

REPORT OF THE 14th MEETING OF THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE¹

10-13 April 2018, Bonn, Germany

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¹ Report finalised after consultation with the Technical Committee and other participants of TC14.

Agenda item 1. Opening

1. The Chair of the Technical Committee (TC), Mr Saulius Švažas, opened the meeting, welcoming all those present. He noted that this was the last Meeting of the Technical Committee before the 7th Session of the Meeting of the Parties to AEWA (MOP7), scheduled to take place on 4 - 8 December 2018 in South Africa. There were many important documents on the agenda for review. He wished all those present, particularly those TC members for whom this would be the last TC Meeting, a productive and enjoyable meeting.

2. Mr Jacques Trouvilliez, AEWA Executive Secretary warmly welcomed the members and observers to the committee. He was also very happy to see the engagement of the numerous Parties present and their interest in the work of the Technical Committee. He reiterated that the Technical Committee had a busy meeting ahead of it, stressing its important function in providing the substance for the document work. He wished all those present a fruitful meeting.

Agenda item 2. Welcome Addresses

3. There were no further welcoming addresses

Agenda item 3. Adoption of the Agenda and Work Programme

4. Mr Švažas introduced documents TC14.2 Rev.2 *Provisional Annotated Agenda* and TC14.3 *Provisional Work Programme*, explaining that the Regional Representative for Northern Africa, Mr Sidi Imad Cherkaoui, had been delayed and would be arriving late. His regional report and additional oral report on the progress of work of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) Task Force to Address Illegal Killing, Taking and Trade of Migratory Birds in the Mediterranean, was thus postponed until the beginning of day 2.

Decision: The Meeting adopted the Agenda and Work Programme with the above-mentioned minor amendment.

Agenda item 4. Admission of Observers

5. Introducing this agenda item, Head of the Science, Implementation and Compliance Unit at the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat, Mr Sergey Dereliev, informed those present that four of the AEWA NGO partner organisations were permanent observers to the Technical Committee, all of which played a critical role by contributing additional expertise towards the delivery of the work of the Committee: the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust (WWT), BirdLife International, the Federation of Associations for Hunting and Conservation of the EU (FACE) and Migratory Birds of the Western Palearctic (OMPO).

6. Other observers included representatives of the Contracting Parties, Uganda (also Chair of the AEWA Standing Committee), the Netherlands (Host of the 13th Meeting of the AEWA Standing Committee 03-05 July 2018), South Africa (Host of the 7th Session of the Meeting of the Parties to AEWA, 04-08 December 2018), Germany, the European Union, the United Kingdom, Botswana, Estonia and Romania, as well as the Ramsar Convention and Mr Olivier Biber, Chair of the CMS African-Eurasian Migratory Landbirds Working Group and members of the UNEP/CMS Secretariat.

Decision: The Meeting agreed to admit the observers present (see Appendix III – StC13 Provisional List of Participants) and welcomed them to the Meeting.

Agenda item 5. Report by the Chair

7. Introducing document TC14.4 *Draft Report of the Technical Committee to MOP7*, Mr Švažas explained that this draft report described the activities of the TC during the period 2016-2018 and presented a summary of the results achieved, listing the impressive list of key tasks that had been successfully carried out. One important question was how to make the TC more effective? With an ever-increasing number of requests from the Parties, it would be important to assign a certain part of the core budget to support this work and to meet the MOP's expectations.

8. Not just the Science, Implementation and Compliance Unit, led by Mr Dereliev, but the entire Secretariat was very closely engaged in the work of the Technical Committee in one way or another. In order to support the Secretariat in its facilitating role to the TC, it would be greatly beneficial if a specific Technical Committee Support Officer post could be established. The Secretariat had submitted an application for a Junior Professional Officer (JPO) during the recent call for applications and he strongly urged those countries providing JPOs to the United Nations System, to allocate an Officer to the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat for this purpose.

9. Mr Dereliev reiterated the urgent need for additional capacity to better service the Technical Committee and addressed those Parties involved in the JPO scheme to seriously consider the Secretariat's proposal.

10. The members were asked to provide input with regard to the progress of the tasks in the TC work plan 2016-2018, i.e. which of these had been completed, which could still be completed by the end of 2018 and which should be carried over to the next triennium. They were also asked to provide input on the outreach of the Committee and to detail important international meetings attended that were related to the work of the Technical Committee and the resulting development of synergies with other treaties and processes.

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| Action: | Based on the outcomes of the Working Group sessions scheduled to take place during Agenda items 15 – 19, with regard to the TC Work Plan 2016-2018, the Secretariat would populate the Table 2 of document TC14.4 <i>Draft Report of the Technical Committee to MOP7</i> and circulate a draft to the Working Group (WG) Chairs in the week 16 - 20 April; upon receipt of comments, a revised version would be circulated to the entire TC by 4 May 2018, in preparation for submission to StC13 and subsequently to MOP7. |
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Agenda item 6. Reports by the Regional Representatives

11. The attending regional representatives delivered progress reports to the meeting from their respective regions. The reports by the regional representatives on the implementation of AEWA in their respective regions are available in Appendix I. These include reports from the Central Europe, Eastern Europe, North and South-western Europe, Northern Africa, Southern Africa and Eastern Africa regions.

12. In connection with the report for the Southern Africa region, Mr Švažas took the opportunity of welcoming Botswana as a new Party to AEWA and congratulating the Government on the many activities already in place with regard to implementation of the Agreement.

13. He went on to stress the importance of the AEWA African Initiative and the important gap it fills and congratulated the Coordinator of the African Initiative, Ms Evelyn Moloko and the Programme Management Assistant, Ms Birgit Drerup for doing an excellent job by closely liaising with the relevant stakeholders in Africa and providing support to the African Parties in their efforts to implement the Agreement.

14. The regional report from Central Europe was followed by a short presentation from Mr Lorenzo Serra (Italy) regarding a joint proposal from Italy and Croatia to list the European Shag (*Phalacrocorax aristotelis*) in AEWA Annex 2 and Table 1 (the latter related to the Barents Sea population of *Phalacrocorax aristotelis aristotelis*, as well as the East Mediterranean population of *Phalacrocorax aristotelis desmarestii*).

15. The proposal had been submitted to the European Commission (EC). Representing the European Union, Mr Joseph van der Stegen confirmed that the EC had consulted with member states and was currently evaluating the feedback received. No decision had yet been taken on whether or not to submit a proposal for amendment to MOP7. Mr. van der Stegen added that owing to strict deadlines, the proposal could unfortunately not be considered at the upcoming meeting of the EU Expert Group on the Birds and Habitats Directive (NADEG), scheduled for the end of May 2018.

16. Following the regional report from Eastern Europe, a brief discussion ensued on how to address the issue of spring-hunting in Belarus which was mentioned in the report. At the time of the country's accession to AEWA in 2016, spring-hunting was prohibited in all important wetlands. However, as of 15 April 2018, a new hunting regulation would come into force allowing spring-hunting for foreign and local hunters. Mr Trouvilliez, while expressing his regret for this development, informed the meeting that Belarus had entered a number of reservations when it acceded to AEWA, including one on spring-hunting. The Secretariat would further investigate how to proceed on this matter. Any formal steps could only be taken after the new regulation would come into force.

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| Action: | The Secretariat would follow up with Belarus with regard to its hunting regulations. |
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Agenda item 7. Reports by the Technical Committee representatives to other processes

17. TC Regional Representative for North and South-western Europe Ms Ruth Cromie reported on the activities of the [CMS Preventing Poisoning Working Group \(CMS PPWG\)](#). Ms Cromie gave some background on the Working Group's establishment, focus and outputs and went on to briefly describe the scope of work of the Lead Task Group, which had been established in October 2017 in the framework of the PPWG. She highlighted the issue of lead ammunition as a particular focus of the Lead Task Group. Mr Trouvilliez remarked that the lead issue affected not only waterbirds and biodiversity, but also humans, given that lead shot was currently the greatest source of lead in the environment.

18. Concurring with this, Ms Cromie stressed the need to put more focus on lead-related soil contamination. She also confirmed that another focus of the Lead Task Group would be on the issue of lead fishing weights, adding that one of the WG representatives would be an expert in that field.

Agenda item 8. Report by the Secretariat

19. Mr Jacques Trouvilliez, AEWA Executive Secretary introduced document TC14.5 *Report of the Secretariat* and TC14.6 *Report on the Implementation of the African Initiative and the Plan of Action for Africa*.

20. With regard to staffing he recalled that since MOP6, the posts within the African Initiative Unit had been partly funded through the AEWA core budget. The post of Associate Programme Officer for Single Species Action Plan Support had been secured until 2020, thanks to a voluntary financial contribution from the Government of Norway and financial support from various Contracting Parties had enabled the Secretariat to recruit both an Associate Programme Officer and a Programme Management Assistant for the European Goose Management Platform (EGMP).

21. Mr Trouvilliez went on to report that following a similar exercise by CMS, all Professional staff positions within the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat had undergone an independent review which found that all professional positions were currently classified at a grade which was lower than the grade reflecting members' actual duties and responsibilities.

22. Referring to cooperation with UN Environment and other organisations, Mr Trouvilliez reported that the Secretariat had increased its synergies within the CMS Family and that the Executive Secretaries of CMS, EUROBATS and AEWA were now meeting every three months in order to increase efficiency.

23. The Secretariat also continued to work closely with the Ramsar Convention Secretariat, with a particular focus on Africa, as well as with BirdLife International and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB). Together with BirdLife International, AEWA had used the Second Session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA2) to promote the work of the multi-stakeholder Energy Task Force, established by the UNEP/CMS Secretariat, in the form of a side event.

24. The Secretariat had, in addition, launched a new partnership with [Conservation Evidence](#), an information resource initiative based in the United Kingdom.

25. Mr Trouvilliez also mentioned the Secretariat's cooperation with the [Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation \(CIC\)](#) which was particularly important with regard to successful networking with national hunting organisations.

26. He went on to report on the [RESSOURCE project](#), a 5 million Euro project on the sustainable management of migratory waterbirds in the Sahel, funded by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the French Facility for Global Environment (FFEM) and the European Union (EU). The project had officially been launched in 2017 and would be important in terms of increasing the quantity and quality of waterbird monitoring data as well as assessing the socio-economic importance of waterbirds.

27. Thanks to the efforts of the Information Management, Communication and Awareness-raising Unit, the [World Migratory Bird Day](#) campaign joined forces with a second large initiative, the International Migratory Bird Day (IMBD), resulting from a cooperation with Environment for the Americas (EFTA). Taking into account comments from countries in the African region, events would from now on be organized not once but twice a year, in May and in October, under the single name of World Migratory Bird Day.

28. Mr Trouvilliez also informed the Meeting that the Head of Science, Implementation and Compliance at the UNEP/ AEWA Secretariat, Mr Sergey Dereliev, had become a member of the Technical Committee of the East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership (EAAFP).

29. He briefly highlighted some of the extensive work which the Science, Implementation and Compliance Unit had accomplished since the last TC meeting, and which would be discussed in-depth during TC14. He mentioned the development of the draft Strategic Plan 2019-2027 and the major work done on AEWA

30. International Species Action and Management Plans and AEWA International Species Working Groups, including two workshops of the Black-tailed Godwit International Working Group.
31. The Executive Secretary briefly referred to the two [AEWA Implementation Review Process \(IRP\)](#) cases currently underway, one in Iceland and one in Montenegro; in September 2017, the Standing Committee had opened an IRP inquiry with the Government of the United Kingdom on the hunting of the Greenland White-fronted Goose.
32. With regard to the issue of lead shot, he thanked TC Vice-chair Ms Ruth Cromie for her expert support during several meetings of the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) on the phase-out of the use of lead shot for hunting in wetlands.
33. Mr Trouvilliez briefly reported on programmatic synergies with CMS with regard to the [CMS Multi-Stakeholder Energy Task Force](#), the [CMS Intergovernmental Task Force on Illegal Killing, Taking and Trade of Migratory Birds in the Mediterranean \(MIKT\)](#) and the [CMS Working Group on Preventing Poisoning in Migratory Birds](#).
34. He went on to mention that a number of new International Single Species Action Plans had been published on the [AEWA Website](#) in the framework of the AEWA Technical Series and were now available for download.
35. With regard to capacity-building, he briefly reported on a training-workshop aimed at enhancing cooperation and implementation of AEWA for countries situated along the Adriatic Flyway. The workshop had been successfully organized in Croatia in 2016, in partnership with the German-based NGO EuroNatur.
36. Mr Trouvilliez then gave the floor to the African Initiative Coordinator, Ms Evelyn Moloko, who introduced the *Report on the Implementation of the African Initiative and the Plan of Action for Africa (doc. TC14.6)*.
37. Ms Moloko thanked the Government of Switzerland and the European Commission for their generous support towards the AEWA African Initiative (AI). She stressed the continued close collaboration with the Technical Support Unit (TSU), made up of technical experts from France and Senegal, with whom the Secretariat was working closely on supporting the implementation of AEWA in the African region.
38. Ms Moloko went on to highlight the development of the Plan of Action for Africa (PoAA) for the period 2019-2027 as one of the main activities of the AI Unit during the reporting period. A Concept Note for the development of the PoAA had been developed and approved by the StC in 2017, and a Working Group (WG) convened. The WG, which, among others, includes African regional representatives of the AEWA StC, regional representatives and experts of the AEWA Technical Committee (TC) and African Contracting Party representatives, met in October in 2017 in Dakar, Senegal, supported by a voluntary financial contribution from the Government of Switzerland.
39. The outputs of the meeting established the basis for the new PoAA, the first draft of which was expected to be ready soon for consultation with the Working Group. Ms Moloko explained that a second consultation phase, involving all African Contracting Parties and other partners, would subsequently follow and a final draft of the PoAA would eventually be presented to the 13th Meeting of the AEWA Standing Committee in July 2018.

40. With regard to species conservation, Ms Moloko highlighted an IWC-related project which the Secretariat had coordinated in seven AEWA African Contracting Parties, in collaboration with the African-Eurasian Waterbird Partnership. Thanks to a voluntary financial contribution from the Government of Sweden, this project helped to collect valuable monitoring data and, at the same time, enhance national capacity, also with a view to future IWC counts.

41. Funding had also been received from the European Commission, for species-related activities over the period up to 2020. These activities included the organization of the first meeting of the Grey-crowned Crane ISWG, for which planning was underway, in cooperation with the African Crane Conservation Programme which coordinates the ISSAP for the species.

42. The EC funding would also contribute to the implementation of some of the highest-priority actions identified in the ISSAP for the White-winged Flufftail. A local stakeholder workshop would be organised to promote the involvement of local communities in the conservation of the Berga Wetland in Ethiopia, which is one of only two confirmed breeding sites for the species and the process for the eventual designation of the Berga Wetland as a Protected Area would be initiated.

43. Ms Moloko subsequently touched upon the latest projects to be selected for funding under the AEWA Small Grants Fund (2015 funding cycle). In 2017, the approval process was completed for a total of four projects, three from Kenya, Nigeria and Mauritania focusing on waterbird monitoring while the fourth project, from Zimbabwe, was related to crane conservation activities.

44. Reporting on the expansion of membership to AEWA in Africa, Ms Moloko commended Botswana for the excellent work the country had done to complete the accession process and become a Contracting Party as of 01 November 2017. Ms Moloko also praised the valuable input which Botswana had provided for the regional report to TC14.

45. Referring to the translation of the AEWA text into Portuguese, which became available in July 2017, Ms Moloko expressed her hope that this would help to significantly advance the accession process in the four Portuguese-speaking African countries which were not yet a Party to AEWA (Angola, Cabo Verde, São Tomé and Príncipe and Mozambique). The Secretariat was following up with these countries accordingly.

46. Ms Moloko went on to report on an accession promotion workshop in Cameroon in December 2016, which the Secretariat had organized in collaboration with the Cameroon Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife (MINFOF). Thanks to this workshop, the accession process, which had previously come to a halt, was reinitiated and was currently at the Prime Minister's level, hopefully to be completed soon.

47. The Secretariat had also been able to re-establish contacts, in order to promote accession including, among others, in Malawi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sierra Leone and the Central African Republic.

48. With regard to capacity-building, Ms Moloko reported on a waterbird data management workshop for Anglophone African Parties which the Secretariat had organised in collaboration with Wetlands International and the TSU, and with local logistical support from Wetlands International Africa (22-24 October 2016, Dakar, Senegal). The workshop was made possible thanks to a generous financial contribution from the Swiss Government, through the Federal Office for the Environment (FOEN) and had made a very important contribution, among other aspects, to closing existing gaps in the IWC database.

49. The Secretariat had also initiated preparations for a training of trainers (ToT) workshop on flyway conservation in order to enhance capacity of technical experts and training institutions in 16 francophone Western and Central African countries. The EC had generously provided funding for the organisation of this workshop, and the Secretariat was currently working towards securing a host country, with Benin having already expressed an interest, as well as collaboration with partner programmes such as the Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative.

50. Finally, Ms Moloko reported on the Secretariat's ongoing efforts to establish and maintain partnerships to help promote the cause of AEWA in Africa while maximising efforts and resources. In this regard, she highlighted her participation in two important meetings, one being the 3rd Project Steering Committee meeting for the BirdLife/MAVA Foundation project on the conservation of migratory birds (CMB) along the coast of West Africa (Guinea, October 2017). The second meeting she attended was the African regional preparatory meeting for the 13th Conference of the Parties to the Ramsar Convention (Senegal, February 2018) which helped to further increase awareness on AEWA issues among government representatives and partners and was an opportunity to network, discuss AEWA relevant issues, promote accession and initiate possible collaboration with new partners.

