of the AEWA Focal Points. It could be flagged in the regular AEWA Newsletter.

Working Group 6 – Conservation Guidelines

185. Mr Stroud introduced Document TC 12.21, which dealt with the background and development of the existing AEWA Conservation Guidelines and how and when they should be up-dated. The recommendations were to update at any time if an adopted Conservation Guideline clearly no longer reflected international ‘best practice’ and definitely to review all guidance every three cycles (nine years) with a view to update if deemed necessary.

186. The second issue referred to the format in which guidelines are presented, i.e. looking at shorter information notes (which would be easier to translate), style and format, different styles and types of guidance and regionally specific guidance.

187. A structure for a web-based questionnaire survey of use of AEWA’s Conservation Guidelines and future options had been drafted, with the aim of getting response from as wide a range of individuals and countries as possible to inform recommendations for the presentation and dissemination of guidelines for MOP7. The TC could distribute the questionnaire, which would be made available in English and French to all its networks.

188. Mr Harradine suggested also using this questionnaire to get feedback on other issues. He suggested using a free-of-charge online survey tool. A working group was formed to work on the design of the questionnaire.

Decision /Actions:	1) The format of the questionnaire will be reviewed and finalised by the working group and any comments from the TC via the Workspace included. 2) The final questionnaire will be uploaded in English and French.
Deadlines:	1) comments: 31 March 2015 2) Questionnaire online: 30 April 2015

189. Mr Stroud introduced draft resolution TC 12.23 on the *Revision and Adoption of Conservation Guideline*, which referred to the adoption of the three newly developed/revised guidelines and would include the outcomes of the work being undertaken on the style of Conservation Guidelines.

190. The aspect of monitoring the use of guidelines was brought up and the fact that national reports did shed some light on this but not a comprehensive picture. Mr Nagy suggested taking advantage of a web analysis tool, which is, for example, used to monitor the use of online guidance by the IWC counters.

191. Mr Keil agreed that such a tool could be used to track how often individual files are downloaded from the AEWA website.

192. The question of translation was raised because most of the AEWA Conservation Guidelines were available in English only, due to the limited resources available for translation. More guidelines could be translated if they were presented in a more easily digestible and compact format.

Decision /Actions:	1) The TC will be requested to comment on the draft resolution on the Revision and Adoption of Conservation Guidelines. 2) Mr Keil will look into the use of a web-based analytics tool to monitor the use of AEWA Conservation Guidelines available for download on the AEWA website.
Deadlines:	Comments: 13 March 2015

193. Mr Stroud began by introducing document TC 12.56 *Guide to Guidance on Extractive Industries*. In 2012, the MOP had identified the need for government officials and other stakeholders responsible for the conservation and management of important wetlands for waterbirds to understand and have access to best practice guidance related to extractive industry processes to aid decision-making. Through Resolution 5.10, MOP5 requested the TC to finalise this guide in close collaboration with the Ramsar Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) for this purpose.

194. The Ramsar STRP had, in the meantime, compiled a comprehensive global reference list of 169 guidance documents relevant to various aspects of extractive industry regulation and management, using a range of searchable fields, which could be filtered according to e.g. regions, types of mining and climatic regions. It was pointed out that Article 6 of the European Commission’s Habitats Directive relating to the management and protection of Natura 2000 sites should be included in this overview.

Decision /Action:	Mr Stroud will draft a cover note for the list of guidance documents on extractive industries for presentation to StC10 and MOP6.
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195. He went on to introduce document TC 12.50 *Developing International Guidance on Cumulative Impact Assessment – A suggested Way Forward*. Through Resolution 5.16, the MOP requested the TC to work with Ramsar’s STRP and other interested parties to develop guidance for assessing the significance of cumulative impacts of multiple wetland losses along species’ flyways and the implications for Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and other assessment processes. It had not been possible to take this issue forward during the past triennium, thus it would be included in the TC work plan for the next triennium.

196. The issue for AEWA was to closely define how and which work should be undertaken on this topic and which partnerships could be used for this purpose.

197. It was agreed that while scoping the work it would be useful to collaborate with the CMS Scientific Council due to the cross-cutting applicability of the issue.

198. Also mentioned in this context was the *Integrated Biodiversity Assessment Tool (IBAT)*, an innovative tool designed to facilitate access to accurate and up-to-date biodiversity information to support critical business decisions. The tool was the result of a conservation partnership between [BirdLife International](#), [Conservation International](#), the [International Union for Conservation of Nature](#), and the [UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre](#).

Decision /Action:	The Guidance on Cumulative Impact Assessment will be put onto the TC Work Plan 2016-2018 and the scope discussed further via the TC Workspace.
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Working Group 9 – Disturbance

199. Through Resolution 5.24, MOP5 had requested the TC to develop and propose definitions of the terms “disturbance” and “significant” in the context of the AEWA Action Plan. Mr Stroud introduced document TC 12.46 *Proposed Definitions of “Disturbance”*, which was the result of significant input by the TC and, as such, considered as being final.

200. In that context, Mr Harradine reported of a PhD study and up-coming workshop (June 2015) on the subject of “disturbance” (not just hunting disturbance). Because of the timing, outputs from that meeting could not be considered with regard to the proposed definitions, however, they could be brought to the attention of the Parties through a side-event or poster at MOP6. Mr Harradine would follow up on this possibility.

Decision:	The Meeting approved the definitions as presented in this paper for presentation to StC10 and MOP6 in conjunction with a relevant draft resolution.
Action:	Mr Dereliev will draft the resolution.

201. Mr Stroud went on to present document TC 12.47 *Disturbance Issues – Summary of Actions since MOP5*. Resolution 5.24 had also requested the TC to commission a synthesis of scientific knowledge of disturbance.

A specification had been drafted (Annex 1), however it had not been possible to find funding for this review. The same applied for the request for a guide for site managers, for which a possible outline structure was also drafted.

202. Mr Harradine referred to the literature review of the afore-mentioned PhD, which would focus on guidance for managers and be available for feeding into this task, which will remain in the TC work plan for 2016-2018.

Agenda item 15. Recapitulation of Workshops of TC Working Groups 1 and 5 (cancelled)

This agenda item was dealt with in plenary under Agenda item 13.

Agenda item 16. Other Draft Resolutions for MOP6

203. Mr Dereliev provided an up-date on poisoning issues, by referring to the relevant Resolutions adopted at COP11 on preventing poisoning of migratory birds (TC Inf. 12.8 - COP Res.11.15), preventing illegal killing and taking and trade of migratory birds (TC Inf. 12.9 - COP Res.11.16), and renewable energy and migratory species (TC Inf. 12.13 - COP Res.11.27), and that one of the major achievements of the COP was the adoption of the *Guidelines to Prevent the Risk of Poisoning to Migratory Birds*. Under the related Resolution, Parties were called upon to report progress in implementing actions taken under this Resolution, through their National Reports, so that a new module would have to be designed for the CMS online reporting format for this purpose.

204. The implementation of the guidelines was also discussed at COP11, because they were broad in terms of different types of poisoning, it was considered that establishing regional thematic groups may be a good way forward.

205. This was a difficult and complex area, both politically and technically to make progress in. The Secretariat was actively involved in the ongoing CMS-led *Working Group on Minimizing the Risk of Poisoning to Migratory Birds*.

206. Mr Stroud reiterated that this was a major step forward giving credit to the Parties engaged in this issue at COP11.

207. Mr Griffin pointed out that there were some discrepancies in the terminology used within the guidelines, i.e. 'lead bullets', 'lead gunshot' and 'lead shot'; 'lead shot' should be used throughout to avoid confusion with target audiences.

208. Mr Stroud suggested that the Working Group ensure consistency in the terminology used, and noted this was a more general consistency issue.

209. Responding to a question by Mr Hughes regarding the convening of the planned Task Force on Lead Shot, Mr Borja Heredia (Head of the CMS Avian Species Team), explained that the CMS Secretariat did not have the necessary resources to take this forward and was currently approaching potential donors.

210. Mr Stroud offered the support of the Technical Committee in that context, as this was a priority issue for the Agreement.

211. Mr Biber added that the lead shot issue had always been a priority for AEWA and that this should be brought up at MOP6 to help raise resources, so that the Task Force could be put into place as soon as possible.

212. Mr Dereliev added that the Parties had decided to amend the AEWA Action Plan and '*endeavour to phase out the use of lead shot for hunting in wetlands as soon as possible in accordance with self-imposed and published timetables*', however it was obvious from the analysis of the national reports that Parties had failed to do this. The majority of Parties had neither phased out lead shot, nor considered doing this, so that the message would need to be strengthened to encourage them to take the necessary legislative steps.

213. Further suggestions included exploring sources of funding from the chemical industry and also the possibility of waiving VAT for non-toxic shot production.

Draft Resolution on Avoiding Unnecessary Additional Mortality for Migratory Waterbirds (Doc. TC 12.49)

214. Mr Stroud introduced this draft resolution, which listed the various sources of mortality for migratory waterbirds, with the aim of encouraging Parties to implement the significant range of guidance available for these sources. One outcome of this analysis was the fact that there is still a gap in guidance relating to by-catch from fisheries.