Agenda item 9. Conservation Status Report (7th edition) and Draft Amendments to the Agreement and its Annexes

51. a) Representing Wetlands international, Mr Szabolcs Nagy introduced document TC14.7 *The 7th edition of the Conservation Status Report for submission to MOP7*, which consisted of a main analytical section supported by Annex 1 – *Population sizes and trends of waterbird species included in the Agreement* and Annex 2 – *Report on the status and trends of Red-Listed AEWA species*, based on IUCN data and compiled by BirdLife International.

52. He highlighted the fact that the report was based on the outcome of the work of a large range of collaborating organisations and initiatives, among others the goose and crane specialist groups, which had made major contributions to the data on their respective species.

53. One new item in the report was the inclusion of multi-species annual indices for AEWA populations based on IUCN data. A further new aspect was the assessment of the AEWA indicators of effectiveness from the AEWA Strategic Plan 2009-2017, which had been presented to show how AEWA populations had changed over time.

54. Although the indicators looking at the overall trend or number of stable or increasing populations indicated a positive tendency, indicators relating to globally threatened species showed that more species were making their way on to the IUCN Red List.

55. There had been an improvement in the overall trend of the waterbird populations listed in Table 1 of the AEWA Action Plan, however an increasing number of mainly marine and farmland species were listed as Globally Threatened and Near Threatened, highlighting the importance of sustainable management beyond protected areas. Species recovery plans positively influenced the trend of waterbird populations in the long-term, however, species were becoming globally threatened more rapidly than they could be recovered. Good governance was the most important determinant of the trend of waterbird populations.

56. A short discussion followed on the interpretation of Figure 14. (p. 29) – *Changes in population trends between two assessments* and that certain populations shown as declining and then increasing, could actually just be fluctuating.

57. After clarification provided by Mr Nagy, it was decided that he would add an explanation as to the definition of ‘fluctuating’, adopted by MOP5 and how the data was interpreted in this comparison of assessments of population trends.

58. The question of decreasing populations amongst oystercatchers came up (p. 30), which Mr Nagy agreed to check and clarify in the text.

59. Mr Barirega Akankwasah, representing Uganda, which was Chair of the AEWA Standing Committee, commented on the Executive Summary, 2nd recommended action (p.5) *Implement reporting of statistically robust estimates of national population size and trend estimates harmonised with the EU Birds Directive Article 12 reporting as part of the national reporting process*, and the suitability of the word ‘harmonised’ in this context.

60. Mr Dereliev explained that this goes in line with the AEWA National Reporting Format. The word ‘harmonisation’ here referred to the type of data to be collected. The aim was to avoid EU member states having to report the same data twice. It was agreed that a small group would consult on the exact wording to avoid any misinterpretation.

61. Representing the United Kingdom, Mr Stroud congratulated Mr Nagy and all the collaborators involved in producing this report, which represented a rich source of data on many aspects of AEWA implementation. He noted that the reference on p.20 that AEWA provides a framework for the protection of almost half a billion individuals of water- and seabirds in Africa and Eurasia should be included in the Executive Summary.

62. He went on to suggest using pie charts to illustrate trends in the different regions so that stakeholders could see the status in their own region. He also suggested that each section of the report could start with a headline message to highlight the key findings.

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| Decision: | The Meeting approved document TC14.7 7 th <i>edition of the Conservation Status Report</i> for submission to StC13 and MOP7 with the inclusion of the above clarifications, amendments and suggestions. |
| Action: | Mr Nagy would finalise the document and circulate it by 30 April 2018. |

63. b) Mr Dereliev introduced document TC14.8 *Proposal for Revision of Table 1 of Annex 3 of the Agreement*, which had been produced by Wetlands International and included ca. 120 proposed amendments. These consisted mainly of changes in categories of populations and their column allocation; justifications were provided in footnotes.

64. He went on to explain that proposals for amendments may only be submitted by a Contracting Party and that the Secretariat had already conferred with Uganda, the Chair of the Standing Committee to act as the formal proponent by the deadline on 07 July 2018.

65. Representing the European Union, Mr Joseph van der Stegen, pointed out that some species were huntable under the EU Birds Directive, but not under AEWA. To avoid legal uncertainty, the EU would have to enter a reservation after the AEWA MOP for that reason. This did not however, prevent the EU member states from

implementing the appropriate measures relating to hunting under AEWA. The final position of the EU with regard to those species that had been upgraded to a category whereby hunting may continue on a sustainable basis, was still under discussion.

66. Mr Dereliev commented that for those populations listed in Categories 2 and 3 in Column A, marked by an asterisk and those populations listed in Category 4 in Column A, hunting may continue on a sustainable use basis, to prevent further decline and to have the opportunity to be proactive in cases of populations showing signs of decline. This did not go against the provisions of the EU Birds Directive, so that a reservation would not necessarily need to be considered. He requested Mr van der Stegen to include this consideration in the EU discussions on the issue.

67. He pointed out that this discussion had been picked up in the cases of some of the Action Plans recently drafted, whereby for species which are huntable under the EU Birds Directive and move to AEWA Table 1, category A 1(b), a reservation would be entered to allow EU member states to hunt; this called for Adaptive Harvest Management on the side of the EU. One example was the case with the ISSAP for the Velvet Scoter, where a mechanism had been included to ensure sustainable use. He summarised by saying that the current approach was a pragmatic one, the Parties would have to decide if a more formal solution was required in the long- term.

68. Mr Mikko Alhainen, representing CIC, pointed out that there was a mismatch between *species* and *population* levels within the classification of categories in Table 1, which needed to be addressed.

69. He also suggested to amend the categories in Column A of Table 1, to allow for adaptive harvest management of large populations, where hunting is currently prohibited, by adding an appropriate threshold.

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| Decision: | The Meeting approved document TC14.8. <i>Proposal for Revision of Table 1 of Annex 3 of the Agreement</i> for submission to MOP7 and took note of the suggestions made. |
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70. c) Mr Nagy introduced document TC14.9 *Proposal to Amend the Definition of "Significant Long-Term Decline" to Apply when Classifying Populations in Table 1 of Annex 3 of the Agreement*, combined with Draft Resolution TC/DR8 *on the Adoption of Amendments for interpretation of Terms used in the Context of Table 1 of the AEWA Action Plan*, explaining that the trend analyses and reporting for the 7th edition of the AEWA Conservation Status Report (CSR7) highlighted problems with the AEWA definition of *significant long-term decline*.

71. Referring to the previous guidance provided in Resolutions 3.3 and 5.7, *whereby a population in 'significant long-term decline' is one where the best available data, information or assessments indicate that it has declined by at least 25% in numbers or range over a period of 25 years or 7.5 generations, whichever is the longer or when similar decline can be predicted based on at least 10 years of the most recent data*, he pointed out that this did not align with the three generation assessment period used in the IUCN red-listing process. This issue had already been raised by the MOP at its previous sessions.

72. Thus, the suggested new definition was based on a *decline by at least 10% in numbers over a range of three generations or when a decline of 30% over three generations can be predicted on at least 10 years of the most recent data*.

73. Some issues were raised in connection with the terminology and the consequences of the changes proposed. These included:

- The lack of alignment between the AEWA assessment period and that used by other international assessments and the reasons why these should be harmonised (or not);
- The long average generation length of AEWA species and discrepancies in their estimation methods; and
- The interpretation of the meaning of the word ‘significant’, i.e. *statistically significant* or *substantial*.

74. A discussion group was formed which examined the issue carefully and came up with the following suggestion for amendment of the operative part of Draft Resolution TC/DR8:

The Meeting of the Parties:

1. Amends criterion (c) in Categories 3 of Column A and 2 of Column B as follows:
"(c) Showing ~~significant~~ long-term decline; or
2. Adds a new criterion to Categories 3 of Column A and 2 of Column B as follows:
"(e) showing rapid short-term decline".
3. *Adopts* the definition of and guidance for interpretation of the terms “*long-term decline*” and “*rapid short-term decline*” as set out in Appendix 1 to this resolution to replace the definition and guidance previously adopted by Resolution 5.7.

The relevant definitions were added to Appendix I of TC/DR8:

- A population in ‘*long-term decline*’, is one where the best available data, information or assessments indicate that it has declined by at least 10% in numbers or range over a period of 3 generations.
- A population in ‘*rapid short-term decline*’ is one where the best available data, information or assessments indicate that it has declined at least at a rate that is equivalent to a predicted long-term decline of 30% over 3 generations based on 10 years of the most recent data.

75. It was considered by the majority, that the proposed changes would result in more consistency with other assessment systems, the shorter assessment periods would allow AEWA to react to changes in time and separating long-term and short-term decline would provide better guidance to national authorities.

76. Mr Dereliev pointed out that the relevant amendments to the categories in Table 1 would require submission by a Party; these would be added to the package of amendments to be submitted by Uganda.

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| Decision | The Meeting approved the proposed revised definition and guidance in document TC14.9 <i>Proposal to Amend the Definition of “Significant Long-Term Decline” to Apply when Classifying Populations in Table 1 of Annex 3 of the Agreement</i> , as well as Draft Resolution TC/DR8 <i>on the Adoption of Amendments for interpretation of Terms used in the Context of Table 1 of the AEWA Action Plan</i> for submission to StC13 and MOP7. |
| Action | Mr Nagy would circulate the final version of the document to the TC14 participants by 20 April 2018. |

77. d) Mr Nagy presented document TC14.10 *Report on the Development of Waterbird Monitoring along the African Eurasian Flyways*, reporting that the African-Eurasian Waterbird Monitoring Partnership had made

good progress since MOP6 (as requested by [Resolution 6.3](#)) and that the partnership approach enabled the provision of technical and financial support to the development of waterbird monitoring schemes. Only Switzerland had contributed to the newly established [Waterbird Fund](#) so far, however a number of other Contracting Parties supported directly waterbird monitoring schemes in other countries or at the flyway level. He stressed the importance of continuing support to provide coordination and capacity building and investment by countries in the running costs of their national monitoring schemes.

78. Mr Stroud was pleased to see that the programme was developing so well and reiterated that Contracting Parties should step up their contributions to the Waterbird Fund. He suggested adding some recommendations for broadening the outreach of funding to other sources, such as the charity and non-profit sectors.

Agenda item 10. AEWA International Species Action and Management Plans

a. Draft International Single Species Action Plan for the Conservation of the Velvet Scoter (*Melanitta fusca*) - Western Siberia & Northern Europe/NW Europe Population (document TC14.11 Rev.1)

79. Mr Dereliev reported that the Secretariat had been deeply involved in production of this document, the action-planning process had been extended from EU to flyway level and co-financed by the European Commission DG Environment and the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat, through a grant by the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety. The Secretariat had facilitated the stakeholder workshop and guided the compilers from the Lithuanian Ornithological Society and the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust in the production of the draft plan. Although most of the comments received from the experts and Range States had already been dealt with, some had still not been resolved.

80. A disclaimer, which had been added to all the recovery plans, clarified the identification of Principle Range States in AEWA Action Plans, which was a new approach to enable prioritisation of coordinated international conservation efforts in those countries considered to be crucial for ensuring the favourable conservation status of the species/population in question, but which did not, in any way, diminish the legal obligations of potential remaining Range States, which are Contracting Parties to AEWA.

81. He went on to outline the comments from the Technical Committee and the relevant feedback from the compilers on how they had been resolved.

82. Representing Germany, Mr Timm Reinhardt confirmed that an open point referring to the status of the species according to German legislation, i.e. whether it is huntable or not, would need to be clarified.

83. Further minor suggestions would be submitted to the Secretariat in writing.

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| Decision | The Meeting approved the <i>Draft International Single Species Action Plan for the Conservation of the Velvet Scoter (Melanitta fusca) - Western Siberia & Northern Europe/NW Europe Population</i> (document TC14.11 Rev.1) for submission to StC13 and MOP7, with the inclusion of the agreed minor technical corrections. |
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b. Draft International Single Species Action Plan for the Conservation of the White-headed Duck (*Oxyura leucocephala*) (revision of the 2005 plan) (document TC14.12 Rev.1)

84. The AEWAs Single Species Action Plan Coordinator, Ms Nina Mikander introduced this plan, which was part of the EuroSAP project package. This joint CMS/AEWA/EU ISSAP was a revision and would supersede the 2005 adopted version, once approved.

85. Comments from the Technical Committee and range states had been incorporated. It had been decided that the west Mediterranean population estimates (Spain and Morocco) would be taken from the CSR7.

86. Another important point provided by David Stroud had referred to those countries which had been requested to eradicate the Ruddy Duck and to make it clearer, which range states were being referred to and when throughout the plan. This issue had been closely coordinated with the Bern Convention Ruddy Duck Eradication Working Group.

87. Representing the Netherlands, Ms Wilmar Remmelts suggested making more reference to [Regulation \(EU\) No. 1143/2014](#) of the European Parliament and of the Council on the prevention and management of the introduction and spread of invasive alien species.

88. TC Game Management Expert, Mr Defos du Rau suggested changing the priority and timescale of the activity “5.2.3 Current status of Ruddy Ducks as in the Netherlands is understood” to essential and immediate, as the Netherlands are one of the few countries with still increasing breeding (and wintering) population, so that it does not hamper eradication efforts by neighbouring countries.

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| Decision | The Meeting approved the Revised Draft International Single Species Action Plan for the Conservation of the White-headed Duck (<i>Oxyura leucocephala</i>) (document TC14.12 Rev.1) for submission to StC13 and MOP7. |
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c. Draft International Single Species Action Plan for the Conservation of the Dalmatian Pelican (*Pelecanus crispus*) (document TC14.13 Rev.1)

89. Mr Dereliev reported that most issues resulting from comments received had been resolved. In this case the EU action planning process had also been expanded to a flyway planning process. Some comments from the TC could not be addressed, particularly on population modelling, because of the lack of existing data.

90. Invited expert on CEPA, Ms Olesya Petrovych reported that the species was listed as being critically endangered in the Ukraine Red Data Book; unfortunately, the best place for nesting, a national park, was now in a war zone. She would provide the Secretariat with details.

91. In the context of important breeding sites and land-use change (Objective 3), Mr Stroud suggested adding a cross-link to the [Ramsar Convention Framework and Guidelines for Avoiding, Mitigating and Compensating for Wetland Losses](#).

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| Decision | The Meeting approved the Draft International Single Species Action Plan for the Conservation of the Dalmatian Pelican (<i>Pelecanus crispus</i>) (document TC14.13 Rev.1) for submission to StC13 and MOP7, with the incorporation of the above-mentioned comments. |
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d. Draft International Species Management Plan for the Barnacle Goose (*Branta leucopsis*) (document TC14.14)

and

e. Draft International Species Management Plan for the Greylag Goose (*Anser anser*) - NW/SW Europe Population ISSMP (document TC14.15)

92. AEWA European Goose Management Platform Coordinator, Ms Eva Meyers reported that these two International Species Management Plans (ISSMPs) were developed in line with [Resolution 6.4](#), which had requested the establishment of a multi-species goose management platform and process to address sustainable use of goose populations and to provide for the resolution of human-goose conflicts targeting, as a matter of priority, Barnacle and Greylag Geese.

93. During the development of these two ISSMPs by teams of international experts, it was recognised that the fundamental objectives for the various goose populations causing significant damage were very similar. Therefore, a generic goose management framework template had been developed.

94. After rigorous consultations with international experts, the plans were under review by the participants of the stakeholder workshops and would be presented to the upcoming workshops in Leeuwarden in June 2018, pending the incorporation of further comments.

95. The Chair stressed the importance of the European Goose Management Platform and the use of adaptive management methods.

96. Representing the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust, Mr Baz Hughes highlighted the aspect of animal welfare in these plans, using the example of Barnacle Goose culling on Islay. Minimising crippling should be an objective, i.e. the provision of relevant training workshops for hunters. Although mentioned in the plan, Mr Hughes felt that this action should be prioritised and made more prominent. He also questioned the effectivity of a single management plan for three Barnacle Goose populations in practise.

97. Responding, Mr Dereliev clarified that both plans were rather general in their context. With regard to the three Barnacle Goose populations, the differences were in the implementation phase. The issue of animal welfare was taken into account; however, this was a fundamental and much bigger debate and not a direct AEWA mandate, which was conservation.

98. Mr van der Stegen who would submit a full set of comments on behalf of the EU, stressed the fact that under the Birds Directive, the legal protection status of both species was different and that this should be better reflected in the plans. It would also be necessary to have a paragraph developing the derogation aspect because part of the implementation of the plan would rely on derogations. The reason for the development of the plans could also be better addressed.

99. Representing Germany, Ms Caroline Kieß confirmed that Germany would also submit comments in writing. She raised some fundamental issues including that of the implementation of the plan in the context of the strict interpretation of granting derogations under the Birds Directive by the European Court of Justice; Germany would appreciate more elaboration on this. Another aspect was that of minimising agricultural conflict as opposed to damage and that conflict and damage do not always correlate. Germany was concerned about the mention of public health issues in this plan, since these are not species-specific and it should not have such a prominent mention in the management plan.

100. Also representing Germany, Mr Timm Reinhardt raised concern about the general structure of the plans and the differentiated population structure of the Greylag Goose, which required defined management units to be able to judge how this plan would work in the first place. It was not certain if the flyway approach, as opposed to other measures of management was actually leading anywhere.

101. Mr Dereliev explained that defining Greylag Goose management units was better placed in the implementation phase since it may require re-definition in future. Current knowledge was too limited to allow taking a definite decision on management unit delineation. Once countries had agreed on the concepts of management in the overall plan, they could go into detailed planning at the unit level in the implementation phase. A more dynamic process of defining and re-defining management units was required here, depending on the available knowledge and stakeholder intentions.

102. Mr Reinhardt went on to point out that keeping the flyway population at a favourable conservation level was an inefficient objective in the context of local management units. This could be changed to reducing damage with a good indicator and population size as a means to achieve this.

103. Mr Dereliev stressed that maintaining species or populations at a favourable conservation status was a fundamental objective of the Agreement and that all management started after that had been secured. This had been strongly maintained by the range states.

104. Ms Meyers confirmed that resources were needed to define the management units and that this was already being worked on in the case of the Greylag Goose.

105. Mr Czajkowski noted that management units depend on the species; for the Greylag Goose it was not accurate to consider the geography or ecology only. It needed more scientific evidence to define the sedentary and migratory parts of the population.

Actions All comments relating to the:
Draft International Species Management Plan for the Barnacle Goose (Branta leucopsis) (document TC14.14) and
Draft International Species Management Plan for the Greylag Goose (Anser anser) - NW/SW Europe Population (document TC14.15)
should be submitted to the Secretariat by 30 April 2018.

After the incorporation of these and any further comments from the range states and participants of the stakeholder workshops, by the Secretariat, the final drafts of both ISSMPs will be decided on at the *Greylag Goose and Barnacle Goose Species Management Planning Workshop in June 2018* and subsequently submitted to StC13 and MOP7 for approval.

f. Document TC14.16 Summary of Current State of Single Species Action Plan and Species Management Plan Production and Coordination with Recommendations to MOP for Extension, Revision or Retirement of Plan)

106. Ms Mikander reported that a comprehensive overview of the status of preparation and implementation of Species Action and Management plans, including a procedure and recommendations for extension, revision or retirement of plans had been presented to the 6th Session of the Meeting of the Parties in 2015 and adopted through Resolution 6.8. MOP6 had instructed the Technical Committee to continue monitoring ISSAPs and to present proposals for their revision or retirement to each session of the MOP. An update had been produced for the 12th Meeting of the Standing Committee in early 2017.

107. Following the procedure adopted by MOP6, and during consultations with the TC and other stakeholders, a third option had been realised, i.e. to extend the validity of a plan without revision, where the objectives and actions were still valid.

108. She went on to present the diagram of the revised decision-making process for the assessment of AEWA International Single Species Action Plans for revision, extension and retirement, which would be added to the document for presentation to StC13 and MOP7.

109. Based on analysis and additional consultation with species experts, recommendations were made to retire three ISSAPs, apart from the revision for the White-headed Duck ISSAP, which was already ongoing, no future recommendations for revisions were made. A total of nine ISSAPs were recommended for extension of their validity for a further 10 years. Both for plans where a revision is currently being undertaken or which are recommended for extension, measures are urgently needed to increase implementation. In the case of all AEWA ISSAPs, emergency reviews can be undertaken at any time, should an emergency situation arise.

110. In the case of the Lesser White-fronted Goose and the Black-tailed Godwit ISSAPs, both recommended for extension, there were still some open points which needed to be clarified in time for presentation to StC13 in July 2018.

111. Responding to an enquiry as to how the success of an action plan was assessed by Mr Czajkowski, Ms Mikander responded that this was based on the population trend data. An action plan could be recommended for retirement if the goals had been achieved and the population was increasing.

Decision Document TC14.16 *Summary of Current State of Single Species Action Plan and Species Management Plan Production and Coordination with Recommendations to MOP for Extension, Revision or Retirement of Plans* was reviewed and the *process for the retirement of Action plans* as well as *the treatment of the selected AEWA International Single Species Action Plans* was approved by the Meeting, subject to final approval by MOP7. The document will be forwarded to StC13 and MOP7.

112. g. Document TC 14.35 *Revision of Criteria for Prioritising AEWA Populations for Management Planning*

Mr Stroud reported that in the context of paragraph 4.3.4. of the AEWA Action Plan, at MOP6, the Contracting Parties had recognised the increasing call for further International Single Species Management Plans (ISSMPs) and had requested the TC to consider priorities. **Part A** - Prioritization Criteria for ISSMPs had already been adopted by TC11, **Part B** was new and included additional factors in form of a check-list of characteristics, whereby species/populations for which several of the characteristics apply would be prioritised for management-planning.

113. Mr Dereliev had some terminology suggestions and stressed the need to consider adding indicative ranking for management planning.

114. Mr Nagy noted that a multi-species process could be entered into if an already-developed framework allowed for that. He was concerned that more attention was being devoted to addressing management plans for species causing damage because this had a direct financial impact, rather than on species which were rapidly declining.

Decision The Meeting adopted document TC 14.35 *Revision of Criteria for Prioritising AEWA Populations for Management Planning* with the inclusion of the comments submitted by 30 April 2018 for submission to StC13 and MOP7.

h. Document TC 14.17 *Draft Revised Format for AEWA International Single and Multi-species Action Plans.*

115. Introducing this document, Ms Mikander explained that the draft revised format had been temporarily adopted by the Standing Committee at its 12th Meeting in January 2017 for use on an interim basis subject to final approval by MOP7.

116. It had been used for the first time for the production of the two new and one revised ISSAPs developed in the framework of the EuroSAP project. In the process of developing and using the revised format, it had become clear that a different format would be required for International Single Species Management Plans, which would be a task for the TC in the framework of the TC Work Plan 2019-2021.

117. At the request of the EU Commission, the legal obligations of the EU member states had been added for plans relevant to the EU. The format was, in general, clearer and more user-friendly, and enabled the development of a more compact and less intimidating document.

Decision The Meeting approved document TC 14.17 *Draft Revised Format for AEWA International Single and Multi-species Action Plans* for submission to StC13 and MOP7, pending an adjustment based on the outcome of the discussion group on the definition of “Significant Long-Term Decline”, in the context of predicted population trajectories.

118. The Chair requested the Meeting to review and finalise document TC14.18 *Draft Resolution on Adoption, Revision, Retirement, Extension and Implementation of International Species Action and Management Plans.*

119. Mr Stroud suggested making a reference to the EU Multi-Species Action Plan for Lowland Grassland Breeding Waders, which was not an AEWA product but included AEWA species.

Decision The Meeting approved document TC14.18 *Draft Resolution on Adoption, Revision, Retirement, Extension and Implementation of International Species Action and Management Plans* for submission to StC13 and MOP7 taking into account the pending comments expected for the Velvet Scoter ISSAP, Barnacle and Greylag Goose ISSMPs and the above-mentioned suggestion.

Agenda item 11. Seabirds

120. Introducing this agenda item, Mr Dereliev explained that the seabird tasks had required outsourcing and thanks to the generous funding provided by the Government of the Netherlands, this had been possible, albeit late in the triennium. The Secretariat had recently received the first drafts of two of the documents commissioned to BirdLife International.

121. Document TC14.19 *Draft Assessment of the Threats Posed by Marine Litter to Migratory Seabird Populations Listed under AEWA* and the related draft resolution (TC14.22) would be provided for comments later in May 2018. Both Document TC14.20 *Draft Guide to Guidance on Reducing the Impact of Marine Fisheries on Migratory Seabird Populations Listed under AEWA* and Document TC14.21 *Priorities for Seabird Conservation under AEWA – draft advice to the Parties* were very initial drafts with the aim of obtaining initial feedback from the TC and subsequently developing the documents accordingly.

b. Document TC14.20 Draft Guide to Guidance on Reducing the Impact of Marine Fisheries on Migratory Seabird Populations Listed under AEWA

122. This document was based on the report submitted to MOP6. As requested by MOP6 this document provided a refinement of the highest priority actions for AEWA in terms of where the Agreement could make a difference compared to other instruments. The guide to guidance follows the concept of the AEWA conservation guidelines, summarising all the published guidance on the reduction of the impact of fisheries on AEWA seabird species.

123. The Chair suggested adding paragraphs for vulnerable species, such as the Velvet Scoter in the context of this guidance.

124. Referring to point 4, paragraph 5 of Resolution 6.9, Ms Wilmar Remmelts, representing the Netherlands, requested clarification as to which were the ‘*pre-existing international or conservation frameworks*’.

125. Mr Czajkowski suggesting including the issue of electric fishing in the North Sea and how this could impact seabirds.

126. Representing the Eastern Africa region, Mr Samuel Muchai, noted that fishing techniques based on poisoning and the use of dynamite should be included. Angling and tack fishing techniques should also be mentioned.

127. In this context Mr Dereliev requested the TC to consider whether the document should cover legal and illegal fishing practices (such as the above). The inclusion of illegal fishing practices would give the document a completely different dimension.

128. c. Document TC14.21 Priorities for Seabird Conservation under AEWA – draft advice to the Parties.

There were a number of comments on this draft document, among others, referring to:

- The definition of North Atlantic;
- Why overfishing was not selected as a priority;
- The effect of predators on dispersed breeders as opposed to breeding colonies only;
- The order of the priorities listed (i.e. priority 2 – *Sensitivity mapping of Northern European Seas Eco-Region* could be moved to the end of the list);
- The inclusion of the taking of seabirds in West African countries mostly for recreation purposes, but also as a source of food;
- Based on available evidence, offshore wind farms were considered to have a high impact on seabirds and are thus a high priority by RSPB;
- In Priority 4. on the sustainability of seabird harvests, the terminology used, i.e. ‘illegal hunting’ should be aligned to include the aspect of illegal killing, whereby ‘harvest’ could be a better term;

129. Referring to the question of whether both documents TC14.20 and TC14.21 should cover legal and illegal aspects of harvest, Mr Dereliev clarified that the scope of the two documents was different and that they did not necessarily need to be synchronised. The TC should decide if illegal fishing practices should be included in the guide to guidance on the impact of fisheries in document TC14.20.

130. Mr Biber advised to stick to the latest agreement about illegal activities, i.e. illegal taking/hunting, taking and trade. However legal activities should also be considered, i.e. different types of catching and fishing, some of which may be in a grey zone.

The Chair considered that the compilers should look at other conventions and how they are taking these seabird issues forward.

131. Referring to [Resolution 6.9](#) and that one of AEWA’s seabird priorities should be the conservation of tropical birds, Mr Stroud noted that illegal activities might be quite significant in that context. He suggested developing the scope of the document to allow for that.

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| Decision | Draft documents, TC14.20 <i>Draft Guide to Guidance on Reducing the Impact of Marine Fisheries on Migratory Seabird Populations Listed under AEWA</i> and TC14.21 <i>Priorities for Seabird Conservation under AEWA – draft advice to the Parties</i> were reviewed and would be posted on the TCWS after incorporation of the comments received for approval for submission to StC13 and MOP7. |
| Deadline | Deadline for comments: 20 April 2018 |

Agenda item 12. Waterbird Monitoring

132. Mr Dereliev introduced document TC14.23 *Draft Revised AEWA Conservation Guidelines on Waterbird Monitoring (Conservation Guidelines No. 9)*, explaining that the revision of the guidelines had been commissioned to Wetlands International rather late with the support of the Government of the Netherlands. The current document was a synopsis of the revised guidelines, which fulfilled two of the three waterbird monitoring-related tasks on the TC work plan.

133. Mr Nagy went on to explain that the Revision of AEWA Conservation Guidelines Number 9 on Waterbird Monitoring, included the production of targeted monitoring approaches for each AEWA-listed population. They were being developed by a small drafting team within the [African-Eurasian Waterbird Monitoring Partnership](#), under the auspices of Wetlands International. The International Waterbird Census did not suffice to provide population estimates with statistical confidence; other methods were needed.

134. Monitoring methods would need to be applicable to individual species and regions. The guidelines would aim to provide Contracting Parties with a strategic framework to be able to plan a system of monitoring to enable them to generate the information required to be able to implement AEWA. The final draft would be submitted to the TC and relevant expert network for comments in the coming months and subsequently finalised for submission to StC13 in July 2018.

135. Mr Czajkowski noted that it could be useful to mention methods of storing and gathering all the available data to ensure that the most recent and reliable data was available.

136. Mr Dereliev clarified that due to the shortage of time and to enable a thorough consultation with all stakeholders, the possibility also existed of providing the document to the StC for approval after its 13th Meeting in July, if necessary.

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| Timeline | The first draft would be submitted to the TC and other stakeholders for consultation in the coming months. |
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137. The Chair introduced document TC14.25 *Draft Resolution on Strengthening Monitoring of Migratory Waterbirds* for submission to the 13th Meeting of the Standing Committee and MOP7.

Mr Stroud suggested that it would be helpful to request, not only the Contracting Parties, but also other donors, such as the charity and non-profit sectors, to contribute to the [Waterbird Fund](#).

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| Decision | TC14.25 <i>Draft Resolution on Strengthening Monitoring of Migratory Waterbirds</i> was approved for submission to the 13 th Meeting of the Standing Committee and MOP7, with the incorporation of the above-mentioned comment. |
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Agenda item 13. Guidance on implementation of the Agreement

a. Document TC14.26 *Draft Guidance on Satisfying the Conditions of Paragraph 2.1.3 of the AEWA Action Plan*

138. The TC Environmental Law Expert, Ms Melissa Lewis introduced *Draft Guidance on Satisfying the Conditions of Paragraph 2.1.3 of the AEWA Action Plan*. Paragraph 2.1.3 identifies the circumstances in which Contracting Parties may permit certain activities that are otherwise prohibited by the Agreement. In drafting the guidance, consideration was paid to the extensive body of guidelines that have been developed on the interpretation of similar legal text in the European Union’s Birds and Habitats Directives and the Council of Europe’s Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention).

139. The AEWA *Guidelines on National Legislation for the Protection of Species of Migratory Waterbirds and their Habitats* and the *Sustainable Harvest of Migratory Waterbirds*, adopted at MOP6 were consulted, where appropriate.

140. The document provided guidance on: granting exemptions for livelihood purposes; determining that there is “no other satisfactory solution”; the grounds of justification; and on ensuring that exemptions do not operate to the detriment of Table 1 populations. Ms Lewis stressed that the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat required immediate notification of any exemption granted, not only in the context of national reports, which were only submitted to the sessions of the MOP every three years.

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| Decision | TC14.26 <i>Draft Guidance on Satisfying the Conditions of Paragraph 2.1.3 of the AEWA Action Plan</i> was approved for submission to the 13 th Meeting of the Standing Committee and MOP7 with the inclusion of some final limited amendments to be decided on during the meeting. |
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b. Document TC14.27 *Draft Guidance on AEWA’s Provisions on Non-native Species*

141. Ms Lewis explained that the document outlined the existing AEWA provisions in the AEWA Agreement Text and Action Plan and provided guidance on the implications of these obligations for Parties’ domestic legislation – in particular, the classification of non-native species as “protected”. It also proposed definitions for the terminology used in AEWA’s provisions on non-native species.

142. The Chair thanked Ms Lewis for compiling this well-structured and concise document. He noted that there was a significant amount of good guidance already available on this topic and he requested the TC members to contribute to the list of publication in the Appendix.

143. Mr Hughes referred to the term ‘*government-controlled*’ in the context of eradication measures for non-native species and that it required some explanation.

144. Mr Dereliev also thanked Ms Lewis for this very useful document, which filled a gap in the currently available guidance. He felt that it would be useful to reinforce the notion that non-native species should be

qualified as such. Some countries employed a naturalisation process on introduced species after a certain timespan, which did not make biological sense.

145. He also referred to p.4 where unintentional protection and legal protections are mentioned. This represented a conservation conflict and it would be useful to stress that legal protection of non-native species should, in general, be avoided.

146. Mr Stroud reported that recent invasions by non-native species had successfully been eradicated by the authorities because of existing contingencies.

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| Decision | TC14.27 <i>Draft Guidance on AEWA's Provisions on Non-native Species</i> – Ms Lewis would incorporate the above-mentioned comments and circulate the revised version by 20 April 2018 for further comments (by 30 April 2018), after which a final draft would be produced for submission to StC13 and MOP7. |
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c. Document TC14.28 *Guidance on Taking a Systematic Approach to Responding to Waterbird Declines: a checklist of potential actions.*

147. Mr Stroud, who had compiled this document, explained that it addressed three TC tasks, it was divided up into two sections; Section 1 outlined a systematic approach to addressing waterbird declines and Section 2. was a checklist of potential interventions of value in addressing waterbird declines, which brought together relevant guidance and case studies. Most of the resources listed were Western European and in English, so that there was an urgent need for greater French and also non-European content.

148. Mr Stroud suggested establishing a mechanism to enable this document to be up-dated on a rolling basis without having to present it to each session of the MOP for approval. It could, for example, be made available in form of a website and periodically updated.

149. The Chair thanked Mr Stroud for this comprehensive document. He particularly urged the TC Regional Representatives to contribute any additional useful data.

150. Mr Nagy also very much welcomed this document, which provided good guidance for action plan compilers and the idea of setting it up as an online resource. He noted that something could be added for the case of multi-species declines and relevant useful planning forms, i.e. multi-species action plans or habitat action plans.

151. TC Game Management Expert, Mr Pierre Defos du Rau stressed the importance of taking traditional knowledge into account and to include the word science under point 3. e.g. ‘Undertake a formal science-based threats analysis’ and under point 4, e.g. ‘Identify and prioritise those issues [...], if necessary, using scientific survey.’

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| Decision | Document TC14.28 <i>Guidance on Taking a Systematic Approach to Responding to Waterbird Declines: a checklist of potential actions</i> would be circulated for comments by 20 April 2018 and finalised for submission to StC13 and MOP7 by 4 May 2018. |
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152. Mr Dereliev introduced document TC14.29 *Draft Resolution on the Adoption of Guidance in the Context of Implementation of the AEWA Action Plan*, explaining that this would be updated to reflect the suggestion of providing this guidance as a regularly updated online resource.

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| Decision | Document TC14.29 <i>Draft Resolution on the Adoption of Guidance in the Context of Implementation of the AEWA Action Plan</i> would be finalised by the Secretariat and the final revised version circulated by 30 April 2018 for subsequent submission to StC13 and MOP7. |
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Agenda item 14. Other Draft Documents and Resolutions for MOP7

a. Document TC14.30 *Draft Format for National Reports on the Implementation of AEWA 2018-2020*

153. Introducing this item, Mr Dereliev explained that in most countries, the format would be filled in by different stakeholders as this was a collaborative process, in the same way as implementation. The format required updating after each MOP, as in the past. The mainly editorial amendments were all marked up in track changes. Most of them related to information needs relating to deliverables envisaged within the first three years of the proposed draft Strategic Plan 2019-2027.