215. Mr Griffin stressed the importance of referring to the guidelines adopted by the CMS COP11 throughout the resolution. He added that a reference should also be made to collisions.

216. Ms Crockford reminded that a reference to the Renewable Energy Task Force should be added to the relevant preambular paragraph.

Action:	Further comments should be forwarded to Mr Stroud via the TC Workspace.
Deadline:	13 March 2015

Draft Resolution on the Extension and Revision of the AEWA Strategic Plan (SP) 2009/2017 and the Plan of Action for Africa (PoAA) 2012-2017 until 2018 and their revisions (TC 12.53)

217. Mr Dereliev introduced this draft resolution, the aim of which was to adjust the timelines of these two documents, which were currently mismatched. Both documents expired in 2017 and required extension since MOP7 would take place in 2018. The preambular part of the resolution referred to the limited progress made in the implementation of the SP and the positive results from the implementation of the PoAA and the substantial support received. Donors were also invited to provide extra funding towards the implementation of both these plans.

218. He stressed the importance of the Strategic Plan for Migratory Species 2015-2023 adopted by the CMS COP11 through Resolution 11.2, which should be taken into account during the revision of the AEWA Strategic Plan for the period 2019-2027 for consideration and adoption by MOP7.

219. The extension of the deadline for submission of national reports from 120 (according to the Agreement text) to 180 days in advance of the MOP had been introduced for the first time for the MOP6 reporting cycle to allow sufficient time for the analysis and would be kept as a standard paragraph for approval by each session of the MOP.

220. Mr Barbieri commented that the process within CMS to develop indicators to assess the achievement of the targets under the SP for Migratory Species and the development of a Companion Volume on implementation of the SP for various stakeholders was ongoing. Input would be sought from AEWA and the other Agreements under CMS towards these strategic issues.

221. Mr Stroud added that any strategic planning process was demanding and the revised AEWA Strategic Plan would determine the operations of the Agreement for the next decade; the TC would provide support towards this important process in the next triennium, with the aim of producing a very much improved and more focussed AEWA Strategic Plan and Plan of Action for Africa.

Action:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Comments should be provided to Ms Evelyn Parh Moloko• Mr Stroud would include this in the TC work plan 2016-2018
Deadline:	Comments: 13 March 2015

Draft Resolution: Update on AEWA's contribution to the Aichi Targets (TC 12.54)

222. Mr Stroud reported that the [CBD AICHI targets for Biodiversity](#) had been adopted in 2010 and represented a cross-cutting plan for biodiversity across all biodiversity MEAs. MOP5 outlined what AEWA's past contribution had been and looked forward to AEWA's contribution until 2020, requesting the Technical and Standing Committees to assess progress towards those targets and provide an triennial assessment.

223. As requested by MOP5, this would remain an Agenda item for each MOP through to 2020. The current document consisted of two annexes; Annex 1 reflecting the TC's assessment of priority needs in respect of delivery of Aichi Targets (with regard to migratory waterbirds) and Annex 2 is an up-date from the table presented to MOP5 and reflected AEWA's past, present and future contributions to the Strategic Goals and Aichi Targets.

224. Mr Stroud continued by going through Annex 1 and collecting feedback on the relevance of the strategic plan targets for AEWA and the TC assessment of future needs, thus providing input on how the AEWA process could contribute to the delivery of those targets.

225. Relating to Target 1, whereby people should be aware of the values of biodiversity by 2020, Mr Stroud noted that this was a difficult target to measure. One method of assessment could be through the national reports.

226. Miss Cremona reiterated the possibility of measuring the usage of guidance through a web-based analytics tool. She would provide some text which could be added on this.

227. Relating to Target 4, referring to sustainable production and consumption, Mr Griffin reiterated the importance of aligning terminology and referring to *lead shot* throughout.

228. Responding to a suggestion by Mr Barbieri to include a reference to the Strategic Plan for Migratory Species, Mr Stroud agreed that this should be acknowledged in this context, since it already incorporated the Aichi targets.

Action:	Further comments and suggested text should be provided to Mr Stroud via the TC Workspace. He would carry out a language check to align terminology throughout all the documents
Deadline:	13 March 2015

Agenda item 17. International Implementation Tasks (IITs)

229. Mr Dereliev introduced this agenda item (TC 12.51) regretting the low level of implementation of these tasks due lack of funding; he hoped that the situation would improve in the next triennium.

230. Progress had been made with regard to Species Conservation largely due to in-kind contributions. The exception being the coordination of the implementation of the Lesser White-fronted Goose ISSAP, for which Norway and Finland had provided continuous support.

231. Projects relating to the development of renewable energy and sustainable harvest guidelines had received support, however there was still a financial gap regarding the latter.

232. The tasks which had been implemented had been taken out. The list would also need some optimisation since some of the projects were not considered to be high priority, whereas others deserved support. The history of this list went back to the first days of the Agreement, since then the Strategic Plan had been adopted and the role of AEWA in the Aichi process also had to be considered.

233. Mr Trouvilliez noted that countries often had their own priorities for funding and were thus not flexible in their choice of issues for funding.

234. Other suggestions included limiting this long list - which could be daunting for potential donors - to ten projects and that activities relating to information and knowledge could be taken out.

235. Referring to the discussion on possibly linking the IITs to the Aichi targets, Mr Trouvilliez agreed that as an MEA, AEWA could contribute to the Aichi targets but agreed with many of those present, that there was a need to define AEWA's niche and where the added value of the Agreement lay.

236. Mr Stroud proceeded to go through the current IITs listed and the Meeting decided which of these could be deleted and which should remain. The Meeting decided to delete IITs 4, 5, 6, 8, 10,11,17,18, 24, 25 and 26. Others could be merged and the rest were considered to remain priorities for implementation. A Working Group was established to discuss the issue further and decide on how to present this to the StC and MOP.

237. In connection with fundraising in this context, Mr Dereliev briefly informed the Meeting about the new fundraising mechanism developed in conjunction with CMS – the [Migratory Species Champions Programme](#), with the aim of securing long-term and sustainable funding for the work of the Agreement. He explained that Champions were those donors who provided a minimum of 20,000 EUR p.a. for a minimum of three years towards an area of work. An evening event for donors was being planned for MOP6. The IWC may qualify to be featured here and perhaps also the IITs.

Decision/Action:	Mr Dereliev would provide a new version of the document on the TC Workspace for comments by 20 March 2015.
Deadline:	Comments: 10 April 2015

Agenda item 18. TC Work Plan 2016 - 2018

238. Mr Stroud introduced document TC 12.52 *Technical Committee Work Plan (2016-2018) and Modus Operandus*, noting that the MOP had never seen a consolidated list of the body of work they request of the TC. This document represented a first draft of the technical agenda for MOP7. Much of the work was being provided by the TC *pro bono*, which was becoming increasingly difficult, as shown by the many tasks given to the Committee by MOP5 which could not be completed (in comparison with former cycles). The volume of tasks given to the TC had steadily increased over the years and Parties should be aware that funding was needed to be able to deliver much of the work.

239. The document itself would be finalised during MOP. The work was previously structured according to the Working Groups; however, for the purpose of this list of tasks it was structured under the main headings of the AEWA Action Plan. Mr Stroud went through the list of issues on the list enabling the Meeting to provide initial feedback; he would post a further elaborated version on the TC Workspace for further comments after the meeting.

240. In connection with quality control in this context, Mr Harradine pointed out that the main principles (using already established guidelines) for preparing a report or review could be adopted by the TC in order to ensure as thorough a result as possible.

241. Mr Hughes added that a meta-analysis component in the systematic review procedure would be beneficial although this would require further resources. Particular care was needed if review results would potentially lead to policy change.

242. Mr Stroud reiterated that quality control was indeed an important issue and this could be further addressed via the TC Workspace, however he considered that the committee could be seen as providing a peer review of its products.

Decision/Action:	Mr Stroud would provide a revised version of the document by 31 March 2015 on the TC Workspace for further comments.
Deadline:	Comments: 17 April 2015

Agenda item 19. Date and Venue of the next Technical Committee Meeting

243. Mr Dereliev explained that the Technical Committee met twice between sessions of the MOP; the first meeting of the triennium was always a planning meeting for the work of the triennium. In this cycle the TC was proposing a work plan in advance, however the committee would still have to meet to initiate and further plan the work.

244. Since MOP6 was taking place in November 2015, March 2016 would be a convenient time to convene TC13. Israel had kindly agreed to host the current meeting, however this did not work out because of legal issues between the host and UNEP, which could not be solved on time. The Secretariat was in a negotiation process with the Israeli government and hoped that the next meeting could take place in Israel.

245. Concerns were voiced with regard to two intersessional meeting not being sufficient for the TC to work effectively, however this was a question of the available resources. The TC Workspace greatly facilitated the work of the TC and Working Groups could potentially arrange skype conference calls to enhance discussions.

246. Mr Stroud went on to refer to seven vacancies within the TC, which were coming up after MOP6 (Regional representatives for North & South-western Europe, Northern and Central Africa and TC experts in Environmental Law, Rural Economics, Game Management and CEPA).

247. Mr Dereliev explained that a call for nominations would go out to the AEWA national administrative and technical Focal Points, which would also be posted on the TC Workspace. The TC Chair, Vice-chair and the four organisations serving as permanent observers to the committee were also allowed to put forward nominations. The deadline for nominations was 22 May 2015.

248. The new TC Members and their alternates would be elected by the Meeting of the Parties at the recommendation of the Advisory Group, which comprised the current Chair and Vice-chair of the Standing Committee, the current Chair and Vice-chair of the Technical Committee, the Executive Secretary and the Technical Officer. The Advisory Group would be chaired by the Technical Committee Chair.

Agenda item 20. Any Other Business

249. Mr Stroud concluded by thanking all those present for their input before, during and after the meeting. He also thanked the Contracting Party observers present who were able to provide valuable input on the reality of implementing the Agreement.

250. He thanked Mr John Harradine, from BASC, who had served on the Technical Committee as invited expert on hunting issues since 2007 and for whom this would be the last Technical Committee Meeting. He had made a considerable contribution to the work of the committee over the years.

251. He went on to thank the Secretariat, particularly the new Executive Secretary, Mr Trouvilliez and Technical Officer, Mr Dereliev, Ms Mikander, Ms Lehmann, Mr Keil and Ms Kremer and all the rest of the AEWA staff for their significant contributions to the success of the Meeting.

252. Mr Trouvilliez thanked the Technical Committee as well as the whole AEWA Team. He particularly thanked Mr Stroud for his outstanding contribution to the work of the TC and as Chair of the Committee.

253. He went on to thank the retiring TC Members; Mr Azafzaf, Mr Mondain-Monval, Ms Lewis and last but not least, Mr Stroud for their individual considerable contributions towards the work and the success of the Technical Committee over the years.

ANNEX I - Reports by the TC Regional Representatives on the Implementation of AEWA in Their Respective Regions

Northern Africa – Mr Hichem Azafaf

Number of Contracting Parties in the region:

The Northern Africa region of AEWA consisted of seven signatory parties namely Algeria, Madeira (Portugal), Canary Islands (Spain), Egypt, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia.

This report was prepared with contribution from five of these territories: Canary Islands (Spain), Egypt, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia.

Activities to implement the Single Species Action Plans relevant to the region:

The majority of the Northern African countries monitor migratory waterbirds. In most of these countries, particularly Globally Threatened and Near Threatened species are monitored, e.g. Marbled Duck (*Marmaronetta angustirostris*), Audouin's Gull (*Larus audouinii*), White-headed Duck (*Oxyura leucocephala*), Ferruginous Duck (*Aythya nyroca*), Black-tailed Godwit (*Limosa limosa*), Eurasian Spoonbill (*Platalea leucorodia*) and Northern Bald Ibis (*Geronticus eremita*).

In Tunisia legal protection for these species (and other waterbird species) is provided through the annual hunting decree. The legal protection of most of the key sites for White-headed Duck, Ferruginous Duck, Eurasian Spoonbill and Black-tailed Godwit was maintained during the reporting period, but weak law enforcement is compromising conservation efforts.

In Morocco the monitoring of the Northern Bald Ibis population in the Souss Massa National Park continued. The population had a good reproductive season with 115 breeding pairs and was estimated at 524 individuals in 2014.

On the Canary Islands, conservation action was carried out for the Kentish Plover (*Charadrius alexandrinus*), which is also listed in annex II under the Barcelona Convention.

Emergency situations that have happened and affected waterbirds and/or their habitats and response to them:

In Tunisia, following the social and political unrest in 2011, natural habitats and resources remain under severe threat due to uncontrolled human activities such as poaching, extraction, urban development, pollution, etc. These are still impacting on key sites and bird populations (for example in the Ichkeul National Park).

In Libya many important sites have been affected by the ongoing civil war. Fighting is taking place near to several important wetlands especially on the coastline, in central Libya and in the western part near Abokammash and Almannghoub sebkhas. The area around Benghazi, which is one of the most important zones for birds and includes many wetlands, has also known intense fighting with different types of weapons and it is estimated that this might have had important impacts on these sites and the avifauna. However, it was currently impossible to make an impact assessment.

The huge spread of arms of different types (including guns), the absence of law enforcement and the enormous increase of bird hunters have negative impacts on migratory waterbirds. Moreover, due to the chaos and the absence of law enforcement, buildings are extending into the adjacent areas (buffer areas) of wetlands (example: Ain Azzargha and Ain Ashaghgha in the eastern part and Almannghoub in the western part).

In Egypt an assessment of the illegal killing of birds was conducted in November 2014 by Birdlife International in which the wetlands worst affected by illegal killing were identified. These will be priority sites for future planning of conservation action.

Activities on eradication or other types of action regarding alien species:

The occurrence of alien waterbird species is generally insignificant in the whole region. However, on the Canary Islands, Muscovy duck populations (*Cairinamoschata*) are increasing significantly, especially on Tenerife.

During site and species monitoring by the parties, special attention is always paid to the potential presence of the Ruddy Duck (*Oxyura jamaicensis*).

New or major ongoing activities on habitat (site) inventory, conservation or restoration and rehabilitation of waterbird habitats:

Tunisia reported the designation of a further Ramsar site *Naturel reserve of Seddine (Kef)*. Furthermore, several on-going conservation projects (some of them funded by the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund - CEPF) carried out in collaboration between international and national NGOs and the biodiversity conservation authorities allowed updating of relevant data on wetlands and other key sites.

Egypt continues to implement the AEWA small grant for waterbird study and survey in the Red Sea Islands. The country was collaborating with ONCFS for the International Mid-winter Waterbird Census in 2014 and 2015.

New or major ongoing research and monitoring activities on waterbirds and waterbird habitats:

Most countries (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya and Egypt) reported mid-winter waterbird counts (IWC) and monitoring of waterbird species in SPAs and IBAs.

Continued intensive monitoring of waterbird populations (wintering and breeding) at selected key sites was reported by Tunisia (wetlands of the Cape Bon, Ichkeul National Park, Salines de Thyna and desert wetlands in South Tunisia).

A new local language identification guide to waterbirds in Northern Africa (in Arabic language) was developed in partnership between the *National Office for Hunting and Wildlife in France (ONCFS)* and the Tunisian BirdLife International Partner Association "*Les Amis des Oiseaux*" (AAO) and presented to the public during a workshop organized by AAO in Tunis on 2 March 2013. Richly illustrated, the small pocket guide allows the identification of 200 waterbird species recorded in the region from the North of Sudan to Mauritania, passing through Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco.

Each species is presented with its vernacular Arabic names used in the seven countries, drawings and texts of identification, a map of distribution as well as information on its status in the region. This guide particularly aims to stimulate the International Waterbird Census in the region and is a contribution to the implementation of the African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement (AEWA) and in particular the African Initiative which aims to promote this Agreement on the African continent. The guide was developed with the financial support of the French Ministry of Ecology, Sustainable Development and Energy and the MAVA Foundation. 400 copies of the guide were sent free of charges to each of the seven countries.

AAO, TDV and ONCFS organised the closing workshop of Phase I of the North African IWC programme in November 2014 in Tunis (Tunisia). Several important points were discussed such as: the presentation of 2014 IWC data, the 1st North African IWC regional article, the planning for a second article and other publications, the future of the « [MedWaterbirds](#) » bulletin, the review of Phase I of the program, the perspectives for a second phase and the update of the database systems. Representatives from Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Egypt attended the meeting.

The Regional Activity Centre for Specially Protected Areas (RAC/SPA) organized the 2nd Symposium on the Conservation of Marine and Coastal Birds in the Mediterranean in Hammamet (Tunisia) from 20-22 February 2015, in partnership with AAO, Tour du Valat Biological and Conservatoire du Littoral. The participants of the symposium reviewed the current knowledge of the 25 bird taxa included in the SPA/BD Protocol and discussed the most recent results of research and conservation work on these species.

The AEWA Eurasian Spoonbill Expert Group Coordinator and Association AAO scheduled the VIII Spoonbill Workshop to strengthen the spoonbill network towards North African and Eastern Mediterranean countries' to take place in Djerba, Tunisia from 23 - 29 November 2015.

In four countries (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Libya) a CEPF-funded wetland conservation project is ongoing in eight key biodiversity sites. The project is managed by Tour du Valat and carried out in each of the countries by a national NGO in partnership with national and local conservation authorities and local NGOs and communities. Two activity axes are related to research and monitoring; the development of monitoring protocols and the identification of management indicators.

In Tunisia, AAO developed a conservation project for the benefit of five key biodiversity sites, among which 4 wetlands. This project is carried out since July 2013 with financial support from the CEPF and in partnership with 4 local NGOs. It includes the set-up and maintenance of an early warning system, the development of participatory monitoring protocols & monitoring of bird populations, habitat conservation status, threats and conservation activities.

One of the results of this project and the increasing collaboration between the national BLI partner, local NGOs and management authorities was in 2014 the early detection and surveillance of a small Greater Flamingo breeding colony in the Korba Lagoon (Cape Bon) in Northern Tunisia. The concerted action between all stakeholders, led by AAO, ensured the successful breeding of the colony and allowed the first ever flamingo ringing in Tunisia with support from the RAC/SPA and Tour du Valat.