154. He went on to explain that one chapter was not included, i.e. that on the status of national populations. The proposed structure was proposed to be developed by the TC either in advance of MOP7 or for presentation to TC15 in early 2019 and forwarded to the StC for adoption.

155. It was proposed that this chapter should be aligned to the reporting under Article 12 of the EU Birds Directive with regard to AEWA species so that EU member states only need to report once. The Waterbird Monitoring Partnership was called upon to contribute to developing this chapter since it played an important role in waterbird monitoring in general.

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| Decision 1 | Document TC14.30 <i>Draft Format for National Reports on the Implementation of AEWA 2018-2020</i> . The Secretariat would circulate the final draft on 04 May 2018, after the incorporation of a few minor comments. The final draft would subsequently be submitted to StC13 and MOP7. |
| Decision 2 | The planned new chapter on the status of national populations following Article 12 of the Bird Directive would be drafted later in 2018 by the Secretariat together with the Waterbird Monitoring Partnership and presented to TC15 in March 2019 and subsequently to the StC for approval. |

b. Document TC14.31 *Draft Resolution on Climate Resilient Flyways*

156. Mr Nagy introduced this resolution which had been drafted to encourage AEWA Contracting Parties to use the products resulting from the [Climate Resilient Site Network in the African-Eurasian Flyway Project](#), which had been generously supported through the [International Climate Initiative](#) provided by the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU) and implemented by Wetlands International together with a range of stakeholders.

157. Pilot projects on the adaptation to climate change through sustainable wetland management were being carried out in Mali and Ethiopia. The project tried to demonstrate that the conservation of migratory waterbirds and their habitats can only function if combined with the interests of local communities.

The most notable outcome of the project was the redevelopment and enhancement of the functionalities of the [Critical Site Network Tool \(CSN 2.0\)](#), in particular the new information available to support national and flyway-level planning of climate change adaptation.

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| Decision | Document TC14.31 <i>Draft Resolution on Climate Resilient Flyways</i> was approved for submission to StC13 and MOP7. |
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c. Documents TC14.32 *Draft Resolution on Adoption and Implementation of the AEWA Strategic Plan and the AEWA Plan of Action for Africa for the period 2019-2027*, TC14 Inf.4 *Draft AEWA Strategic Plan 2019-2027* and TC14 Inf.5 *Draft AEWA Plan of Action for Africa 2019-2027* (cancelled)

158. Mr Dereliev introduced this draft resolution explaining that it was standard by nature. He went on to explain that the Secretariat had suggested developing a reporting module for the Plan of Action for Africa (PoAA) 2019-2027; the deadline for submission of that had been brought forward to not later than 240 days before the opening of MOP8 to allow the Secretariat to accommodate for any delays in submissions, while the module on the status of native and non-native species of waterbirds should be submitted by 30 June 2020 to provide with the opportunity to use the data for CSR8.

159. Responding to an enquiry by the Chair of the CMS African-Eurasian Migratory Landbirds Working Group, Mr Oliver Biber, with regard to the ‘*identified stakeholders*’ in operative paragraph 3 referring to the establishment of budgeted work plans, Mr Dereliev explained that this referred to the stakeholders identified by both plans and that some text could be added to clarify this.

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| Decision | Document TC14.32 <i>Draft Resolution on Adoption and Implementation of the AEWA Strategic Plan and the AEWA Plan of Action for Africa for the period 2019-2027</i> was approved for submission to StC13 and MOP7 with the inclusion of the above-mentioned suggestion. |
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d. Document TC14.33 *Draft Resolution on AEWA’s Contribution to the Aichi Targets and Relevance of the Sustainable Development Goals*.

160. The compiler of this document, Mr David Stroud explained that this overview of AEWA’S contribution to the Aichi targets and relevance of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) was based on a request by MOP5 to present these triennial assessments as an agenda item for each MOP through to 2020. This draft resolution retires Resolution 6.15. The annexes were revised and updated and annex 3 on AEWA’s contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals, had benefitted a lot from the work related to the drafting the new AEWA Strategic Plan.

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| Decision | Document TC14.33 <i>Draft Resolution on AEWA’s Contribution to the Aichi Targets and Relevance of the Sustainable Development Goals</i> was approved for submission to StC13 and MOP7 after the inclusion of final comments by the TC by 20 April 2018. |
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Agenda item 15. TC Working Group 1 (Field of Application)

Agenda item 16. TC Working Group 8 (Strategic, Reporting, Emerging and other Issues)

Agenda item 17. TC Working Groups 2 (Species Conservation) and 3 (Habitat Conservation)

Agenda item 18. TC Working Groups 4 (Management of Human Activities) and 5 (Research and Monitoring)

Agenda item 19. TC Working Groups 6 (Education and Information) and 7 (Implementation)

Agenda item 20. TC Work Plan 2019-2021

161. Regarding Agenda items 15 - 20 TC Working Groups 1 – 8 met to review the progress of their tasks as per TC Work Plan 2016-2018, Mr Dereliev introduced document TC14.34 *Draft Technical Committee Work Plan for the Triennium 2019-2021*, which had been based on the current work plan (2016-2018). Obsolete or delivered tasks had been deleted and new tasks added, based on the new draft AEWAs Strategic Plan 2019-2027 to be submitted to MOP7 for approval. Any further tasks taken over from the previous triennium would be added, as well as those resulting from MOP7 resolutions.

162. In order to finalise the overview of the TC Work Plan 2016-2018 in document TC14.4 *TC Report to MOP7* and update TC14.34 *Draft TC Work Plan 2019-2021*, the Working Groups were asked to:

1. Review the progress of work against each task and see what has been completed during the triennium 2016-2018;
2. Identify which tasks could still be completed by end of the current triennium (i.e. by the end of 2018);
3. Decide which tasks should be carried over to the TC Work Plan for the next triennium (WP 2019-2021).

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| Decision and actions | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The outcome of the Working Group discussions had been recorded by the Secretariat using the table annexed to document TC 14.4 <i>TC Report to MOP7</i>; the ensuing draft would be circulated to the Working Group Chairs by 20 April 2018 for comments and the revised version subsequently to the whole TC.• On the basis of the revised table, the Secretariat would finalise Document TC14.4 <i>TC Report to MOP7</i> and update TC14.34 <i>Draft TC Work Plan 2019-2021</i> for inclusion in the Draft Resolution on <i>Institutional Arrangements: Technical Committee</i> for submission to StC13 and MOP7.• The Secretariat compiled a separate overview of the TC Work Plan 2016-2018 tasks to be advanced by December 2018 and distributed it to the Committee. |
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Agenda item 21. Date and Venue of the next Technical Committee Meeting

163. Mr Dereliev explained that the new TC membership would be approved by MOP7 in December 2018 and the first meeting of the Technical Committee would take place early in the next triennium, i.e. in March/April 2019 so that the new Work Plan could be decided on. The Secretariat hoped that a host could be found, otherwise the Meeting would again take place at the UN Campus in Bonn, where the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat is based. The second Meeting, i.e. the one in the run-up to MOP8 would probably take place in February 2021.

Agenda item 22. Any Other Business

164. Mr Dereliev reported that the nomination procedure had been launched to replace the six TC regional representatives and expert, whose terms of office would end MOP7 (*the Western Africa, Eastern Africa, Central Africa, South-Western Asia, Eastern Europe and Central Europe regions and Environmental Law*

Expert). The deadline for submission of nominations was 30 April 2018, but could be extended, if necessary, as only one nomination had been received to date.

165. He urgently requested the Committee, particularly the outgoing members, to consider nominating replacements. The Advisory Committee (consisting of the current StC and TC Chairs and vice-Chairs and the Secretariat) would recommend the selected candidates to MOP7. The nomination documents consisted of a CV and signed declaration from the nominee, as well as a letter of recommendation. He stressed the fact that a fully functioning Technical Committee was crucial for the work of the Agreement, For more information on the nomination procedure, please see pp 2 - 4 of the [TC Modus Operandi](#).

166. Nomination for the [AEWA Waterbird Conservation Award 2018](#), established in 2005 by the AEWA Standing Committee in order to recognize and honour individuals, as well as government and non-government organizations and enterprises, who have made a significant contribution towards the long-term conservation and sustainable use of waterbirds in the African-Eurasian region was also open.

The deadline for the submission of nominations was 04 June 2018. The Award would be decided upon by the AEWA Standing Committee at its 13th Meeting on 3- 5 July 2018 and presented to the winners in both categories at the 7th Session of the Meeting of Parties to AEWA on 4 - 8 December 2018 in South Africa. In both institutional and individual categories, the Award would, however, not be endowed with a monetary prize as in the past, due to financial constraints. The relevant nomination forms are available on the [AEWA website](#).

167. Ms Crockford presented the [African Biosphere Reserves as pilot sites for monitoring and conservation of migratory birds \(AfriBiRds\)](#) project, which was relevant to AEWA, requesting any feedback from the TC which could be passed on to the project partners. The project closely collaborated with [UNESCO's World Network of Biosphere Reserves](#) as well as the [BirdLife Partnership Network for birds' conservation in African biosphere reserves](#). The AfriBiRds project was a collaboration between the German partner of BirdLife International (NABU) and BirdLife International. It was founded in December 2016 and was due to finish in August 2019. It was supported by the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN) with funds of the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Conservation, and Nuclear Safety (BMU).

168. AfriBiRds contributed to creating awareness and to filling the knowledge gaps regarding the state of declining species in the wintering grounds with a special focus on Palearctic migrants. NABU and BirdLife would adapt and implement a long-term bird monitoring scheme at two demonstration biosphere reserves as a nucleus for standardised replication and comparative expansion of similar systems, first, amongst the 90 sites forming the African Network of Biosphere Reserves, secondly, through the BirdLife Africa partnership, and finally, to the wider landscape in the countries of the pilot sites.

169. Mr Dereliev reported that AEWA was on the steering committee of the project and that AEWA's role was an advisory one. He hoped that the project would benefit the work of AEWA in Africa.

Closure

170. The Chair thanked all those present for their excellent contributions to the work of the Meeting, which had been a very productive one. He went on to thank the Secretariat for the excellent preparations and facilitation of the Meeting.

171. The AEWA Executive Secretary, Mr Trouvilliez also thanked the Committee and all those present for their input and the Secretariat staff for their hard work with regard to document preparation and servicing the Meeting.

172. This would be the last TC Meeting for a number of Members, whose terms of office would expire at MOP7. These were:

- Environmental Law Expert, **Ms Melissa Lewis**;
- Regional Representative for the Western Africa region, **Mr Erasmus Owusu (absent)**;
- Regional Representative for Eastern Africa, **Mr Samuel Muchai Muchane**;
- Regional Representative for the South-Western Asia region, **Mr Sharif AlJnour (absent)**;
- Regional Representative for the Central Europe region, **Mr Lorenzo Serra**, and last-but-not-least;
- Regional Representative for the Eastern Europe region and TC Chair, **Mr Saulius Švažas**

173. Mr Trouvilliez thanked all of them for contributing their expertise to the work of the Committee and for their hard work during their terms of office – it had been a pleasure to work with them and many of them would be sorely missed. He also thanked the Secretariat team, Mr Sergey Dereliev, Ms Nina Mikander, Ms Eva Meyers and Ms Jolanta Kremer for their professionalism and efficiency, which had contributed greatly to the success of the Meeting.

174. Finally he thanked the team from Wetlands International, who had provided a side event during the Meeting on the [Climate Resilient Flyways Project](#), one of the outcomes of which was the development of the improved [Critical Site Network Tool \(CSN Tool\)](#).

175. With that the Chair declared the Meeting closed.

APPENDIX I - Reports by the TC Regional Representatives on the Implementation of AEWA in their Respective Regions

North and South-western Europe – Ms Ruth Cromie

Activities to Implement the ISSAPs in the region

France:

- Eurasian Curlew (*Numenius arquata*): (<https://www.png-courliscendre.fr/>): survey of breeding population (1st meeting of the working group on breeding population in April 2018), ongoing work on maintaining or promoting favourable agri-environment schemes on breeding strongholds. Further studies on predation on breeding pairs and migration strategies.
- Black-tailed Godwit (*Limosa limosa*): (<http://www.plan-bqn.fr/>): in 2018, the plan steering committee requested France to maintain favourable agri-environment schemes on breeding strongholds until 2020. Since 2016 breeding population surveys in Brière and Brivet have been undertaken. Colour-marking started in 2012 to improve knowledge on western France breeding population. Promotion of extensive grazing on currently protected or restored prairies, plus 95ha of wet meadows bought for breeding Black-tailed Godwit conservation purposes.
- Madagascar Pond Heron: ongoing National Action Plan.

Netherlands:

- Black-tailed Godwit: In September 2017 the UNEP/AEWA secretariat, Sovon Dutch Centre for Field Ornithology and the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality signed the MoU in which Sovon takes up the role of coordinator for the Black-tailed Godwit Action Plan. As part of this role Sovon organized in cooperation with National Parks Senegal (DPN) and the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat in November 2017 the first regional Black-tailed Godwit workshop in Dakar, Senegal, on the management and conservation of this species in its wintering grounds in western Africa. In the framework of the same action plan a workshop was held in The Hague, the Netherlands in November 2016, for the West European Countries with Black-tailed Godwit breeding populations.

Spain:

There are two principal Action Plans being implemented in Spain – White-headed Duck (*Oxyura leucocephala*) and Northern Bald Ibis (*Geronticus eremita*):

- Within the framework of the strategy for the conservation of the Marbled duck (*Marmaronetta angustirostris*), Red-knobbed coot (*Fulica cristata*) and White-headed duck in Spain: This strategy, updated in 2013 for a period of 6 years, has been done by the different administrations responsible for the conservation of the species with the collaboration of experts. It includes the main lines of work coordinated between the administrations for the conservation of these species, as well as the action measures that will satisfy the action plans of the different regional administrations.

Some of the main lines of work taking into account the current threats are:

- a) Promote effective measures that avoid accidental or non-accidental captures of these three species, in the places where they are present during hunting season.
- b) Promote the control of non-native species that affect the species or their habitats
- c) Promote the legal protection of wetlands where these species are present, principally in their Critical areas (areas important for their reproduction or feeding) and take actions for the conservation of these habitats.
- d) Restoration of wetlands with historical presence of these species.

- a) Fight against lead poisoning.
- b) Continue with ex situ conservation programs and reinforcements.
- c) Continue with the census and follow-up programs coordinated between administrations.
- d) Reinforcement of awareness.

Principal Activities undertaken:

- White headed duck:
 - Habitat protection: The principal reproduction areas of the species have been protected.
 - Ex-situ Conservation. Coordination between the different ex situ conservation centres.
 - Control of Ruddy duck (*Oxyura jamaicensis*) in Spain and also in North Morocco.
- Marbled duck:
 - Consideration of the species as in Critical Situation to take extraordinary measures to prevent its extinction. These measures will be paid by an extraordinary budget of the central administration for this purpose.
- Northern Bald Ibis:
 - Reintroduction Program of bald ibis in Andalusia (Spain) (see below).
 - Consolidation of a wild population of 22 males and 27 females in La Janda area in Andalusia.

UK:

- Eurasian Curlew: various activities undertaken including a political debate on its status and need for action, a multi-partner workshop (hosted by WWT), and awareness raising activities for World Curlew Day (21st April).
- Black-tailed Godwit. [Project Godwit](#), a multi-partner project with EU Life funding was launched with the following objectives:
 - To increase the productivity of black-tailed godwits at the Nene and Ouse Washes so that the population can begin to recover.
 - To maintain and enhance black-tailed godwit wet grassland habitat at the Nene and Ouse washes, providing the right conditions for the species to thrive.
 - To improve our understanding of the local and migratory movements of black-tailed godwits breeding in the project area, using colour ringing and tracking.
 - To supplement the Ouse Washes black-tailed godwit population through the trialling of a rear-and-release programme, helping to re-establish the birds at sites adjacent to the Ouse Washes.
 - To increase support among local communities for the long-term conservation of Black-tailed Godwits.
 - To develop a UK-wide recovery plan for Black-tailed Godwits, working with international flyway initiatives.

Seaducks

- The ISSAP for Velvet Scoter has been prepared under the EuroSAP programme and the European Seaduck International Work Group (ESIWG) is currently being established to oversee implementation of Long-tailed Duck and Velvet Scoter ISSAPs. The intension is to hold the 1st ESIWG meeting in the spring of 2019.
- Seaducks of conservation concern were removed from lists of huntable birds in Estonia, Latvia and Norway. In Norway, Long-tailed Duck was removed on 1st April 2017 (for period 2017/18 - 21/22) (Velvet Scoter already not huntable).

Emergency situations (extreme cold, draught, toxic or oil spills, etc.) that have happened and affected waterbirds and/or their habitats since the last meeting and response to them.

UK:

The duck disease sarcocystis (rice breast disease) is apparently increasing sharply in the UK (as determined by surveys of hunters) and no doubt across the flyway. This emerging infection, caused by protozoal parasite *Sarcocystis rileyi*, affects mainly ducks and research found the parasite caused muscle weakness which may have a range of implications for health. Its impact remains undetermined but it should be noted as a potential threat to populations due to its novelty in Europe (it is commonly found in the USA and may have originated in imported ducks) and its rate of increase.

Avian influenza

Netherlands:

In the winter of 2016/2017 a mild outbreak of avian influenza occurred in The Netherlands. Local measures were taken in the poultry industry to prevent the virus to spread further, which seemed to have minimized the economic damage to the sector. Last winter another mild outbreak occurred that again lead to the obligation to keep poultry indoors. That lasted for many months. The impact of both outbreaks on waterfowl populations appeared minimal.

Whole region:

Highly pathogenic avian influenza H5N8 and H5N6 caused mortality of wild birds across Europe in the winters of [2016/17](#) (Mainly DE, NL, DK, SE, UK – for this N &SW Europe region) and 2017/18, although numbers of dead birds appeared lower in the latter winter possibly due to immunity resulting from circulation of the initial virus in the first winter.