In Egypt the number of wetlands surveyed for IWC is steadily increasing. In 2012 Burullus and Manzalla Lakes (Northern Lake), Fayoum Lakes, Red Sea Islands and the Southern parts of the Nile River were included. At the same time, the Wetlands International IWC database was updated by re-formatting waterbird counts data from different sources. Egypt was the first North African country to digitize all wetlands in the country. Furthermore the IWC data collection form was endorsed as the standard data sheet for waterbirds monitoring within protected areas and IWC was considered to be a priority biodiversity monitoring activity in the strategic plan of the nature conservation sector for 2015-2020. In 2015, the IWC at Lake Nasser and the Nile River was conducted with the support of ONCFS, through signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with EEAA for finalizing this activity.

Due to the unrest in Libya, waterbird monitoring only took place in a few areas, such as in the area around Tripoli where new records of breeding species such as the Marbled Duck (publication) could be made.

New or major ongoing education and information activities on waterbirds, waterbird habitats and the Agreement:

Several countries organised events specific to waterbirds and wetlands during *World Migratory Bird Day* in 2013 and 2014. Equally, *World Wetlands Day* was celebrated by several countries during this reporting period.

The network brochure entitled “Mediterranean Waterbirds” was launched and dispatched in North African countries.

In Libya, training courses on the monitoring of waterbirds were carried out at two sites in the eastern part of Libya.

In Tunisia AAO organized bird identification and monitoring training for local NGOs and site management units at 7 wetlands.

Problematic cases threatening waterbirds or their habitats:

A potential threat to migratory waterbirds was emerging in Tunisia with plans to enhance the use of alternative energies such as wind and solar power. Special attention must be given to capacity development and improvement of the legal and institutional framework allowing effective impact assessment and the application of best practices.

In the majority of the countries legislation for the protection of waterbirds and their habitats exists, but weak law enforcement is compromising conservation efforts

Illegal waterbird hunting is increasing in the eastern part of Libya and in Tunisia, where growing bird traffic is also putting waterbirds under threat.

The issue of illegal killing and trade was ongoing with shooting and hunting in Libya and trapping in eastern Libya during the migratory period.

Responding to an enquiry about the problem of poisoning of White Storks in Egypt, Mr Azafzaf had received no information and would follow-up on the issue.

Mr Azafzaf acknowledged with thanks the valuable contributions towards this report from: Mr Miguel Aymerich (Canary Islands - Spain), Mr Zouhair Amhaouchand and Mr Sidi Imad Cherkaoui (Morocco), Mr Essam Bourass and Mr Khaled Taieb (Libya) as well as Mr Wed Abdel Latif Ibrahim (Egypt).

Annex 1 to Report on Northern Africa by Mr Hichem Azafzaf:

Status of populations of Muscovy duck (Cairina moschata) in the wetlands of the Canary Islands

Following the guidelines to prevent the introduction of exotic species of AEW (Owens et al., 2006), the Canary Islands Government is tracked from certain exotic birds detected in wetlands of the archipelago. As a result of the studies conducted, it has been detected that the Muscovy duck (*Cairina moschata*) should be given especial attention and control or eradication actions by the competent authorities in order to prevent negative effects on native species and in particular, on migratory species.

This species is widely distributed as a domestic pet and is present in all the islands, both in zoological centres, parks and gardens in urban environments, as well as ponds, dams and reservoirs in rural environments, including channels of ravines with puddles. In these places, it lives in semi-freedom and nests successfully (Martin & Lorenzo, 2001). Not surprisingly, they cover significant areas, stopping at different locations, and are regular visitors at humanized environments. Site-specific problems had been documented with Coots (*Fulica atra*) and Moorhen (*Gallinula chloropus*) at some wetlands where they coexist.

Today, the Muscovy Duck can be considered as a fully established species on most of the islands (Lawrence, 2007). In recent years, it has been found nesting regularly in virtually all of the islands, except in Lanzarote and El Hierro. On these two islands, the specimens found in wetlands and in rural environments do not appear to have been successfully established at the time. Other locations where the species occurs included the ravine and the mouth of "Los Molinos" and the surroundings of the golf courses of "Caleta de Fuste" (Fuerteventura), "Charco de Maspalomas" and interior dams such as "Chira" and "Ayagaures" (Gran Canaria), ponds as "Valle de Guerra", "Tejina" and "Bajamar" (Tenerife), dams of "Chejelipes" and "Vallehermoso" (La Gomera), Recreation Center of "Barlovento" and puddles of "Barranco de Las Angustias" (La Palma), etc.

According to a recent report by SEO / BirdLife Partner Spain, commissioned by the Government of the Canary Islands, there should be an effective control of the Muscovy duck given its current distribution. It will prevent its current expansion. The site-specific competition with different wild species, both nesting and migratory species, that share canary wetlands with this duck will be reduced. While health risks will be also reduced (Lorenzo & González, 2014)

Responding to an enquiry by Mr Olivier Biber (Chair of the CMS African-Eurasian Migratory Landbirds Working Group), about the longstanding issue of poisoning of White Storks in Egypt, Mr Azafzaf had not received any feedback on that but would enquire. He reported that the White Stork was actually very much valued and deeply embedded in the Egyptian culture.

1. Background on implementation

- Number of Contracting Parties in the region: 5 / number of Range States in the region: 14
- New accessions since the previous TC meeting: 0
- Number of Range States (Parties and non-Party States) that provided feedback for this report: five – Botswana (NP), Malawi (NP), South Africa (P), Swaziland (P), Zimbabwe (P).

2. Major threats to waterbirds in the region, especially focusing on new or developing issues since previous TC meetings.

a) Emergency situations that have happened and affected waterbirds and/or their habitats:

- Botswana and Zimbabwe: none reported.
- Malawi: Unprecedented floods throughout much of the country in early 2015 which might have affected water birds and their habitats.
- Swaziland: Extreme wildfires, toxic spills into rivers (no further details known).
- South Africa: Marine oil spills have in the past contaminated large numbers of seabirds and are a continuing threat around South Africa e.g. in 2013 a ship ran aground in Goukamma Nature Reserve outside of Knysna. Many birds were successfully rehabilitated. However, the amount of work needed to help the birds is enormous - volunteers caught oiled birds to clean and non-oiled penguins to prevent them from getting oiled.

b) Introduction/spread of alien species and activities on eradication or other type of action regarding alien species:

- *Salvinia molesta* in the Okavango Delta is an issue, but not a very significant threat in Botswana otherwise.
- Water hyacinth (*Eichhornia crassipes*) and Mesquite (*Prosopis juliflora*) are challenges in Malawi. Mesquite colonizes a large area at Swang'oma in the Lake Chilwa Basin.
- Swaziland: Major alien plant species particularly those that consume a lot of water and encroach on wetlands of any kind are the key threats throughout the country. A recent survey indicated that 80% of the country is invaded by at least one of the 16 priority species.
- South Africa: The National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act (NEMBA) was promulgated in 2004, and the Alien and Invasive Species Regulations for this Act came into effect on 1 October 2014. The Regulations aim to prevent the introduction and spread of alien and invasive species across South Africa. A total of 559 alien species are listed as invasive and 560 species are prohibited from being introduced into South Africa. Any contravention of the provisions of the Act or Regulations may render a person liable for a fine and in some instances imprisonment.
- Zimbabwe: Lake Chivero and Manyame have problems with invasive plant species, mostly water hyacinth

c) Progress by Contracting Parties in the region with phasing out the use of lead shot for hunting in wetlands.

- The Government of Botswana has not yet initiated any move to phase out the use of lead shot.
- A greater part of hunting in Malawi uses traditional methods, mainly snaring.
- This is not used in Swaziland.
- South Africa: further investigations need to be undertaken with relevant stakeholders such as the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries.
- Zimbabwe: hunting is not an issue in wetlands.

d) Problematic cases threatening waterbirds or their habitats

- Botswana: Major infrastructural developments, such as the proposed powerlines connecting Morupule to Maun, and the Maun-Ghanzi powerlines, are a significant threat for many waterbirds.

- Unregulated fishing (such as at Lake Ngami) is another very significant threat, given the importance of Lake Ngami to Botswana's birds.
- Malawi: Deforestation (leading to erosion and silting) of rivers, lakes and other wetlands, infrastructure development, habitat degradation and fragmentation due to agricultural expansion and over exploitation of natural resources for livelihoods are threats in Malawi.
- Swaziland: Major agricultural expansion programmes, human settlements encroaching on wetlands, infrastructure development in/near critical habitats.
- South Africa: Halo effect caused by telecommunication towers and island bases with night lighting in clouded or misty conditions that cause birds to fly into obstacles.
- Expansion of electrical infrastructure causing collision and electrocution, especially cranes, flamingos, storks, bustards, vultures and eagles.
- The Wind Energy sector is expanding rapidly in South Africa. The first wind farms have begun construction and should become operational soon. Avifaunal specialists now need to consider how to monitor the actual impact of wind energy facilities on birds and reflect on lessons learned so far in assessing the potential impacts of wind energy on birds in South Africa.
- Zimbabwe: Habitats outside the protected area system are threatened by agricultural expansion and urban expansion

e) Other

- There have been major shifts in the distributions of marine forage fish resources off South Africa, which have brought about mismatches in the distributions of the breeding localities and prey of some seabirds, which have consequently suffered large decreases in numbers.

3. Significant conservation initiatives for waterbirds in the region, especially focusing on new or developing issues since previous TC meetings.

a) A summary of which Single Species Action Plans relevant to the region are being implemented:

Botswana:

- Slaty Egret ISSAP: recently approved, coordinated implementation should commence during 2015, including all five KAZA range states.
- Lesser Flamingo ISSAP: some aspects of the plan implemented as part of the BirdLife-led GEF-funded Strategic Partnerships for Protected Area project (2009 - 2013), such as designation of Flamingo Sanctuary as a Protected Area, and more elements to be implemented as part of the new BirdLife Botswana-led Sustainable Land Management (SLM) Makgadikgadi project (2014 – 2017).
- The bi-annual waterfowl counts also allow for some monitoring of other Botswana waterbirds for which ISSAPs exist (such as Maccoa Duck, Corncrake), but there isn't much direct implementation of those action plans.
- While not an AEWAs species action plan, BirdLife Botswana led the compilation of a national Wattled Crane Action Plan, aspects of which are being implemented; although implementation is below par due to a lack of resources (human and financial).

Swaziland:

- The ISSAP species which spend part of their life cycle in the country have been identified.
- The proposed Ramsar sites that have been investigated include sites of importance to these species to enhance the protection of their wintering and breeding areas.
- Furthermore, the legislation governing protected areas is being revised to include special reserves which will include special habitats for species such as waterbirds.

South Africa:

- The African Penguin Biodiversity Management Plan was adopted in 2013 in terms of the National Environmental Management Biodiversity Act and is being implemented.

- ISSAP for the White-winged Flufftail: BirdLifeSA tried to source funding from the Wildlife Without Borders Critical Fund to do research for the implementation of the ISSAP. The proposal was not successful. Additionally BirdLife SA is coordinating a workshop to be held in Ethiopia later in 2015
- ISSAP for the Lesser Flamingo (*Phoeniconaias minor*) – no action yet.

Zimbabwe: none reported.

b) New or major ongoing waterbird species re-establishment (reintroduction, supplementation) initiatives.

- BirdLife Botswana is looking to establish a captive breeding facility in Kasane (scheduled to be operational from early 2017); while this will primarily be targeted at vultures, but it is envisaged that some threatened waterbirds will also benefit.
- None in Malawi or Swaziland.
- South Africa: Consideration is being given to attempting to establish a colony of African Penguins closer to the present location of their main prey items.
- Zimbabwe: None - all conservation is done in-situ.

c) New or major ongoing activities on habitat (site) inventory, conservation, or restoration and rehabilitation of waterbird habitats:

- Botswana: The new BirdLife-led SLM Makgadikgadi project (2014 – 2017) has components of habitat restoration and rehabilitation in the Makgadikgadi, which should directly benefit waterbirds.
- Malawi: Under the Shire River Basin Management Program, a consultancy firm has been engaged to study the ecology, hydrology and livelihood activities of the Elephant Marsh which is a major wetland in the Lower Shire Valley. The ecology studies will also include waterbirds. The plans are to designate the site as a Ramsar Site and enhance community based wetland management.
- Swaziland: An inventory of wetlands in the country has been done looking at all types of wetlands as per Ramsar definition.
- A GEF-funded 6-year project to expand the protected area network in the country is also being implemented starting in 2015.
- The country is also funding (through the National Environment Fund) small-scale projects aimed at protecting and restoring wetlands particularly in communal areas.
-
- South Africa: Artificial nest boxes have been introduced at several colonies of African Penguins.
- Zimbabwe: Environmental Management Agency has carried out an inventory of wetlands. Zimbabwe recently designated 7 sites as Ramsar Sites.

d) New or major ongoing research and monitoring activities on waterbirds and waterbird habitats.

- Botswana: Bi-annual waterfowl counts (January and July) covering all major wetlands are ongoing, whose data has been summarised in two publications, covering the periods 1980 - 2000 and 2000 - 2010 respectively (copies available from BirdLife Botswana).
- Swaziland: This is reported as ongoing and primarily done by the University of Swaziland's Department of Biological Sciences (but IWC has no data for Swaziland).
- A collation of all species occurrences has also been done with the aim of ascertaining their spatial distribution in the country.
- As part of the recently concluded climate change vulnerability and adaptation assessment, waterbirds were included as species of concern to project possible future impacts of climate change.
- South Africa: Numbers of 12 seabird species breeding at selected colonies are monitored annually.
- Birdlife SA is involved in several initiatives aimed at providing the science needed to implement an ecosystem approach to fisheries (i.e. explicitly considering the needs of top predators like penguins when managing fishing quotas). Linked to this is a study on the effectiveness of creating 20 km fishing exclusion zones around penguin breeding islands. Another exciting research programme involves satellite tracking

of adult penguins outside of the breeding season to identify key foraging areas. This research allows us to identify potential threats in the important foraging areas and begin to address them.

- The Second Southern African Bird Atlas Project (SABAP2) is an important project in the region, and the data feeds into the Red Listing and IBA selection processes. It is a joint venture between the Animal Demography Unit at the University of Cape Town, BirdLife South Africa and the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI), and will hopefully run indefinitely. The project includes South Africa, Lesotho, Swaziland and Namibia. Information is updated continuously on the project website.
- The Coordinated Waterbird Counts (CWAC) project is ongoing, with regular mid-summer and mid-winter censuses at over 400 wetlands, and waterbird data for a further 600 sites are curated.
- Zimbabwe: Wetlands International assisted BirdLife Zimbabwe to set up [Observado](#), a new on-line data management system for waterbird data.

e) New or major ongoing education and information activities on waterbirds, waterbird habitats and the Agreement.

- Botswana: Initiatives here include World Migratory Bird Day commemorations (featuring 500+ students and 1000+ general public), held annually since 2009. Next one to be held in Letlhakane (18 April 2015), and will profile flamingos.
- BirdLife Botswana Environmental Education coordinator to be based in Letlhakane from March 2015, and will support at least 30 schools in the Makgadikgadi catchment area.
- At least 1,000 Waterbirds of Orapa game park posters produced for Debswana, and now available for visitors to this park, and shared with many schools in the catchment.
- A guide to help field identification of Lesser and Greater Flamingos is being produced by BirdLife Botswana, and should be ready for wide distribution from April 2015.
- A DVD of all of Botswana's birds (including a specific sections on IBAs, threatened birds, waterbirds etc.) is currently being produced by BirdLife Botswana; due for release in May 2015.
- Botswana is looking to submit AEWa accession documents during 2015 (awaiting Cabinet discussion and endorsement presently, having done all requisite stakeholder consultations). This should then significantly enhance implementation of AEWa plans in Botswana.
- Swaziland: The National Environmental Education Programme, under the auspices of the Swaziland National Trust Commission, is responsible for information and communication and occasionally raises awareness on waterbirds.
- South Africa: The *Save our Seabirds Festival* is held annually in the first week of October as part of the National Marine Week in Cape Town. This is to raise awareness and funds for seabird conservation.
- The annual *Flufftail Festival* raises awareness for the need to conserve, not only the White-winged Flufftail, but other wetland birds, their threatened habitats and our country's scarcest natural resource i.e. water. Launched in February 2013 in conjunction with Bird Life South Africa's 2013 Bird of the Year, it is held in Johannesburg for a week. This is aimed at reaching thousands of business owners and residents of Johannesburg through displays and interactive activities.
- World Migratory Bird Day is an annual event which is celebrated during the second weekend of May.
- Zimbabwe: Production of a Waterbird Field Guide for educational purposes

4) Any other relevant information on regional conservation issues that would enhance the understanding of the Technical Committee

Botswana

- a) Impacts on waterbirds of vulture/carnivore poisoning (both intentional and unintentional) needs to be assessed, in view of the fact that some of the poisoning has occurred near water bodies in Botswana.
- b) Initial findings on lead concentrations in vultures suggest very high concentrations; could this also be happening in waterbirds, and if so, what are the implications?

Swaziland:

There is need for stronger regional initiatives for collaboration and on-the-ground cooperation in monitoring the movements of waterbirds particularly looking at migration patterns, stop-over sites, flyways, population

dynamics, etc. This will help us to quickly identify and enhance our understanding of new and emerging threats and also in identifying areas of conservation priority.

South Africa:

A meeting to develop a multi-species action plan for seabirds in the Benguela upwelling system was held in Namibia in 2014, under the auspices of AEWAs. South Africa participated in this meeting and, through BirdLife South Africa, will be coordinating the development of this document.

Mr Stroud added that feral cats on the United Kingdom overseas territory Ascension Island were proving to have a major impact on seabird species and a project had been installed to eradicate them.