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

Spain:

The project of reintroduction of Northern Bald Ibis *Geronticus eremita* in the south of Spain is looking forward to establishing another population in the south-east in Gata Natural Park, Andalusia.

UK:

[Black-tailed godwit](#): head-starting of godwits on the Ouse Washes was undertaken in 2017 with young birds being seen wintering in Southern Europe and then returning to the Ouse Washes in 2018. At time of writing the head-starting project for 2018 is well underway.

Activities on eradication or other type of action regarding alien species.

France:

The EU Regulations on IAS (Regulation No 1143/2014 - 22 October 2014, Implementing Regulation (EU) 2016/1141 - 13 July 2016, Implementing Regulation (EU) 2017 / 1263 - 12 July 2017), have been transcribed into French law by the Decree No. 2017-595 of April 21, 2017 on the control and management of the introduction and spread of certain animal and plant species, the Order of February 14, 2018 on the prevention of the introduction and spread of invasive alien animal species in metropolitan France, and the Order of February 14, 2018 on the prevention of the introduction and spread of species invasive alien plants on the metropolitan territory.

The decree of April 21, 2017 gives provisions for species already established: eradication for new populations, confinement for others. The first order of February 14, 2018 prohibits the introduction into the natural environment of several animal species, including the Canada goose. A more restrictive level

(Level 2) also prohibits the possession, sale, exchange or transport of the IASs listed in the European regulation, with derogation for zoos (under conditions) and transitional measures for the current legal holders (no reproduction, no escape). The Egyptian Goose and the Ruddy Duck are regarded by Level 2, the objective being to avoid new introductions.

- For Canada goose, the control plan applied since 2012 is being evaluated.
- For Egyptian Goose, not huntable in France, the destruction is allowed by prefectural orders.
- For Ruddy duck, the National strategy (2015-2025 National Plan to combat Ruddy Duck) is designed in accordance with the Berne Convention: only sworn officers can kill them (destruction shots). 97 Ruddy ducks including 27 females were thus killed in 2017, nearly half of them on Lake Granlieu. This figure is lower than in previous years. This very year, the number of bird contacts was lower than in previous years. So as to obtain additional human and technical resources to eradicate the national population estimated at ca. 200 individuals, France submitted a LIFE project of 5 years (01/10/18 - 30/09/2023) entitled "Oxyura against Oxyura" of € 1.68 million (of which € 1.21 million from the EU).

See Annex 1 for further details.

Netherlands:

The Netherlands has ongoing attempts to eradicate the Ruddy Duck.

Spain:

Preparation of a National Strategy for Management, Control and Eradication of Invasive Alien Species in continental aquatic environments.

UK:

Ruddy duck control is on-going with the national population thought to stand at fewer than 20 individuals.

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

France:

As part of the National Wetlands Observatory, Tour du Valat / the Mediterranean Wetlands Observatory (MWO), with the help of the Ramsar-France Association, studied the evolution of land cover within 32 French Ramsar sites in 1975, 1990 and 2005. Using the methodology developed under the GlobWetland-II project (carried out in partnership with the European Space Agency, JenaOptronics and Ramsar Secretariat), the MWO analysed the evolution of broad habitat classes, and in particular wetlands (natural and man-made); analysed the level of agriculture and urban pressure on the French metropolitan Ramsar Sites; and established simple land-cover maps for the 32 sites at 3 dates. Overall, in 30 years, the natural wetland habitats within the Ramsar Sites have declined by 6%, and man-made wetlands increased by 38%. Natural, terrestrial habitats have declined also. These figures probably underestimate the real changes in French wetlands overall, wetlands which are less protected/ appreciated than the Ramsar Sites.

<https://www.ramsar.org/news/evolution-of-land-cover-in-french-metropolitan-ramsar-sites-between-1975-and-2005>

Project Life+ ENVOLL (2013-2018) created a whole network of breeding sites for colonial waterbirds (9 sp) on the Mediterranean French coast: <http://www.life-envoll.eu/?lang=en>

Within the RESSOURCE project co-funded by FFEM and ONCFS, OMPO and ONCFS have provided expertise to three major African wetland complexes of international importance (Bahrs Aouk & Salamat in

Chad, Khor Abu Habil in Sudan & Trois Marigots in Sénégal), including management recommendation, management planning, and support to a range of expertise aiming at improving management and conservation

The French Conservancy Agency for coast (Conservatoire du Littoral) buys on average 3000ha of coastal wetlands annually.

Netherlands:

In 2016/2017 an evaluation and assessment of the current Natura 2000 sites network was carried by Wageningen University & Research Centre and Sovon for the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality analyzing if sites or species were missing.

Spain:

Different projects have been developed, principally for the protection and restoration of habitats for the White-headed Duck, for example:

- a. Proyecto Life Conservación y Restauración de Humedales Andaluces.
- b. Life La Mancha Wetlands (2010-2016): <http://www.humedalesdelamancha.es/>.
- c. Life Malvasía Región de Murcia: <http://lifemalvasiamurcia.es/blog/>.
- d. Proyecto humedal de los carrizales ANSE. El Hondo- Malvasía.
- e. Project TransHabitat: Waterbirds of Andalusia and Morocco.

UK:

The third extensive review of the SPA network in the UK, which also presents an assessment of current population sizes within individual sites, documents network-scale changes over a decade, and assesses future conservation needs, was completed in 2016 and can be found here: <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-7309>.

The review has:

- further developed guidance and principles to assist the application of UK SPA selection guidelines;
- assessed the adequacy of the SPA network for relevant species;
- assessed gaps in data availability for species and made recommendations as to how these might be filled;
- considered issues in relation to the inclusion of cropped habitats in SPAs;
- reviewed relevant **EU case-law**; and
- undertaken an audit of the content of the network in the 2000s, assessing change since the **second review** in the 1990s.

This significant review and gap analysis, has provided a new suite of suggested sites for SPA protection – action on this is awaited.

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

Spain:

Implementation of REAL DECRETO 581/2001, de 1 de junio, por el que en determinadas zonas húmedas se prohíbe la tenencia y el uso de municiones que contengan plomo para el ejercicio de la caza y el tiro deportivo (decree by which in certain wetlands the possession and use of ammunition containing lead for the purposes of hunting and sport shooting are prohibited).

Mateo et al. (2013), has indicated that it is difficult to determine the prevalence of ingestion of lead shot for example in white headed duck, since it is not a hunted species, but the Spanish program to eradicate ruddy ducks (*Oxyura jamaicensis*) and their hybrids with the white-headed ducks, allowed observation of prevalence of ingestion of pellets of 32% in the genus *Oxyura*. In addition, 73.3% of *Oxyura* sp. found dead in the Spanish

wetlands contained lead pellets in the gizzard and 80% had > 20 µg / g of lead in the liver in dry weight (Mateo et al., 2013)².

EU:

CMS Res 11.15(Rev1) Preventing Poisoning of Migratory Birds was adopted in October 2017 at CMS COP12 which formally establishes the Lead Task Group to help Parties deliver their commitments on phase out of lead ammunition.

An important European Chemicals Agency restriction proposal would harmonise bans on use of lead shot in wetlands across the EU. A public consultation is running presently.

A resolution on Health and the Environment was adopted at UNEA3 in 2017 which requests further action on lead ammunition ([UNEP/EA.3/L.8](#)).

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

France:

- International management plan for the Greylag Goose

The French Ministry of Environment, together with National Hunters' Federation and Fondation François Sommer has funded the drafting of the International Management Plan for the Greylag Goose (NW/SW European population) under the AEWA. The drafting has been entrusted to OMPO. A first draft was presented at the launching workshop in Paris in October 2017 (see below). A revised second draft was circulated in March 2018, so as to get a "final document" to be examined by the Technical Committee in April, then by the present Standing Committee.

In addition, France contributed to the functioning of the European Goose Management Platform (EGMP) for 30,000 Euros in 2017. A new, probably higher, funding has been secured for 2018.

- Support to the implementation of the African Initiative:

France carried on providing funding to the Technical Support Unit (TSU) which includes ONCFS, Tour du Valat and Senegal National Parks Directorate. The results of the TSU for technically assisting the African Parties to implement the Plan of Action for Africa adopted at MOP5, were presented at MOP6 and unanimously greeted by the attendees, in particular the African Parties.

Since the last standing Committee, the TSU permanently implemented activities both in North and Sub-Saharan Africa.

In North Africa, the TSU:

- organized the last workshop carried out in the framework of the project: « Waterbirds monitoring in North Africa for the preservation of Wetlands », funded by the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF), held in Oran, Algeria 27-30 September 2016. This project, for which TSU raised funds in 2013 and which will be completed this year, enabled local NGOs to improve their IWC network, to develop management indicators on pilot sites and to strengthen the awareness of NGOs and local communities regarding wetlands conservation.
- organized the yearly workshop of the Mediterranean Waterbird Network in Arles, 2-4 October 2016 and Tunis, 11-18 September 2017. The main goals of these meetings were to work on collaborative scientific papers on IWC in North Africa and to complete and sign the convention on data sharing

² R. Mateo, N. Vallverdú-Coll, M.E. Ortiz-Santaliestra: Intoxicación por munición de plomo en aves silvestres en España y medidas para reducir el riesgo. *Ecosistemas* 22(2):61-67 [Mayo-Agosto 2013].

between the countries. Following the update and finalization of the overall IWC database, completed in 2017, the network was also able to work on the Medwaterbirds storage and exchange platform (www.medwaterbirds.net) where the data are to be transferred. The network also prepares each IWC operation. The opportunities of funding of the Mediterranean Waterbird network and its extension to other Mediterranean countries are also discussed.

The achievements of the Mediterranean Waterbird network have been presented at several international events: AEWa MOP6 (Nov. 2015 Germany), 8th International Workshop on the White Spoonbill (Nov 2015, France), European Bird Census Council, EBCC (Sept. 2016, Germany), 14th Panafrican Ornithological Congress (PAOC, Dakar, Senegal, 16-21 October 2016).

In Subsaharan Africa, the TSU:

- attended the 14th Panafrican Ornithological Congress (PAOC), held in Dakar, Senegal, 16-21 October 2016. Two oral communications on the results of the TSU's work in Sudan and Egypt were presented.
- organized along with the AEWa Secretariat and Wetlands International a workshop on IWC Data management aimed at the African anglophones countries. This workshop funded by Switzerland, was held on 21-24 October, back to back with the PAOC. 13 African anglophones AEWa Parties attended the meeting whose goal was to update the list of the counted sites, digitalize their limits and complement the missing data in national IWC databases. The workshop allowed to significantly improve and complement the IWC database both at the regional and international levels.
- Organized a workshop on IWC data management aimed at 3 Sahelian countries in Tour du Valat on 20-25 November 2017, aiming at cleaning and updating national IWC database of Senegal and Mali.
- Launched the RESSOURCE project in partnership with CIRAD, OMPO, BirdLife and Wetlands International. This project of an amount of 5 M€ on 4 years will enhance the management of waterbirds in the Sahel and Nile Valley. It will be coordinated by FAO which will also co-fund the project along with FFEM and UE. The project which began in November 2016, includes five components: (i) Monitoring of the ressource « Waterbirds »; (ii) Conservation of the ressource « Waterbirds » and integrated management of wetlands; (iii) Knowledge and sustainable use of the ressource « Waterbirds »; (iv) Capacity strengthening and (v) Improvement of legislative and institutional frameworks for the ressource « Waterbirds ». Waterbird and waterbird harvest were surveyed in Senegal, Egypt, Chad, Sudan and Mali since 2016
<http://www.fao.org/news/story/fr/item/445552/icode/>

New PhDs at CNRS. Centre d'Ecologie Fonctionnelle et Evolutive (CEFE):

- FRANCESIAZ Charlotte, 2016. Sélection d'habitat et dynamique spatio-temporelle des colonies chez deux espèces de laridés, la mouette rieuse et le goéland railleur. Thèse TDV, Université de Montpellier, CEFE.
- AMELINEAU Françoise, 2016. Sensibilité d'un oiseau marin arctique aux changements environnementaux. Thèse de doctorat sur le Mergule nain (*Alle alle*), Université de Montpellier/CEFE

Various research Programs at the French National History Museum on waterbird migration and dispersion

Research program of OMPO on duck migration in eastern Europe and Western Africa

New PhD at CNRS Centre d'études biologiques de Chizé:

- BLEVIN Pierre, 2017. Polluants organiques émergents en Arctique : effets des composés perfluorés sur les oiseaux marins. Thèse de Doctorat, Université de La Rochelle
- Programme CORMOR on Shag ecology
- Regional Action Plan for Kentish Plover conservation in Brittany

- Research Programs at Tour du Valat (TdV):
- metapopulation dynamics of Greater Flamingo, Slender-billed Gull, Glossy Ibis, Spoonbill.
- adaptive management and restoration of major coastal saltworks in Camargue aiming at conserving breeding waterbirds
- Long-term monitoring of colonial breeding & wintering waterbirds
- Modelling IA dispersal in wetlands using wintering duck data

Project DyCIT on Tromelin Island (Indian Ocean) conservation & habitat restoration including introduced predators removal in order to protect seabird colonies. Administration des TAAF, Université de la Réunion et CEB de Chizé (CNRS).

Wader and mudflats monitoring in Western France by La Rochelle University <http://limitrack.univ-lr.fr/> and around 30 sites of the whole coastal France by the French Agency for Marine Protected Areas: <http://www.aires-marines.fr/Evaluer/Suivre-et-evaluer-les-AMP/Observatoire-Littoral-Limicoles-et-Macrofaune-benthique>

ONCFS conducts research & monitoring programs on pop Dynamics on Woodcock, snipes, ducks, geese, waders, as well as fishponds and meadows. In addition, ONCFS supports IWC in Sahel and Egypt in the framework of the Technical Support Unit to the AEW African Initiative and the RESSOURCE project in collaboration with Tour du Valat, including for data management.

Finally, French wetlands and associated ecosystems services were evaluated by FRB (<http://www.fondationbiodiversite.fr/en/>) in march 2018.

<https://www.ecologique-solidaire.gouv.fr/sites/default/files/Th%C3%A9matique%20Les%20milieux%20humides%20et%20aquatiques%20continentaux.pdf>

Publications lists on waterbirds can be accessed on the following web portals:

- MNHN
- ONCFS
- Station Biologique de la Tour du Valat.

See Annex 2 for further PhD studies being undertaken in France.

Netherlands:

The Netherlands has invested in a research project with regards to the Barnacle Goose to support the knowledge base of the European Goose Management Platform and improve international monitoring of goose populations. In 2017 work has begun on the population modelling in order to underpin the measures to manage and conserve this species in Europe as well as keeping economic conflicts to a minimum. Results will be available during establishment of the Adaptive Harvest Management Plan in 2019. This research project was taken up by a consortium consisting of the Netherlands Institute for Ecology, Dutch Centre for Avian Migration and Demography, Wageningen Environmental Research and Sovon Dutch Centre for Field Ornithology.

The international conservation and management of waterbirds and wetlands along the East-Atlantic Flyway benefitted from the Waddensea Flyway Initiative, a cooperation between Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands that was established since 2011. Improvement of International monitoring under this umbrella was financed by the Dutch programme Rich Waddensea and coordinated by Sovon in cooperation with Wetlands International and BirdLife international. In January 2017 a complete inventory of all wintering areas along the flyway was executed in order to calculate new flyway trends and population sizes after this was done the first time in January 2014. Besides the monitoring of birds numbers also the presence of human induced threats were assessed. In January 2018 waterbirds were counted in a sample of wintering areas along the

western African coast as a continuation of this monitoring. The Network Ecological Monitoring provides yearly counts of waterbirds and has organized training for new volunteers.

Spain:

Results of censuses of waterbirds:

- *White-headed duck*:
Coordinated census (2016): 280 males + 333 females + 125 indeterminate= 738 individuals.
- *Marbled duck*
The reduction in the population in the last 10 years or three generations could reach 80%, from the 145 counted in 2002 (MAPAMA-Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, Food and Environment, 2013).

Seaducks:

A coordinated marine waterbird census (focused on seaducks, divers and grebes) took place across the Baltic Sea in January 2016. Plans for developing the next coordinated census in January 2020 are underway – most Baltic countries have confirmed participation but there is still much work to do outside the Baltic (i.e. in this AEWA region) to make this a flyway-scale census. Parties are encouraged to consider, and ideally confirm, participation as soon as possible.

Attempts to secure resources for surveys of other marine regions in northern Europe were unsuccessful.

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

France:

The French National Strategy for wetlands includes several teams (Pôle relais Zones humides) aiming at public awareness and CEPA activities:

Pôle relais for Mediterranean lagoons : <https://pole-lagunes.org/>

- Communication on breeding colonial waterbirds in the framework of the Life+ project ENVOLL
- Launching in 2016 of the « Météo des oiseaux » facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/Meteodesoiseaux/> providing beach sport practitioners with an information tool on breeding colonies disturbance and sensitivity level.

Pôle relais for ponds, continental wetlands and floodplains : <http://www.pole-zhi.org/>

WETNET project aims at coordinating management and network of Mediterranean wetlands. <https://wetnet.interreg-med.eu/>

Netherlands:

The following sites provide information on conservation measures, habitat conservation, threats, research, monitoring and education:

www.vogelbescherming.nl

www.sovon.nl

www.waddensea-secretariat.org/management/projects/wadden-sea-flyway-initiative-wsfi

Spain:

All Life Projects developed in Spain for the conservation of waterbirds and waterbird habitats include as a fundamental objective the awareness for its conservation.