1. Background on implementation

- The Western Africa region consists of 17 Range States.
- Feedback was received from two countries only. However, there had been the opportunity to go to Sierra Leone and report according to personal observation and communication from one of the experts involved in developing a project for the Sierra Leone River Estuary

2. Major threats to waterbirds in the region, especially focusing on new or developing issues since previous TC meetings. These may include some or all of the following issues, if information is available:

a) Emergency situations that have happened and affected waterbirds and/or their habitats:

- Agriculture: In Sierra Leone, significant stretches of mangrove vegetation along the inner extent of the Sierra Leone River Estuary are cleared for swamp rice cultivation.
- Fishing: Artisanal fishing is predominant in the sub-region. Legislation exists on limiting the mesh size of fishing nets and prohibition of fishing by large trawlers, but these are not adhered to, despite recent improvement in law enforcement.
- Settlement: The growth of the population in cities near wetlands e.g. Freetown, Sierra Leone and Accra, Ghana continue to pose a threat to the integrity of major wetlands. For example, in Sierra Leone the sprawling of communities closer to the mouth of the river, especially in the southern shore, has led to the creation of unbridled settlements that are causing serious pollution and siltation problems along the banks of the estuary. The situation is a threat to coastal ecology and the impact on waterbird numbers has been significant.
- Industrial Pollution and Mining: Many of the industries in and around Freetown dump untreated wastes into this estuary. Oil spillage from tankers offloading at the Freetown port affects marine life. The use of the estuary for the loading and transport of iron ore by African Minerals and London Mining is suspected to increase heavy metal pollution in the estuary. There have been two episodes of explosion in sea weeds within the estuary

b) Introduction/spread of alien species and activities on eradication or other type of action regarding alien species.

- No cases reported.

c) Progress by Contracting Parties in the region with phasing out the use of lead shot for hunting in wetlands.

- Nothing reported.

d) Problematic cases threatening waterbirds or their habitats (e.g. major infrastructural developments, changes in legislation, etc.).

- In Ghana, the Densu Delta and the Sakumo Ramsar sites are all heavily being built up and gradually reducing habitats for waterbirds.
- Other threats to the habitat include harvesting of fuels (wood); pollution mainly through the dumping of refuse, discharge of industrial and domestic waste, and, in some cases, agricultural runoff into wetlands, prominent in and around the Keta Lagoon Complex as well as the Songor Lagoon.

3. Significant conservation initiatives for waterbirds in the region, especially focusing on new or developing issues since previous TC meetings. These may include some or all of the following issues, if information is available:

a) A summary of which Single Species Action Plans relevant to the region are being implemented.

- No single species initiative reported.

b) New or major ongoing waterbird species re-establishment (reintroduction, supplementation) initiatives.

- None reported

c) New or major ongoing activities on habitat (site) inventory, conservation, or restoration and rehabilitation of waterbird habitats.

- The [Centre for African Wetlands](#) (CAW), Ghana received a grant of Euros 21,699 from the AEWA Small Grants Fund to implement the project, Priority setting and conservation of migratory waterbird species at key coastal wetland sites in Ghana. The aim of the project was to analyse the 20 year waterbird count data collected from coastal wetland sites, and based on the results, re-define key wetland sites in Ghana and advocate for their protection. The project lasted for 21 months (January 2013-September 2014). Three main objectives were defined for the project, namely:
 - To analyse the long-term (20+ years) waterbird counts in Ghana and Sanderling demographic data for better understanding of trends in waterbird species populations;
 - To review the importance of Ghana's coastal wetlands for waterbirds with a view to identifying additional wetlands requiring protection to secure long-term survival of key species;
 - To advocate for enhanced management of designated Ramsar sites and protection of additional key sites.

The Esiama wetland site continues to be the most important site for Sanderlings

d) New or major ongoing research and monitoring activities on waterbirds and waterbird habitats.

- The Centre for African Wetlands and [Ghana Wildlife Society](#) continue to manage the Ghana Ringing Scheme (GRS) which has been in operation since 1986
Currently the centre is involved in:
 - Ringing of waders using metal rings;
 - Colour marking of individual sanderlings at Esiama in the Western Regions of Ghana;
 - Colour ring reading/observation. This is being done in collaboration with the Global Flyway Network which is coordinated by the [Netherlands Institute for Sea Research](#) (NIOZ) and the University of Groningen;
 - In terms of monitoring, the CAW undertakes monthly waterbird counts focusing on the Ramsar sites. The Centre also undertakes ecological studies on selected waterbird species including Royal, Common and Sandwich Terns as well as Sanderlings. Some of these studies are either carried out directly by the Centre or by research students who are supervised by the Centre.

New or major ongoing education and information activities on waterbirds, waterbird habitats and the Agreement.

With regard to the awareness creation, the Ghana Wildlife Society has been in the forefront over the years. However due to lack of funds the use of the Wildlife Clubs in Basic and Senior High Schools across the country as a means of creating awareness was not sustainable and most clubs have become dormant.

4. Any other relevant information on regional conservation issues that would enhance the understanding of the Technical Committee.

- A major challenge in the sub-region is information sharing. Focal points do not respond to messages, some of them had also changed jobs so they were no longer at post.
- It is recommend that a meeting of regional country focal points to share information on progress if possible.

Mr Stroud acknowledged that the question of contacting national Focal points and obtaining relevant feedback had been discussed in the past. Sub-regional meetings were not a realistic alternative, holding the Meetings of the Technical Committee around the Agreement area did bring Parties together.

Mr Dereliev reiterated the fact that although sub-regional meetings would be ideal, neither the capacity nor the required resources were available. The Secretariat was however fundraising with the aim of organising a meeting for the African Focal Points in preparation of MOP6 (pre-MOP).

The Secretariat endeavoured to encourage governments to appoint Focal Points, however it was not always communicated to the Secretariat when people left or a new Focal point was designated. The Secretariat recognised the issue and tried to update contacts as often as possible.

Ms Moloko reported that some sub-regional meetings had already taken place in the framework of the African Initiative. She noted that communication was often hampered due to language problems. One option could be that the Secretariat could find a way of helping out with translations. Group emails had been established for the sub-regional Focal Points to facilitate communication.

Mr Muchai reported that from the 10 Contracting Parties in the region, three had provided feedback. He reported that in South Sudan, the accession process was ongoing.

Major threats in the region, often due to a lack of wetland policy and commercial interests, included:

- Wetland degradation and wetland encroachment;
- Water pollution from flower farms;
- Water regulation and irrigation activities;
- Impacts of agriculture;
- Forest (catchment) exploitation, e.g Mau Forest, Kenya;
- Waterbird hunting and illicit wildlife trade and trafficking;
- Human wildlife conflicts, e.g. cranes;
- Wind farms and expanding powerline grids;
- Poor waste management and disposal; and
- Residential and commercial development.

Agricultural intensification was causing a drastic decline in shorebird numbers in a large part of Eastern Africa. Other developments impacting migratory waterbirds were the production of bio-fuels in the Tana River Delta floodplain wetlands and mangroves on the north Kenyan coast and the expansion of commercial farms in Ethiopian wetlands and the extensive use of agrochemicals.

Emergency situations resulted from the widespread drought in Eastern Africa due to decreases in rainfall, as a result of climate change throughout the entire region, dams and irrigation schemes and unexpectedly large drops in river flows.

Toxic chemicals and oil spill were being used in South Sudan in the drilling of petroleum, causing severe damage to waterbirds, coming into contact with polluted water. Oil spill had been a problem in South Sudan in the past, resulting in various levels of soil, water and ground water pollution.

Introduction/spread of alien species in the region included:

- Water hyacinth (*Eichhornia crassipes*);
- Mesquite tree (*Prosopis juliflora*);
- Introduced carnivorous fish and crayfish;
- Invasive Indian House Crow (*Corvus splendens*) continues to be a major problem for both waterbirds and terrestrial species in coastal Eastern Africa.

Phasing out of lead shot:

- Ethiopia – phased out since 30 December 2011.
- South Sudan: Ban imposed on hunting since 2012.
- Other Eastern African countries had not yet phased out the use of lead shot.

Problematic cases threatening waterbirds and habitats:

- Soda ash extraction – Lake Magadi, Kenya, Lake Natron, Tanzania (breeding site for Lesser Flamingos). In late 2014 construction of a facility at Engaruka, near Lake Natron;
- Geothermal and wind power developments.
- Pesticide hunting with Furadan (Bunyala Rice Irrigation scheme, Kenya);
- Drainage of the wetland for settlement and farms;
- Hydro-electric dams;

- Salt manufacture and Mining;
- Piping for domestic water;
- Uncontrolled agricultural schemes and infrastructural development projects (Sudan).

International Single Species Action Plans (ISSAPs):

- Implementation of ISSAPs in the region is scant;
- Tanzania: National Wetlands Working Group, WCST and TAWIRI agreed on a new National Single Species Action Plan for the Lesser Flamingo based on the AEWA ISSAP;
- Uganda was developing a National Action Plan for the conservation of the Shoebill, as well as for the Grey Crested Crane.

Ongoing waterbird species re-establishment initiatives:

- Currently no tangible activities in the region

Inventory, conservation, restoration, rehabilitation of waterbird habitats:

- Replanting of Papyrus fringe along the Lake Naivasha;
- Demarcations of Riparian land at Lake Naivasha by the IMARISHA project: Economic strengthening for households affected by AIDS;
- Prioritization of the Coastal Delta accepted as a Ramsar Site in 2002;
- Tana Delta accepted as a Ramsar Site in 2012;
- Restoration for the flamingo habitats in Western Uganda;
- Promotion of birding tourism to generate revenue for communities and Government in Uganda;
- Strengthening legislation – Wildlife Act is under review and Uganda Wildlife Policy 2014 was approved by Cabinet and is ready for implementation.