In the case of Project Life 2016 for the conservation of *Marmaronetta angustirostris* (2018- 2022) it is intended to recover the population of the species by reversing its negative trend through actions that include the promotion of sustainable management of wetlands through the acquisition of land; the correction and minimization of the causes of unnatural mortality; the impulse of ex situ conservation; the promotion of agreements of custody of the territory, the best knowledge of the species applied to management; support for dissemination, communication and awareness for the conservation of this species and the promotion of international cooperation in this matter.

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

France:

The wind farm of Rion-des-Landes, overlapping with a Common Crane key site has been the subject of two successive impact assessments. The project is now put on hold for military reasons.

ANNEX 1

Further details of Alien Species being managed in France

Canada Goose: 12 000 - 14 000 individuals in 2016, 1700 breeding pairs. Increasing. Since 2012 a national control plan includes hunting and culling activities. Around 500 culled annually. However, spatial increase in distribution. Management guidelines recently produced by ONCFS. The national control plan is currently being evaluated and a winter pop survey planned in 2019 by ONCFS and hunting organisations. (<http://www.oncfs.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/Bernache-du-Canada-Carnets-ONCFS.pdf>)

Ruddy Duck: about 200 individuals, France having 50% of the European population. Culling activities in the wild and in captivity have been strengthened by European regulation N°1143/2014. National control plan (2015-2025) includes enforced culling and yearly winter survey by ONCFS and hunting organisations. 170 culled in 2016 in lac de Grand-Lieu which holds 95% of the national pop.

Sacred Ibis: 150/160 pairs on Atlantic French coast in 2017. Culling activities in the wild and in captivity have been strengthened by European regulation N°1143/2014. ONCFS carries on its culling activities that have been started since 2006 and French pop is now decreasing despite new establishment in Charente-Maritime (4-5 pairs). Influx from Italian feral pop is a case for concern.

Egyptian Goose: 1 000 - 1 200 individuals (essentially in NE France). Not hunted but occasionally culled by ONCFS upon official request from administration. In November 2017, meeting between Luxembourg, Belgium, Germany and France to strengthen cooperation on the management of this species. Winter pop survey planned in 2019.

ANNEX 2

Further new PhDs in France:

ASSALI Camille, 2017. Contribution des radars embarqués à l'étude des stratégies collectives de recherche alimentaire chez les oiseaux marins. Thèse de Doctorat, Université de Montpellier.

PHILLIPPE Anne, 2016. Interactions between shorebirds and benthic macrofauna : making small things bigger. Thèse de Doctorat, Université de La Rochelle.

ROJAS Emilio, 2015. Déterminants proximaux et contexte évolutif de la dispersion chez deux espèces d'oiseaux, la Cigogne blanche (*Ciconia ciconia*) et le Cincle plongeur (*Cinclus cinclus*). Thèse de Doctorat, Université de Strasbourg.

DUPRAZ Marlène, 2016. Convergence dans l'évolution de la spécialisation d'hôte chez des tiques : modèle tiques-oiseaux de mer à distribution mondiale. Thèse de doctorat, Université de Montpellier.

GERARD Agathe, 2015. Naïveté, nouveauté et indigénisation : vers une meilleure compréhension de l'impact des espèces animales invasives sur les faunes natives. Thèse de Doctorat, Université d'Aix-Marseille.

FARAU Sébastien, 2015. Les savoirs écologiques des chasseurs de gibier d'eau girondins : étude de leur validité pour une gestion de l'avifaune des zones humides. Thèse de Doctorat, Université de Pau.

PIOCH Sylvain, 2017. Vers une nouvelle gouvernance côtière entre aménagement et environnement ? La compensation des impacts de l'homme sur l'environnement dans les projets d'aménagements maritimes. Mémoire d'HDR, Université Montpellier 3.

PERNOLLET Claire, 2016. L'utilisation des rizières par les canards hivernants : vers une gestion des rizières en interculture favorable aux canards et aux agriculteurs. Thèse de doctorat ONCFS/TDV.

Ongoing :

GAGET Elie. Impact des pressions humaines sur les oiseaux d'eau hivernants dans les zones humides méditerranéennes. Thèse en cours, TDV/MNHN.

FOLLIOT Benjamin Population dynamics of Common Pochad, these en cours, ONCFS/TdV.

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.

There are seven contracting Parties in the Region (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, Belarus) and the European Union. The total area of the region is 5,2 million. km²; population: about 200 million people. Eight Range States provided feedback to this report.

Information for this Report was collected through the National Focal Points for AEWA/CMS or other relevant experts/organizations.

Waterbird conservation/management issues and problems differ quite substantially in 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.

I. Belarus

Belarus joined AEWA in 2016. It is distinguished by unique habitats (the largest fens and river floodplains in Europe), critically important for rare and vulnerable species of waterbirds. Bogs and mires cover about 2.3 million hectares of the country. The country holds a large number of rare and threatened waterbirds species. The Pripyat River Floodplain in southern Belarus is the key stop-over area for waterbirds in this part of Europe, regularly supporting internationally important concentrations of 18 species of waterbirds.

The country-wide inventory of peatlands and mires was performed in Belarus, and the National Strategy on the sustainable use of peatlands and mires was adopted by the Government in 2016. More than 684,000 ha of peatlands and mires were included into the list of specially protected territories. 11 new State Reserves (their total area – about 29,000 ha) were established in particularly valuable mires and bogs in 2016 - 2017. The largest restoration scheme of peatlands and open mires in Eastern Europe was implemented in Belarus in 2009-2017, with more than 51,000 ha of wetlands restored.

The main threats to waterbirds and their habitats indicated by the national authorities are of a broad range, such as habitat loss, mainly caused by recent changes in land-use. Large areas overgrown with shrubs/bushes/tall grassy vegetation cannot be used by most species of breeding and migratory waterbirds.

Following the ratification of AEWA, the Belarusian Government has totally prohibited spring hunting in certain sites internationally important for waterbirds. However, the planned new regulation of spring hunting (to enter into force in mid-April 2018) threatens many species of waterbirds (among them – species listed as Vulnerable under IUCN), as the duration of the period open for spring hunting of birds is extended up to 28 days for local hunters and up to two months – for foreign hunters. With such regulations, Belarus will become the only country in Europe with such a long period open for spring hunting of birds, while an exceptionally long period open in spring for foreign hunters contradicts sustainable hunting practices.

II. Moldova

Moldova has prepared the National Report for the AEWA MOP7. The main problems and threats are of a broad range, such as habitat loss, law enforcement, new infrastructure developments and the lack of funds necessary for implementation of environmental projects, particularly during the present economic crisis.

III. Ukraine

There is a continuing emergency situation in Ukraine caused by the war in the eastern part of the country and annexation of Crimea by Russia. Despite continuing military actions in eastern Ukraine and a very difficult economic situation, Ukraine has initiated several major environmental initiatives related to waterbirds and their habitats. The draft Law of Ukraine on habitats and species of European importance was under development in 2017 – 2018. Its aim is to harmonize the legislation of Ukraine in line with the EU Birds Directive 2009/147/EC and EU Habitats Directive 92/43/EC, which will be important complementary tools for the AEWA implementation in the country.

Work is ongoing on the establishment of the Emerald sites network in Ukraine. In 2016, the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention adopted 271 Emerald sites for Ukraine. Many Emerald sites are important areas for waterbird species listed under AEWA.

Several AEWA Guidelines were translated into the Ukrainian language and distributed among relevant authorities/organizations.

National Action plans for certain rare waterbird species in Ukraine are considered for adoption. A total of 11 designated Ukrainian Ramsar sites, located in the region of the Black and Azov Seas are currently threatened by the ongoing military actions and drastic political/economic changes. These sites are among the most important areas for breeding and migratory waterbirds in Eastern Europe, annually holding more than 1 million migratory waterbirds and globally endangered breeding/migratory species, such as the Red-breasted Goose and Ferruginous Duck, etc.

Several of these Ramsar sites are threatened by the major infrastructural developments, such as the construction of the new mega-bridge across the Kerch Strait (dividing the Black and Azov Sea), implemented by Russia without any international environmental impact assessment.

IV. Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan

Georgia is the only Contracting Party to AEWA in the Caucasus region. A national report for AEWA MOP7 was prepared. Georgia is negotiating new Association Agreements with the EU, including the converging of the EU Birds Directive and the Habitats Directive to the national legislation. New laws on EIA are already in force in this country, markedly contributing to the conservation of species listed under AEWA.

The main threats to waterbirds and their habitats indicated by the national authorities: new potential major infrastructures (recreation resorts, major energy sector developments, etc.).

Azerbaijan also evaluates possibilities of converging 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 pollution of the Caspian Sea by oil leakages.

Armenia: no information was received from authorities although local experts have indicated a significant drop in Lake Sevan's water level because of drawdown for irrigation and the diversion of water to hydroelectric

plants as the main threat to waterbirds and their habitats. As a Member of the Eurasian Treaty, Armenia is being encouraged to ratify AEWA, following Belarus.

V. Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania

A comprehensive review of national AEWA implementation activities was prepared by all three countries for MOP7.

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

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

In 2015-2017, these countries have significantly contributed to the reduction of by-catch of wintering/migratory waterbirds in the Baltic Sea (particularly of seaducks). In Lithuania and Latvia, the network of offshore and inshore protected marine areas was completed in 2015. Appropriate regulation of intensive fisheries (including the ban of trawling) is now in force in almost all internationally important areas for wintering/migrating waterbirds, located in marine waters of the Baltic States. The Lithuanian Ornithological Society and WWT prepared the draft AEWA/EU International Single Species Action Plan for the Conservation of Velvet Scoter in 2017, to be presented to MOP7 for adoption in November 2018.

There are major ongoing projects related to the reduction of negative effects of power lines/wind-power developments on breeding and migratory waterbirds in all three countries concerned.

There are several major ongoing activities on restoration of the key waterbird habitats in all three countries (funded mostly by EU programmes) and several major ongoing research and monitoring activities on waterbird species and their habitats in the Baltic States.

There are special ongoing programmes on eradication/regulation in numbers of alien mammal species (American mink, racoon dog), negatively affecting waterbird populations in all three countries.

During the last years major progress was made related to education and information activities on waterbirds and their habitats in all three countries, with numerous information centers and other public education objects established.

VI. Russian Federation

The European part of the Russian Federation holds 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 and impacts of the global climate change. Some progress has been recently achieved in the management of game birds. The period open for spring hunting was restricted to 10 days and new evaluation of approximate annual game bag of waterbirds in Russia was provided in 2017.

The problems related to AEWA in Russia were discussed in several special international meetings arranged by the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat and appropriate international organizations. The Russian authorities have formally confirmed plans to join AEWA in the near future.

Southern Africa – Ms Lizanne Roxburgh

1. Number of Contracting Parties in the region / number of Range States in the region. New accessions since the previous TC meeting. Actions by the regional representative to encourage non-party Range States to ratify the Agreement:

6 contracting parties/ 14 range states

New accessions: Botswana on 1st November 2017

2. Number of Range States (Parties and non-party Range States) that provided feedback for this report.

Four – namely Botswana, Mauritius, South Africa, Zimbabwe. No feedback received from Swaziland or Madagascar

3. Activities to implement the AEWA International Single Species Action Plans relevant to the region (please check for the AEWA ISSAP as per Sections 1&2 of attached [Annex 2](#))

a) White-winged Flufftail SSAP

Activities completed:

1.3 Designate all sites under national protected area legislation

South Africa: Middelpunt Wetland now forms part of the recently declared Greater Lakenvlei Protected Environment, Mpumalanga Province.

The declaration of the Ingula Nature Reserve (border of KwaZulu-Natal and Free State) is imminent.

Ethiopia: Discussions with Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority and more recently with potential funders in collaboration with AEWA regarding assistance with the declaration of Berga as a protected area.

5.1 Undertake genetic and isotopic investigations to determine if there are multiple populations of the species

A scientific study authored by BirdLife South Africa (BLSA) and National Zoological Gardens geneticists has showed that South African and Ethiopian birds are genetically similar, with only three minor sequence variations between the two populations (Dalton et al. 2018).

Dalton DL, Smit-Robinson HA, Vermaak E, Jarvis E, Kotzé A. 2018. Is there genetic connectivity among the Critically Endangered Whited-winged Flufftail (*Sarothrura ayresi*) populations from South Africa and Ethiopia? African Journal of Ecology 56: 28-37.doi:10.1111/aje.12414.

Du Plessis M, Dalton DL, Smit-Robinson HA, Kotzé A. 2017. Next generation sequencing yields the mitochondrial genome of the critically endangered *Sarothrura ayresi* (White-winged Flufftail). Mitochondrial DNA Part B: Resources 2: 236–237.

Dalton DL, Vermaak E, Smit-Robinson HA, Kotzé, A. 2016. Lack of diversity at innate immunity Toll-like receptors genes in the critically endangered White-winged Flufftail (*Sarothrura ayresi*). Scientific Reports. 6: 36757–63665. DOI: 10.1038/srep36757

7.1 Design and implement a scientific study to undertake a thorough assessment of habitat requirements, including the understanding of the hydrological functioning of the plateau floodplains.

Through the use of a novel survey method, BLSA's research team has this month discovered the first breeding of the threatened White-winged Flufftail in South Africa, contradicting prior thought that this flufftail is a non-breeding visitor to South African wetlands.

Over the past two years, an innovative method was developed to survey this cryptic and elusive species. Dubbed the BirdLife South Africa Rallid Survey Method (Colyn et al. 2017), it uses a cleverly designed camera trap system to record the secret life of the White-winged Flufftail. Working at Middelpunt Wetland near Belfast, in 2016/17 they recorded interesting wing-flapping behaviour during which both males and females display their white wing feathers. In 2017/18, the survey technique was further refined. The most exciting discovery was photographing recently-hatched chicks and juvenile White-winged Flufftails. At least two breeding attempts were recorded, with chicks ranging from only a couple of days old to juvenile birds which were about four weeks old. This confirms that the White-winged Flufftail is not a "non-breeding visitor" to South Africa.

Colyn R, Campbell A, Smit-Robinson HA. 2017. The application of camera trapping to assess rallidae species richness within wetland habitat types, eastern Free State, South Africa. *Ostrich* 88: 235-245.

8.1 Identify and explore potential sites in South Africa and Ethiopia (also refer to 12.1)

A habitat niche model through the use of remote sensing, Maxent and NDVI modelling are near-completed. This project was undertaken by BLSA. As part of her field research during the breeding season in 2017, Ethiopian Edge Fellow of Conservation, Bruktawit Abdu, discovered a nest with five eggs at a second site visited in Ethiopia by during July 2017. This site is now only the second confirmed breeding site for White-winged Flufftail in Ethiopia. It is encouraging that this particular site was identified as being one of the suitable areas for breeding by the latest ecological niche model developed by BLSA (unpublished), and thus confirms the accuracy of the model.

13.1 Compile and disseminate species information

BLSA's annual Flufftail Festival held at Maponya Mall, Soweto in collaboration with several partners, including the Department of Environmental Affairs, to celebrate waterbirds, wetlands and water.

b) Grey Crowned Crane SSAP

South Africa:

- Where Grey Crowned Cranes have been found under powerlines, assessments have been made and recommendations sent to Eskom for the mitigation of powerlines;
- The Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT) has actively participated as an Interested and Affected Party (I&APs) in mining applications that could affect Grey Crowned Crane habitat on the Steenkampsberg, around Chrissiesmeer and in the Southern Drakensberg. Due to the input from many I&APs against the appeal that was submitted by Ibubesi mine on the Steenkampsberg to reverse the declaration of the Greater Lakenvlei Protected Environment so that mining could be considered, the motion was withdrawn;
- Black wattle (*Acacia mearnsii*) is currently being cleared around key Grey Crowned Crane sites in Chrissiesmeer;
- There is ongoing monitoring of Grey Crowned Cranes in KwaZulu-Natal through annual aerial surveys conducted by the EWT and Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife;
- The annual aerial surveys conducted by the EWT are ongoing in the Chrissiesmeer area.

c) Draft MSAP for the Benguela ecosystem's seabirds

South Africa has continued to monitor numbers breeding for African penguin, Cape gannet and Cape, bank and crowned cormorants. Following substantial reductions in numbers of African penguin, Cape gannet and Cape and Bank cormorants breeding off South Africa's west coast, these four species all now have an IUCN Red List status of Endangered. South Africa has undertaken surveys for Damara Terns (Vulnerable), which indicate that perhaps just 50 pairs of this species breed in South Africa. South Africa has also continued its programme of tracking some seabirds listed on the draft plan in order to better understand their at-sea distributions and advise on marine spatial planning.

d) Maccoa Duck SSAP

An ISSAP was developed for the Maccoa Duck several years ago. The Gauteng Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (GDARD) in South Africa have drafted revised minimum requirements for biodiversity assessments (related to EIAs) that propose expanded buffers around wetlands used by this species. These proposals are being reviewed by external experts.

e) Slaty Egret SSAP

Botswana: Fundraising for implementation of the Slaty Egret ISSAP from the KAZA secretariat was unsuccessful.

f) Lesser Flamingo SSAP

Botswana: Elements of the Lesser Flamingo ISSAP implemented through the BirdLife Botswana-led and UNDP/GEF Sustainable Land Management (Makgadikgadi) project, 2014-2017, notably awareness-raising and training of local community members around the core breeding site in the Makgadikgadi Pans. The details on this project can be found at <https://www.thegef.org/project/using-slm-improve-integrity-makgadikgadi-ecosystem-and-secure-livelihoods-rangeland>

4. Emergency situations (extreme cold, draught, toxic or oil spills, etc.) that have occurred and have affected waterbirds and/or their habitats since the last TC meeting and response to them.

- Avian Influenza widespread in South Africa – see BLSA's media statement;
- In February 2018, there was an outbreak of avian influenza amongst some South African seabirds, including African penguin and Cape gannet. The severity of the outbreak is yet to be gauged;
- An appeal was circulated via social media in South Africa for reports of unusual waterbird mortalities. State vets from GDARD collected samples for testing. Feedback is still awaited from several incidents;
- On 16 June 2016, there was an occurrence of a minor oil spill around the south-east coast of Mauritius at Le Bouchon following the grounding of a tanker MV Benita. One dead Lesser Noddy (*Anous tenuirostris*) was recorded. Oil spilled was contained and cleaning operations were conducted.

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

None reported from any range states

6. Activities on eradication or other type of action regarding alien species.

South Africa: GDARD and BirdLasser are in the process of developing an early warning system for detecting existing and emerging alien bird threats. This conservation cause will draw on data collected by citizen scientist volunteers and is linked to the Southern African Bird Atlas Project initiative.

Mauritius: In 2017, a crow (*Corvus splendens*) eradication campaign was carried out island-wide. From an initial count of about 4,900 individuals, the crow population was successfully reduced by 83%. At the Rivulet Terre Rouge Estuary Bird Sanctuary (RTREBS), a Ramsar site of International Importance, crows have successfully been removed, as they caused much disturbance to migratory birds and waterbirds. Mudflat restoration is being carried out by removing invasive weeds.

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

South Africa: GDARD officials are actively involved in the management of the Blesbokspruit Ramsar site. Significant resources have been allocated to attempts at reed management

Mauritius: The Management Plan of RTREBS (Rivulet Terre Rouge Estuary Bird Sanctuary) is currently being reviewed. Conservation activities regarding seabirds are ongoing at Round Island.

Zimbabwe: Plans to conduct habitat assessment in Driefontein Grasslands (Ramsar Site & Important Bird Area) through the AEW grant to BirdLife Zimbabwe.

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

BLSA initiated a focused study on lead toxicosis in scavenging raptors, which is focused on quantifying the blood lead levels and mainly relates to lead bullets, rather than lead shot. An isotope study is currently underway to establish the source of the lead poisoning.

In 2017, GDARD met with representatives of local wing shooter groups and it was agreed that hunting over wetlands with lead shot was unacceptable and would not be permitted. License conditions for the hunting of gamebirds in Gauteng Province should reflect this prohibition from 2018 onwards.

The military (Botswana Defence Force, BDF) has expressed an interest in moving towards lead-free bullets; this is not formalised yet. However, the BDF has (in partnership with Botswana International University of Science and Technology, BIUST) started some research projects into the levels of lead contamination at some of their shooting ranges, and are looking at remedial actions at some of those sites. At a systemic level, Botswana has not started national dialogue on phasing out of lead shot, and this is an issue that DWNP and BirdLife Botswana will have to champion in the near future.

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

South Africa: GDARD officials are continuing with biannual Coordinated Waterbird Counts at all major dams in Gauteng as well as at many other sites in the province. Data was previously sent to the ADU and will now be sent to the FitzPatrick Institute. River surveys aimed at assessing the status of rare river-associated waterbird species were initiated in 2017. To date, parts of three rivers (min 3km stretches) have been surveyed and this initiative will be continued in 2018.

Botswana: There are bi-annual monitoring activities done countrywide on waterbirds (counts in January and June each year); results are shared with Wetlands International, and also summarised in BirdLife Botswana publications, notably the organisation's journal, Babbler.

Mauritius: Regular monitoring of migratory birds and some waterbirds at RTREBS. Monitoring of population of seabird is also ongoing.

Zimbabwe: Waterbird counts done in January and July of every year. Avian Influenza surveillance is carried out.

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

The EWT's Chrissiesmeer Crane Festival is held annually to celebrate and raise awareness of cranes and other threatened species and their habitats in the area. It also highlights Chrissiesmeer as an important bird area and an eco-tourism destination.

BLSA's annual Flufftail Festival held at Maponya Mall, Soweto, in collaboration with several partners, including the Department of Environmental Affairs, to celebrate waterbirds, wetlands and water, World Migratory Bird Day and World Wetlands Day are celebrated annually in Mauritius. World Wetlands Day Commemorations and Waterbird identification courses in schools in Zimbabwe

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

South Africa: Several coal mining proposals in the Steenkampsberg Important Bird and Biodiversity Area are threatening the habitats of White-winged Flufftail and Grey Crowned Crane in the Greater Lakenvlei Protected Area and surrounding areas.

Botswana: In 2016, an estimated 100 flamingos died after colliding with Botswana Power Corporation (BPC) powerlines near the Broadhurst sewage ponds in Gaborone. The threats posed by powerlines will be part of the 2018 workplan for further discussions with the power utility, in light of at least five very large transmission lines planned across Botswana, many of which will be constructed starting 2018, while others are at the EIA stage. AEWA assistance on dealing with powerlines would be most welcome.

Regarding to legislation, the following laws are currently under review, and it will be crucial to ensure waterbirds are protected by these legal tools: Agrochemicals Act, Waste Management Act, and Wildlife Act. Any support from the UNEP/AEWA secretariat and other partners regarding input into these Acts would be most welcome.

Mauritius: Absence of legislation regulating wetlands in Mauritius. Impact of climate change and sea level rise. There was a motorway project which was supposed to cross (RTREBS). Fortunately, this project did not materialise

Zimbabwe: Urban areas particularly in Harare- Infrastructure development, wetland cultivation, pollution. Outside urban areas, cultivation in wetlands, veldfires One case of poisoning in Victoria Falls where 100 birds were killed; casualties included Comb Duck, Red-billed Teal and Egyptian Goose – see <https://www.africanfarming.com/suspected-poisoned-wheat-kills-dozens-birds-zambezi/>

12. Extent of use of the AEWA Conservation Guidelines by the parties (please check for the AEWA Conservation Guidelines as per Section 3 of Annex 2)

AEWA Conservation Guideline No 14 in use by the EWT-ESKOM partnership

13. Any other information.

A strategic re-evaluation of priority conservation interventions for birds in Gauteng Province, South Africa, has just been completed. Relevant commitments were extracted from the AEWA strategic plan and priority actions will be incorporated into future workplans.

As a new signatory, Botswana will need technical, financial and logistical support from both the UNEP/AEWA secretariat and other partners so that it can realise the full benefit of AEWA accession.

BirdLife Zimbabwe was awarded an AEWA Small Grant to implement the project: *Species Survey and habitats assessment for Conservation Planning to secure the future of two Crane species in Zimbabwe*. The project started in January 2018 and will end in June 2019.

Eastern Africa - Mr Samuel Muchane Muchai

Contracting Parties & Non-Party Range States

| Contracting Parties | | Non-Contracting Parties |
|---------------------|------------------|-------------------------|
| Burundi | Tanzania | South Sudan |
| Djibouti | Uganda | Eritrea |
| Ethiopia | Rwanda | Somalia |
| Kenya | Réunion (France) | |
| Sudan | Mayotte (France) | |

Feedback received

| Feedback (42%) | |
|--------------------------|------------------|
| Party States | Non-Party States |
| KE, UG, TZ, S, ETH (42%) | - (0%) |

Recruitment of new Parties from Eastern Africa

No new Parties since TC13 last meeting; Burundi is the most recent country to accede; (the Agreement came into force on 1 October 2014). Rwanda became a Contracting Party to AEWA as of 01 September 2014. South Sudan is still in the process of accession.

1. Activities to implement the AEWA International Single Species Action Plans (ISSAP)

Lesser Flamingo (*Phoeniconaias minor*)

Kenya: Breeding & feeding sites designated as protected areas, Ramsar sites, IBAs, World Heritage Sites.

Tanzania: National Wetlands Working Group & WCST & TAWIRI: National Single Species Action Plan for the Lesser Flamingo.

The Tanzanian government has recently announced the stopping of plans to establish a soda ash plant in Lake Natron, and to move it to Engaruka; this is positive for the Lesser Flamingo breeding site.

Madagascar Pond-Heron (*Ardeola idea*)

Kenya: Not much has happened since the surveys in Kenya by Henry Ndithia.

Pressures on its wetland habitats continues.

National MPH Census Twice/year

MPH network: The Africa Secretariat of BirdLife International in liaison with the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat will provide the global lead and the Madagascar Pond-heron network. There are plans for a coordinated censuses in all countries, population modelling and the creation of artificial breeding.

White-winged Flufftail (*Sarothrura ayresi*)

Ethiopia: (EWCA & EWNHS, Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Climate Change is working on ratification of Ramsar Convention and inclusion of important bird areas as Ramsar sites. According to the existing report, the following main activities have been performed in order to implement the WwF ISSAP:

- Concerned bodies Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority (EWCA) and the Ethiopian Wildlife and Natural History Society (EWNHS) have been working in close collaboration with the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Climate Change on ratification of Ramsar Convention and inclusion of important bird areas as Ramsar site;
- Concept note was submitted for potential interest in full proposal for community-based programs;
- Consultations between EWCA and local government offices on how to enforce legislation to prevent cultivation at the breeding wetlands was undertaken;
- Monitoring of Berga site has been conducted in order to understand the status of White-winged Flufftail and its habitat;
- Checking out existing sites for presence of White-winged Fluff tail was undertaken; Identification of migration & stop-over sites;
- Prevent cultivation at breeding wetlands;
- Monitoring of White-winged Fluff tail in Berga;
- White-winged Flufftail Survey.

Crucial research by birdlife South Africa has established that this species also breeds in South Africa, in contrary to the previous assumption that it only breeds in Ethiopia.

Maccoa Duck (*Oxyura Maccoa*)

Gill nets issues continue to be a threat to the Maccoa ducks. NMK has conducted a national annual national count/survey of Maccoa Ducks. This has improved knowledge about Maccoa duck population estimates and distribution. Sport hunting has been abolished in Kenya.

Kenya: Kenya has established the following for Maccoa ducks:

- Guidelines for population censusing and monitoring;
- Annual national counts;
- Inclusion in national and international RDB status, and upgrading (i.e. higher levels of threat categorization) of national and international conservation status as appropriate;
- Improved definition of annual cycles and movement;
- Improved understanding of habitat usage in relation to breeding activities;
- Guidelines for habitat management practices;
- Improved definition and evaluation of threats;

- Guidelines for collecting country data and annual reports on the implementation of the Action Plan;
- Guidelines for monitoring implementation; and
- Organizing triennial meeting with Range States and submitting review to the triennial Range States Meeting.

Shoebill (*Balaeniceps rex*)

Uganda: Uganda has undertaken the following:

- Reduction of factors affecting productivity;
- Reduce habitat fragmentation & deterioration;
- Study key knowledge; and
- Minimize illegal trade.

There are still concerns that the species is being illegally traded from some places in Tanzania.

Grey Crowned Crane (*Balearica regulorum*)

Facing quite a bit of threats in East Africa

Uganda: National Action Plan for Grey Crowned-crane completed, awaiting approval of Minister.

Kenya: Lake Olborosat = there has been egg collection and disturbance of nesting sites in the past. However, a lot is happening in Kenya. Mr. Rudolf Makhanu coordinator of EWT's Kenya crane work has been engaged with many activities to save the cranes. In Lake Olborosat, a local conservation group is already protecting breeding grounds from cattle disturbance with great results this year; and the group is also giving bursaries to families to encourage people to take care of the breeding grounds.

NABU/ICF/EWT are partnering with Kerry Morrison and many others in conducting various Crane conservation work. Professor Nathan Gichuki and Dr Muchane Muchai are supervising Mary Mugure (MSc student – University of Eldoret), Stephen Wamiti (PhD student – University of Nairobi) and Andrew Moinde (MSc student – University of Eldoret) who are carrying out research, monitoring and conservation of the Grey crowned cranes in Kenya.

Eurasian Spoonbill (*Platalea leucorodia*)

No activities in the region, despite the fact that the species winters in the Eastern Africa region.

Range States, governmental and non-governmental organisations & bilateral and multilateral donors to provide assistance (active participation and funding) for the coordination and implementation of International Species Action in the region.

Black-tailed Godwit (*Limosa limosa*)

No activities in the region despite the fact that the species winters in the Eastern Africa region.

Range States, governmental and non-governmental organisations & bilateral and multilateral donors to provide assistance (active participation and funding) for the coordination and implementation of International Species Action in the region.

Corncrake (*Crex crex*)

No activities in the region despite the fact that the species winters in the Eastern Africa region.

Range States, governmental and non-governmental organisations & bilateral and multilateral donors to provide assistance (active participation and funding) for the coordination and implementation of International Species Action in the region.

Ferruginous Duck (*Aythya nyroca*)

No activities in the region despite the fact that the species winters in E Africa region.

Range States, governmental and non-governmental organisations & bilateral and multilateral donors to provide assistance (active participation and funding) for the coordination and implementation of International Species Action in the region.

Black-winged Pratincole (*Glareola nordmanni*)

No activities in the region despite the fact that the species winters in E Africa region.

Range States, governmental and non-governmental organisations & bilateral and multilateral donors to provide assistance (active participation and funding) for the coordination and implementation of International Species Action in the region.

Great Snipe (*Gallinago media*)

No activities in the region despite the fact that the species winters in E Africa region.

Range States, governmental and non-governmental organisations & bilateral and multilateral donors to provide assistance (active participation and funding) for the coordination and implementation of International Species Action in the region.

2. Emergency Situations

Impacts of drought in Eastern Africa:

- Decreases in rainfall in the whole of Eastern Africa;
- Dams and irrigation schemes;
- Climate change is causing reductions in rainfall;
- Unexpectedly large drops in river flows.

Toxic chemicals & oil spill

- South Sudan: Toxic chemicals used in the drilling of petroleum –waterbirds that come in contact are severely affected. Oil spills had been a problem in the past.
- Kenya, Tanzania & Uganda: New Oil Producing Countries –potential issues??
- Ethiopia: There was one incidence of mass mortality case of Lesser flamingoes about two years ago at Chitu Lake, in the Abijatta-Shalla Lakes National Park. Postmortem samples were taken and sent for diagnosis. The result was however negative with regard to disease prevalence.

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

Uganda: Crane conservation efforts have been reinvigorated with support of International Crane Foundation through Nature Uganda.

Elsewhere: Nothing tangible ongoing.

4. Activities on eradication or other type of action regarding alien species.

Activities on Eradication of alien species:

1. **Kenya:** Invasive and other problematic species e.g. Water hyacinth and Water salvinia in Lake Victoria, L. Naivasha (Kenya). Awareness and manual and mechanical removal is ongoing.
2. **Uganda:** Massive removal of invasive species in Lake Mburo and Queen Elizabeth National Parks are ongoing.
3. **Ethiopia:** Awareness creation and mass movement programme for eradication of invasive species (water hyacinth) was launched throughout the major lakes of Ethiopia, especially in Lake Tana (the biggest Lake in Ethiopia).
4. **Kenya:** Invasive Indian House

The invasive Indian House Crow continues to be a major problem for both waterbirds and terrestrial species in coastal eastern Africa. There are ongoing discussions for coordinated eradication of Indian house crow in Kenya.

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

Kenya:

- Inventories: Include; Waterfowl counts in lakes along Rift Valley such as L. Naivasha, L. Magadi, L. Nakuru, L. Elementaita and Central Kenya Lakes such as L. Olbolossat and Yalla Swamp in Western Kenya.
- Replanting of Papyrus & trees along the L. Naivasha, Yalla & Dunga ecosystem/ catchment.
- Demarcations of Riparian land at L. Naivasha by Imarisha.
- Kenya: Sites (IBAs) conservation ongoing and very beneficial to sites, habitat and ecosystem restoration.
- The Wildlife, Fisheries and Wetlands Bill have been revised and are now supporting integrated biodiversity conservation and ecosystem based management.

Ethiopia:

- Wetland International (Abijatta-Shalla sustainable use & habitat restoration).
- All 25 IBA Wetlands are monitored annually.
- All protected areas which are situated in the aquatic areas are being restored and properly protected.
- A project that is assisted by Wetland International (WI) and the Government of Germany is being implemented at Abijatta-Shalla Lakes National Park. The main objective of the project is to support sustainable use of water along the Rift Valley and restore some of the degraded habitats of the park.

Sudan:

- San Sustainable Natural Resource Management (SSNRMP) -Umjar Wetland, White Nile.

Uganda:

- Routine site management.
- Restoration for the flamingo habitats in Western Uganda.
- Promotion of birding tourism to generate revenue for communities and Government in Uganda.

BirdLife just completed a project on community action plans for conserving sites in the Lake Victoria Basin (Yala & Dunga (Kenya), Lutembe Bay and Mabamba Bay (**Uganda**), and Akanyaru Wetland (**Rwanda**).

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

Ethiopia:

- Since 30 December 2011, no hunting is allowed in the protected areas and use of lead in the controlled hunting sites is considerably minimized.

South Sudan:

Ban imposed on hunting for ten years until 2021.

Kenya:

- The Wildlife Conservation and Management Act (2013) bans any form of gamebird hunting and exercises tough penalties to any person who engages in any such activity.
- NatureKenya is creating awareness /advocacy ant Yala swamp.

Uganda:

No lead shots in Uganda wetlands.

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

Kenya:

- January and July annual waterfowl census was conducted in L. Naivasha, L. Magadi, L. Nakuru, L. Elementaita, Olbolossat, Yalla Swamp, and Central & Nairobi Wetlands. The annual waterfowl census is carried out by National Museums of Kenya in collaboration with Kenya Wildlife Service, Nature Kenya, and volunteers.
- Ongoing surveys of Maccoa duck, Grey Crown Cranes and Madagascar Pond Heron in Kenya.

Uganda:

- Government will be supporting Nature Uganda to conduct water bird census & monitoring.

Tanzania:

- Annual waterfowl census ongoing.

Sudan:

- Survey in Umjar/ Um Gurr Island -White Nile State.

South Sudan:

- Annual waterbird census ongoing.

Ethiopia:

- January waterfowl census in 31 major wetlands.

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

- The Flyway WoW Training kit
- BirdLife Africa Partnership Secretariat
- Celebrations of WMBD in all countries. Awareness-raising campaigns for migratory birds.
- Trainings personnel on monitoring waterbirds.