Research and monitoring activities on waterbirds and waterbird habitats

There was a lack of data and a general decline in waterbird counts in the region.

- Kenya: January and July annual waterfowl census;
- Kenya: Ongoing surveys of Maccua Duck;
- Ethiopia: January waterfowl census (31 major wetlands);
- Uganda: Annual waterfowl census;
- Tanzania: Annual waterfowl census;
- South Sudan: Waterbird census (funding constraints)

Education and information on waterbirds, habitats and Agreement

- [The Flyway Training Kit](#);
- BirdLife Africa Partnership Secretariat;
- [WMBD](#) celebrations in all countries;
- Wildlife Trust – education and awareness of bird poisoning within the irrigation schemes;
- Lake Naivasha Sustainable Project, [National Museums of Kenya](#), [NatureKenya](#), Community-based Organisation Education and Advocacy;
- Supports undergraduates, Master's and PhD students doing field surveys.

Other Conservation issues in Eastern Africa

- Poverty;
- Population growth;
- Rising demand for goods and services;

- Poor governance and management;
- Inadequate technology, knowledge and incentives for alternative livelihoods;
- Limited coordination and landscape focus;
- Unsustainable use of wetlands resources;
- Wetland policy;
- Development of wetland monitoring tools.

Mr Stroud thanked Mr Owusu for the comprehensive report. Despite all the good efforts being made, many problems remained, some of which could be on the agenda of the Ramsar Convention.

Mr Muchai confirmed that in Kenya and Uganda many measures were coordinated with Ramsar. Commenting on the decline in waterbird counting activities, Mr Muchai explained that counting was mainly carried out by volunteers, however funding was needed for their transport or accommodation costs while in the field. Support was also urgently needed for the development of training tools for monitoring and protocols. There was also the problem of the high fluctuation in volunteers – continuity would lead to higher efficiency.

Responding to an enquiry about the issue of the lack of policy, or rather enforcement, Mr Muchai confirmed that enforcement was the problem. In fact there was also a problem with overlapping policies. This came to light in connection with the measures to control the spread of water hyacinth at Lake Victoria, which had, unfortunately, not been effective due to the countries involved each having different policies.

1. Background on implementation

The Central European Region consists of 18 Range States, of the 12 Contracting Parties, five provided feedback towards this report. Serbia was the only non-Party Range State which contributed to this report.

2. Major threats to waterbirds in the region

- Extreme climatic events (droughts, floods, windstorms) seem to be much more frequent in recent years (Hungary).
- Habitat loss:
 - Abandonment of salt pans (Ulcinj in Montenegro, Comacchio and Molentargius in Italy);
 - Coastal erosion (Italy);
 - Tourism and recreational activities on sandy beaches (Italy).
- Introduction of alien species (Coypu and *Amorpha fruticosa* in Serbia; American Mink in Slovakia).
- Lead shots: ban in wetlands as of 2020 in Serbia and 2015 in Slovakia.

3. Significant conservation initiatives for waterbirds in the region

a) New or major ongoing activities on habitat (site) inventory, conservation, or restoration and rehabilitation of waterbird habitats.

Serbia

- Restoration and rehabilitation of Obedska bara (Ramsar and IBA site).
- New protected areas (in process of designation) important for waterbirds:
 - Protected landscape Forland Beograda - newly established protected area in Danube floodplains near Belgrade.
 - Protected habitat Zimovalište malog vranca - roosting place of Pygmy Cormorant in Belgrade.
 - Special nature reserve Brzansko moravište - wetland in the valley of Velika Morava.
 - Ramsar site Djerdap - includes NP Djerdap and IBA Mala Vrbica.
 - Gružansko jezero - IBA in Central Serbia (feasibility study for protection is being developed).

Italy

- Three LIFE projects on wetland restoration in Natura 2000 sites and improvement of breeding conditions of waterbirds are ongoing:
 - [LIFE10NAT/IT/000256](#) “Environmental Management and Conservation in Mediterranean salt works and coastal lagoons”
 - [LIFE13 NAT/IT/000115](#) “LIFE AGREE - coAstal laGoon long teRm managEmEnt”
- Eleven new Ramsar sites were designated (4 in 2011 and 7 in 2012) and possibly presented at COP12.

Montenegro

- Conservation project at Skadar Lake.
- Artificial floating rafts for Dalmatian pelicans were set up to prevent the threat of water fluctuations which often flooded the nests. These rafts seem to be very successful as population size increased from 28 pairs in 2013 to 38 in 2014 and fledging success was the largest ever observed since the last century.

Slovakia

- Development of the Programme of Wetland Conservation in 2015-2021 and Action Plan for its implementation for 2015-2018;
- ERDF project of the State Nature Conservancy of the Slovak Republic (SNC) on the establishment of a monitoring system for habitats and species; development of management plans to achieve favourable conservation status of selected species in SPAs;

- Transborder projects on species inventory, monitoring, database development, public awareness; LIFE projects on wetland restoration in Natura 2000 sites and improvement of breeding conditions of selected waterbirds;
- Coordination of the Carpathian Wetland Initiative as regional Ramsar initiative;
- Establishment of the Carpathian Wetland Centre by the State Nature Conservancy.

Serbia

- International Waterbird Counts since 1984.
- Monitoring of gull and tern colonies on the river Velika Morava and Drina.

Italy

- The National Report of IWC 2001-2010 was published at the end of 2014 by the [Institute for Environmental Protection and Research](#) (ISPRA).
- Two National action plans were submitted to the Ministry for the Environment for endorsement: Pigmy Cormorant and Black Stork.

Slovakia

- Red List of Birds of Slovakia and Carpathian Region
- [LIFE project](#) is running on development of the action plan for *Botaurus stellaris* and *Aythya nyroca* ([SOS/BirdLife Slovakia](#));

Hungary

- Wetland restoration projects (the [Environment and Energy Operation Programme](#)) supported/support 44 projects.
 - Total number of huntable waterfowl species was reduced in October 2012
 - Greylag Goose (*Anser anser*) became a huntable species
 - Teal (*Anas crecca*) and Goldeneye (*Bucephala clangula*) became protected species.

b) A summary of which Single Species Action Plans relevant to the region are being implemented

Hungary

Lesser White-fronted Goose, Black-tailed Godwit, Eurasian Spoonbill, and Red-breasted Goose ISSAPs are being implemented in Hungary.

1. Background on implementation

The AEWA Eastern Europe Region includes 10 Range States (European Russia, Belarus, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan) and the European Union.

Contracting Parties in the Region: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, and the European Union.

The total area of the region: 5, 2 million km²; population: about 200 million.

Number of Range States that provided feedback to this report: eight (including EU).

The information for this report was collected through the National Focal Points for AEWA/CMS or other relevant experts/organizations. Waterbird conservation issues and problems are very varied amongst the AEWA Range States of Eastern Europe. Therefore for practical reasons the presented information in this report is compiled separately for several sub-regions of Eastern Europe.

1. Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania

The comprehensive review of national AEWA implementation activities were provided by these countries in the triennial report for the MOP5 (particularly by Estonia).

In these three Baltic States, the management and conservation of waterbirds and their habitats followed the EU Birds and Habitats Directive, as well as other environmental legislation, such as in the fields of water, impact assessment (EIA, SEA) and the Baltic Sea conservation, etc. The main activities related to migratory waterbirds were concentrated in Natura 2000 sites.

The EU had contributed financially to several major LIFE projects addressing waterbirds and habitats in the Baltic States. Large-scale Programs on Special Management Plans for Rare Bird Species (including species covered by the AEWA International Single Species Plans) were currently implemented in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

During the last years all three countries had significantly contributed to the reduction of by-catch with regard to wintering/migratory waterbirds in the Baltic Sea (particularly of seaducks). Several new protected marine areas had been established (or were in the final stages of formal designation) in exclusive Lithuanian and Latvian economic marine zones. Appropriate regulation of intensive fisheries (including the ban of trawling) was in force in almost all internationally important areas for wintering/migrating waterbirds, located in the marine waters of the Baltic States.

There were several major ongoing activities on the restoration of the key waterbird habitats in all three countries (funded mostly through EU programs), like the restoration of major complexes of raised bogs and exploited peatbogs/coastal wetlands/open wet meadows/etc.

There were also several major ongoing research and monitoring activities on waterbird species and their habitats in the Baltic States (like the Program on White Stork in Lithuania – with about 20,000 of their nests recorded/GPS plotted/photos of all nests stored in a special database/annual reproduction success evaluated/etc.).

During the last years, major progress had been made with regard to education and information activities on waterbirds and their habitats in all three countries. For example, in Lithuania, seven new Information/Visitors Centres had been established in „Natura 2000“ sites in 2013-2014.

The Baltic States participated in the preparation/implementation of the following International Single Species Action Plans: Taiga Bean Goose, Lesser White-fronted Goose, Long-tailed Duck and Eurasian Curlew.

There had been no major emergency situations or major infrastructure developments that have affected waterbirds or their habitats in the Baltic States during this reporting period.

Special programmes were ongoing for the eradication/regulation in numbers of alien mammal species (American mink, racoon dog), negatively affecting waterbird populations in all three countries.

To date, no progress had been made with the phasing out the use of lead shot for hunting in wetlands of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia.

2. Moldova

The detailed review of national AEWA implementation activities in Moldova was provided in the triennial report for the MOP5. Moldova was the only country in the region using all available AEWA Guidelines, Recommendations and CNS Tool.

Moldova participates in the preparation/implementation of the International Single Species Action Plans for Lesser White-fronted Goose and Eurasian Curlew, to varying extents.

Main problems and threats indicated by the focal point of this country for AEWA are of a broad range, such as habitat loss, law enforcement, new infrastructure developments.

3. Ukraine

The Ministry of Ecology and Nature Resources had informed about the largest threats to migratory waterbirds and their habitats in the country since 1999 (when Ukraine became a Contracting Party to AEWA).

A total of 10 designated Ramsar sites located in the region of the Black and Azov Sea were threatened by the ongoing military actions and drastic political/economic changes. Ukraine has practically lost the control of several extremely important bird areas located in Crimea, including the *Central Syvash National Park* (Ramsar No. 115) and *Eastern Syvash National Park* (Ramsar No. 769), located at the western coast of the Azov Sea. These sites are among several the most important areas for breeding and migratory waterbirds in Eastern Europe, annually holding more than 1 million migratory waterbirds and such globally endangered breeding/migratory species as Red-breasted Goose, Ferruginous Duck, Slender-billed Curlew, Aquatic Warbler, also many other species protected in Europe. The same situation existed at the *Cape Kazantyp* Ramsar site located on the coast of the Azov Sea (Ramsar No. 1393) and two further Ramsar sites located on the coast of the Black Sea (*Karadag*, Ramsar No. 1394 and *Cape Opuk*, Ramsar site No. 1395).

All these sites were internationally important for migratory waterbirds. Ukraine had lost possibilities to ensure conservation and sustainable management of these sites, critically important for waterbirds after the annexation of Crimea by Russia in 2014. The former State organizations responsible for conservation and management of these Ramsar sites were closed down; new appropriate structures had not yet been established and therefore these key bird areas (particularly in Syvash area) were currently threatened by uncontrolled and large-scale poaching, potential changes in legislations and new infrastructure developments, etc.

The conservation and sustainable management of several other Ramsar sites located on the coast of the Azov Sea (*Molochny Liman*, Ramsar site No. 770; *Obytochnaya Bay*, Ramsar site No. 771 and *Berdianskaya Bay*, Ramsar site No. 772) was very complicated due to intensive military activities in adjacent areas. A similar situation also existed in the internationally famous *Askaniya - Nova Biosphere Reserve* (Ramsar site No. 1397).

Finally, two Ramsar sites were located on the northern coast of the Azov Sea (*Kryvaya Bay Ornithological Reserve*, Ramsar site No. 774 and *Bilosuraiska Bay*, Ramsar site No. 773) and in the direct zone of front-line, with most active military actions including shellfire/uncontrolled large-scale fires, etc. These sites were critically endangered due to the continuing war.

In addition several of Ramsar sites indicated above are threatened by the major infrastructural developments, like planned construction of the new mega-bridge for trains/cars across the Kerch Strait (dividing the Black and Azov Seas). Such major development had been planned previously, however, it had been rejected

following recommendations of EIA (implemented by the international team of experts), as a potential threat for the ecosystem of the whole Azov Sea. However in 2015, Russia had initiated the projecting phase of this mega-bridge without any international EIA (as infrastructural development implemented exclusively in the territory of the Russian Federation).

Due to the continuing military actions in eastern Ukraine and the difficult economic situation, Ukraine was forced to postpone several major environmental initiatives related to waterbirds and their habitats also in other parts of the country.

Ukraine will make an appeal concerning the critical situation in several key sites for migratory waterbirds during MOP6.

4. Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan

Georgia was the only Contracting Party to AEWA in the Caucasus region.

Georgia was negotiating new Association Agreements with the EU, including the linking of the EU Birds Directive and the Habitats Directive to the national legislation. New laws on EIA were already in force in this country, markedly contributing to conservation of species included into AEWA list.

The main threats to waterbirds and their habitats indicated by the national authorities were: inadequate sewage treatment before release into the Black Sea, new potential major infrastructures (recreation resorts, etc.) and new military developments of Russia (establishment of new military training areas/new military bases) in South Ossetia, in the habitats unique to that region.

As in Georgia, the authorities of Azerbaijan were also evaluating possibilities of linking of the EU Birds Directive and the Habitats Directive to the national legislation.

The main threats to waterbirds and their habitats indicated by the national authorities and experts: rapidly rising water levels in the Caspian Sea, threatening Important Bird Areas located in coastal areas and the pollution of the Caspian Sea by oil leakages from old and new developments (though strict legislation preventing such accidents was now in force).

No information was received from the authorities of Armenia, experts had indicated the following main threats to waterbirds and their habitats: a significant drop in Lake Sevan's water level because of drawdown for irrigation and the diversion of water to hydroelectric plants, and clear-cuttings of forests in certain key habitats caused by the continuing energetic crisis in this country.

5. Belarus

Belarus was distinguished by unique habitats (the largest fens and river floodplains in Europe), critically important for rare and vulnerable species of waterbirds. Bogs and mires covered about 2.3 million hectares of the country, of which 800,000 ha were open bogs. The country supported about 60% of the global population of Aquatic Warbler, 5,000 pairs of Great Snipe and large numbers of other rare and threatened species.

The largest restoration scheme of peat bogs and open mires in Eastern Europe had recently been implemented in Belarus, with more than 40,000 hectares of wetlands restored.

The main threats to waterbirds and their habitats indicated by the national authorities were of a broad range, such as habitat loss, law enforcement, landscape changes and impacts of the climate change (particularly in the Pripyat River floodplain region).

The principal decision of Belarus to join the AEWA had been announced by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection in May 2014. It had been decided to initiate all procedures in Belarus necessary for ratification of the Agreement.

OMPO had provided special funds for Belarusian authorities and experts, necessary for the identification of all procedures related to AEWA (like appropriate changes of the national legislation, identification and mitigation of possible conflicts (e.g. with hunters and land users etc.), possible impacts to existing international agreements with Russia and Kazakhstan, etc.). A team of experts (including lawyers, invited experts from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Forestry, Association of Hunters, etc.) had been evaluating all procedures related to joining AEWA.

Two international meetings enabling the launch/implementation of all procedures targeted to AEWA in Belarus (similar to meetings arranged by AEWA in Russia, but mainly targeted to concrete and practical issues) would be arranged in Belarus in 2015. The first working meeting had been arranged in Lithuania in July 2014, as AEWA was listed as the Priority Action in the existing Collaboration Agreement between the Ministries of Environment of Belarus and Lithuania. As a Contracting Party to AEWA, Lithuania was actively encouraging Belarus to ratify the Agreement (following AEWA Resolution 3.10).

Of course the active support of the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat for Belarus (in terms of appropriate consultations/submission of all necessary AEWA documents/participation in appropriate international meetings) is very important during this period. In May 2015, a meeting was being planned in Minsk together with AEWA and Ramsar. After this meeting, Belarus hoped to ratify the Agreement before MOP6. This was particularly important due to Belarus being a member of the [Treaty on the Eurasian Economic Union](#) (EAEU), and could encourage Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation, both also member states, to follow suit.

6. Russian Federation

The European part of the Russian Federation held the major part of breeding populations of many species of waterbirds in Europe.

The main threats to waterbirds and their habitats: the loss or degradation of breeding habitats (particularly due to recent oil and gas developments in arctic regions), large-scale changes in land use, poorly regulated hunting in certain regions (including hunting open in spring) and impacts of global climate change.

The problems related to the AEWA in Russia were discussed in several special international meetings arranged by the AEWA Secretariat and appropriate international organizations. The Russian authorities had formally confirmed plans to join AEWA in near future, though up to now there were no practical activities targeted to ratification of the Agreement (similar to those currently implemented in Belarus).

In this context, Mr Stroud referred to the [International Union for the Conservation of Nature](#) (IUCN) and its engagement in post conflict situations, which could also be relevant for this region.

Mr Stroud reported that Iceland had become a Party in 2013 and that nearly of the Contracting Parties in the region were Member States to the EU, which remained an important policy driver on wetland and waterbird conservation.

The EU had introduced a consolidated reporting system for the status of all birds in the EU under [Article 12 of the Birds Directive](#). This was a six-yearly, very comprehensive report, the first cycle of which was submitted in 2013. The report covered population sizes and trends, range trends, numbers within the EU Special Protection Area network, pressures and threats and conservation measures, thus representing a large package of information being collected. Outputs in 2015 fed into European status assessments and the creation of a first IUCN European Red list for birds. Much of the information collected was relevant to the implementation of AEWA, making this a very useful source of information.

The data was available under the following link: <http://bd.eionet.europa.eu/article12/summary>. This site presented information on population numbers, trends, pressure/threats, as well as mapped distributions for all regularly occurring birds in the EU27.

ANNEX II – TC 12 List of Participants

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