- Wildlife Trust –education and awareness on Birds poisoning within the irrigation Schemes.
- L. Naivasha Sustainable Project, NMK, NatureKenya, CBO Education & Advocacy.
- Supports Undergraduate, Master’s and PhD students in field surveys.

Ethiopia: Trainings were provided to wildlife personnel on how to monitor waterbirds. The World Migratory Birds Day (WMBD) has been colourfully celebrated and used as a main forum to create awareness.

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

- Pesticide hunting with FURADAN (a carbofuran), Marshal and Styrychnine (BunyalaRice IrrScheme);
- Drainage of the wetland for settlement & farms;
- Hydro-electric dams;
- Salt manufacture & mining;
- Piping for domestic water;
- Uncontrolled Agricultural schemes & infrastructural Development projects (Sudan);
- 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 & wind power developments;
- Immerging Diseases;
- Agricultural Intensification is causing drastic decline in shorebird numbers in a large part of EA;
- Production of bio-fuels (Jatropha) in the Tana River Delta floodplain wetlands & mangroves on the north Kenyan coast;
- Commercial farms in wetlands in Ethiopia which use agrochemicals like fertilizers, herbicides and insecticides are now expanding;
- Oil and gas explorations (Albertine Rift Lakes (e.g. methane exploration in L. Kivu, L. Tanganyika & L. Turkana);
- Geothermal explorations in Hell’s Gate & Bogoria will affect waterbirds?
- Habitat loss (wetland conversion) due to agriculture;
- Wetland degradation & Wetland encroachment;
- Development;
- Human wildlife conflict e.g. Egg collection of Grey Crowned Crane at Lake Olborosat;
- Poor waste management & disposal;
- Water pollution from flower farms;
- Water regulation & irrigation activities;
- Recent rise in water levels within the great Rift Valley Lakes (effects of regional tectonics influenced by the movements of global earth’s plate tectonics). reduced number of Flamingoes Water bird hunting, Electrocutation;
- Wind Farms & expanding power line grids (Turkana).

6. Extent of use of the AEWA Conservation Guidelines by the parties.

| | |
|--|-------|
| Avoid or Mitigate Impact of Electricity Power Grids | ≤ 50% |
| Translocation of Waterbirds for Conservation Purposes | ≤ 50% |
| Measures needed to help waterbirds to adapt to climate change | ≤ 30% |
| Avoid, minimize or mitigate impact of infrastructural developments and disturbance | ≤ 50% |
| Avoidance of Introductions of Non-native Waterbird Species | ≤ 50% |

| | |
|---|-------|
| Sustainable harvest of migratory waterbirds | ≥ 50% |
| Preparation of site inventories for migratory waterbirds | ≥ 50% |
| Preparation of National Single Species Action Plans for migratory waterbirds | ≥ 50% |
| Reducing crop damage, damage to fisheries, bird strikes and other forms of conflict | ≥ 50% |
| Management of key sites for migratory waterbirds | ≥ 50% |
| Waterbird monitoring protocol | ≥ 50% |
| Identifying and tackling emergency situations for migratory waterbirds | ≥ 50% |
| Development of ecotourism at wetlands | ≥ 50% |

7. Other conservation issues in EA

- Conservation Status of Waterbirds Report;
- Population decline;
- Net increase in threats;
- Deterioration in the state of the IBAs;
- Agricultural intensification;
- Drought;
- Habitat modification;
- 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 wetland resources;
- Wetland policy (institutional and legal frameworks);
- Inadequate funding and capacity.

Expansion of large scale farms around the Rift Valley Lakes is expected to pose huge negative impact on the habitats of waterbirds unless proper mitigation measures are put in place. As indicated above, the situation is being assessed through involvement of all stakeholders.

1. Activities to implement the Single Species Action Plans relevant to the region

Albania: No implementation of species action plans as the result of lack of human and financial resources.

Hungary: All ISSAPs relevant for Hungary are being implemented (e.g. Corncrake, Black-tailed Godwit, Eurasian Curlew), at least at the level of regular monitoring, habitat restorations and habitat management and agri-environmental schemes.

Romania: The Management Plans for all the Special Protection Areas including conservation measures for migratory waterbird populations have been elaborated and approved by the Ministry of Environment. The Management Plan for the conservation of the Ferruginous Duck (*Aythya nyroca*) and the Management Plan for the conservation of the Pygmy Cormorant (*Microcarbo pygmaeus*) were implemented in the Special Protection Areas.

2. Emergency situations (extreme cold, draught, toxic or oil spills, etc.) that have occurred and affected waterbirds and/or their habitats since the last TC meeting and response to them.

Croatia: in January 2017 during the cold weather spell in Europe, hunting was closed from 17 January to 8 February 2017. After that date and until 25 March 2017, the ban was limited to hunting grounds within 20 km of the outbreak and/or confirmed bird influenza locations.

Hungary: The extreme and long-lasting cold spell in January 2017 raised concerns for waterbirds, however, it did not apparently cause any noticeable losses. The outbreak of avian flu in winter 2016/2017 caused some losses in waterbird populations, and notably, even some Lesser White-fronted Geese died, probably due to this disease.

Romania: Hunting was banned in Natura 2000 sites following cold spell in 2017 and several activities were organised to reduce bird mortality.

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

No actions reported.

4. Activities on eradication or other type of action regarding alien species.

Hungary: *Alopochen aegyptiaca*, an IAS of EU concern, appears as an irregular vagrant in Hungary, but the first very few breeding records have also been observed. In the first case where a pair were known to breed successfully in consecutive years, the family was almost completely eradicated in 2017 (one of the adults and 10 out of 11 nestlings were shot) as a measure to stop the spreading of the species (under EU law).

Italy: The European regulation 1143/2014 was implemented by the Italian decree law 230, 15 December 2017. Guidelines for the eradication of the Sacred Ibis in Italy are in preparation.

Romania: monitoring mortality caused by invasive species, permanent updating by the Environmental Protection Agencies of the database on invasive species in wetlands, implementation of a detection programme and an educational programme for species' eradication.

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

Albania: Waterbird habitat mapping is improving by producing digital mapping.

Croatia: In September 2017, an international project "Preserving the Tern Populations in the Sava and Drava Basin - ČIGRA" within the Interreg V-A Cooperation Program Slovenia, has been launched. The main goal of the project is to increase the degree of conservation of the continental population of the Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*) in Natura 2000 areas in Croatia and Slovenia through establishment of long-term nesting conditions.

Hungary: Thirty-two large-scale wetland restoration projects are to be carried out with EU funding by 2020.

Romania: Many management projects and plans are ongoing, funded by EU, public and private programmes.

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

Czech Republic: The intersessional WG on a solution of poisoning and other ways of illegal killing of wild animals meets regularly. The national strategy on the prevention of poisoning and illegal killing of wild animals is almost completed. The strategy also includes measures concerning phase-out of the use of lead ammunition across all habitats.

Hungary: No progress since the last TC meeting; lead shot is banned in wetlands.

Romania: The discussion between the Ministry of Environment and the General Association of Hunters and Fishermen for phasing out the use of lead shot for hunting in wetlands is ongoing.

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

Albania: Waterbird monitoring is part of the annual monitoring process in the country.

Hungary: Waterbird monitoring on the 48 most important sites of the country is continued.

Italy: Several projects based on GPS-GSM or GPS-UHF technology are ongoing. Waterbird monitoring is ongoing.

Romania: Inventory, mapping and monitoring of AEWA species was realised in all the Special Protection Areas by the Romanian Ornithological Society/BirdLife Romania and other NGOs by participating in the "Waterfowl Census (International Waterbird Count - IWC)".

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

Albania: Education and information activities on waterbirds and waterbird habitats have taken place, notably through donor funded projects.

Czech Republic: The national AEWA communication strategy was prepared and approved in 2017. The project *Conservation, Research and Sustainable use of Wetlands in the Czech Republic (2015-2017)* finished in April 2017.

Hungary: Eleven visitor/interpretation/education centres are operating at Ramsar sites, and six centres at other wetlands. In addition to other wetland values, they also deal with waterbirds.

Romania: public awareness campaign during the environmental events (World Migratory Bird Day, World Biodiversity Day, World Wetlands Day).

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

Romania: the Environmental Protection Agencies were involved in elaborating land use plans to reduce threats for migratory birds such as land use change, electric power lines, pollution and the climate changes.

10. Extent of use of the AEWA Conservation Guidelines by the parties

No details

11. Any other information:

Albania: With the establishment of the National Protection Agency in 2015, greater control and careful management is found in all wetland territories, including those in the western part of the country where bird migration is extensive.

Albania: The second law on hunting ban was approved for a 5-year period, from 2016 to 2021. The first ban was for a 2-year period from 2014 to 2016

Italy: Guidelines for the management of the breeding population of the Yellow-legged Gull (*Larus michahellis*) in the saltpans and coastal wetlands of the Mediterranean have been published by ISPRA and partners as a product of the Mc_Salt.

Northern Africa – Mr Sidi Imad Cherkaoui

The region consists of Algeria, Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia; there had been no report submitted by Algeria.

Egypt

Egypt joined the world in celebrating the World Migratory Birds Day under the theme (Stop the illegal killing, Taking and Trade of Migratory Birds) on May 2016 and 2017 respectively at Lake Nasser and Lake Quarun,

Reducing Illegal Bird Killing Along Egypt's Mediterranean Coast

Objectives:

- Objective 1: To increase knowledge of the scale, conservation impact, socio-economic and legal aspects of bird trapping.
- Objective 2: To ensure that effective legislation and regulations are in place and are properly enforced.
- Objective 3: To build capacity of Government institutions, NGOs and local communities to effectively address the bird trapping issue.

- Objective 4: To increase awareness locally, nationally and internationally, in order to promote bird conservation.

Migratory Soaring Birds Project (MSB Project)

This is being achieved through partnerships and strategic alliances with private businesses, NGOs, governments, international organizations in Egypt.

The project aims to protect the migratory soaring birds in their journey to the countries. This project aims to mainstream conservation of migratory soaring birds into the key productive sector along the Rift Valley/Red sea flyway, these sectors are; energy, agriculture, hunting and waste management.

Governments throughout the Mediterranean have agreed on the Cairo Declaration

The Ministry of Environment in Egypt announced the conclusion of the activities of the first ever meeting of the Intergovernmental Task Force on Illegal Killing on the Mediterranean region and launched the "Cairo Declaration" to combat poaching of migratory birds. Dr. Mustafa Fouda Minister's Advisor for Biodiversity and Dr. Jamal Jum'a director of nature conservation section, beside the representative of the Secretariat of the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) and with the participation of the United Nations Environment Program, Migratory Soaring Birds project, the Convention for the safeguarding of animals and number of international organizations and stakeholders. Within the Illegal killing of Birds project, NCE organized a number of meetings with Al Burullus Area.

Libya

New or major ongoing activities on habitat (site) inventory, conservation or restoration and rehabilitation of waterbird habitats. Despite the fragile political situation in Libya, ongoing monitoring of waterbirds carried out by Libyan Society for Birds, The monitoring has allowed discovery of important sites for wintering and breeding waterbirds as well as several trainings for students and NGOs members have been done during WBS Campaigns

Celebration of World Migratory Bird Day for 2016 and 2017. Libya is still part of the DIOE project and MEDDWATERBIRDS Network

Morocco

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

In Morocco, legal protection for particularly Globally Threatened and Near Threatened species, such as Northern Bald Ibis (*Geronticus eremita*), Marbled Duck (*Marmaronetta angustirostris*), Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*) Audouin's Gull (*Larus audouinii*), White-headed Duck (*Oxyura leucocephala*), Ferruginous Duck (*Aythya nyroca*), Black-tailed Godwit (*Limosa limosa*) and Eurasian Spoonbill (*Platalea leucorodia*) and other waterbird species is provided through the annual hunting decree. The legal protection of most of the key sites for Osprey, 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. Specific attention is paid to these species during International Waterbird Census and breeding surveys in Moroccan wetlands resulting in the regular update of the population data available.

Record breeding success for Critically Endangered Northern Bald Ibis and expansion: two new sites found in Morocco

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

Several on-going conservation projects (some of them funded by the CEPF, MAVA, Wadden sea Partnership, Conservatoire du Littoral, PPI-OSCAN IUCN, PA2M Foundation, ..) carried out in partnership between international and national NGOs and the biodiversity conservation authorities, allowed updating of relevant data on wetlands and key sites (IBAs and Ramsar sites) like Essaouira Mogador, Mar Chica Lagoon, Aguelmam Afnourir Lake, Knifiss, Dakhla National Park, Smir Lagoon, etc.

GOMAC is strongly lobbying for the protection of two non-designated wetlands but are extremely important for migratory and breeding waterbirds (Fouarat and Dar Bouaza Marshes respectively in Kenitra and Casablanca cities).

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

- Intensive monitoring of waterbird populations (wintering and breeding) continues at selected key sites n=28 (RAMSAR and IBA).
- Ecological factors affecting wetland occupancy by breeding Anatidae in the southwestern mediterranean. Ecological research.
- Factors Predicting Ramsar Site Occupancy by Threatened Waterfowl: The Case of the Marbled Teal *Marmaronetta angustirostris* and Ferruginous Duck *Aythya nyroca* in Morocco. *Ardeola Journal*

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

- Several partners in Morocco continued to organise awareness raising events on occasion of World Migratory Bird Day, World Wetlands Day and World animal Day (Moulay Ismail University; ASMAPEC, Nature solutions) in 2016 and 2018.
- Several environmental education center projects have emerged in Morocco, especially in the main protected areas.

Several wetlands continue to face serious threats namely due to urbanization, tourism transport, overgrazing, climate change and illegal hunting and fishing which are also directly affecting bird populations. Urbanization and Tourism in all forms remain a major threat to waterbirds or their habitats in Morocco

Associations mobilize to protect the wetlands against destruction

Successful completion of AEWA small grant fund project titled: improving the conservation status of the White-headed Duck (*Oxyura leucocephala*) in Morocco. It has been implemented by BirdLife Morocco and Moroccan wildlife conservation authorities (HCEFLCD). Project activities included the organization of a multi-stakeholder consultation meeting which resulted in the establishment of a national working group given the task of guiding and coordinating the conservation of the species. This national working group includes Morocco's representatives on the AEWA International Working Group for the White-headed Duck, thereby maximizing collaboration at the flyway scale.

Monitoring the illegal trade of wildlife project

A potential threat to migratory waterbirds is emerging in Morocco with plans to enhance the use of alternative energies such as wind and solar power. power lines pose serious problem for resident and migratory raptors such as Spanish Imperial Eagle, Golden and Bonelli's eagles. Black points are being identified. Several communications notes were produced.

A Saker Falcon (*Falco cherrug*), a bird, illegally captured on 27 November 2017 by poachers in the Casablanca region, was seized by the wildlife authorities on 03 December and handed over to the Moroccan Association

of Falconry and Conservation of Raptors (AMFCR), which took care of them until his release. The electrocution of raptors continues.

Relevant Research

Effects of orchard type and breeding period on Turtle Dove nest density in irrigated agroecosystems:

- The European Turtle-Dove (*Streptopelia turtur*) in Northwest Africa: A Review of Current Knowledge and Priorities for Future Research
- Nest-niche differentiation in two sympatric columbid species from a Mediterranean Tetraclinis woodland: Considerations for forest management
- Effects of location, orchard type, laying period and nest position on the reproductive performance of Turtle Doves (*Streptopelia turtur*) on intensively cultivated farmland

Towards a strategy for the conservation of birds of prey in Morocco

The [High Commission for Waters and Forests and the Fight against Desertification \(HCEFLCD\)](#) in collaboration with the IUCN Center for Mediterranean Cooperation (IUCN-Med) organized a workshop from 19-20 April 2017, for the elaboration of a strategy for the conservation of birds of prey in Morocco

- members of IUCN Commissions
- local conservation NGOs
- international (CMS))
- experts on the conservation and / or reintroduction of raptors of the Regional Ministry for the Environment of Andalusia (Spain)
- to complete a roadmap for the development of the first version of a strategy for the conservation of raptors in Morocco, in line with the [Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of Migratory Birds of Prey in Africa and Eurasia and its Multi-Species Action Plan for the Conservation of African-Eurasian Vultures](#). Workshop participants worked together to identify concrete and more effective conservation actions.

Tunisia

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

In Tunisia legal protection for particularly Globally Threatened and Near Threatened species, such as Marbled Duck (*Marmaronetta angustirostris*), Audouin's Gull (*Larus audouinii*), White-headed Duck (*Oxyura leucocephala*), Ferruginous Duck (*Aythya nyroca*), Black-tailed Godwit (*Limosa limosa*) and Eurasian Spoonbill (*Platalea leucorodia*) 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. Specific attention is paid to these species during International Waterbird Census and breeding surveys in Tunisian wetlands resulting in the regular update of the population data available.

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

Several on-going conservation projects (some of them funded by the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund - CEPF) carried out in partnership between international and national NGOs and the biodiversity conservation authorities, allowed updating of relevant data on wetlands and key sites (IBAs and Ramsar sites) like Lake Tunis, Sebkhet Soliman, Maâmoura Lagoon, Korba Lagoon, Sebkhet Soliman, Lake Ichkeul, etc. For three years Tunisia hosted the training in the DIOE project framework for the benefit of new observers from five

countries of North Africa (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya and Egypt). Training organized by the AAO and TDV as part of the strengthening of the [MEDWATERBIRD](#) network

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

Several partners in Tunisia continued to organise awareness raising events on occasion of World Migratory Bird Day, World Wetlands Day and World Shorebird Day. AAO has developed and tested an awareness - raising programme for local NGOs and nature clubs focusing on threats to birds and how citizen can contribute to better conservation of birds and their natural habitats. This programme is planned to be spread to Local Conservation Groups (LCG) through a training program for volunteer educators in 2016.

Problematic cases threatening waterbirds or their habitats

Intensive monitoring of waterbird populations (wintering and breeding) continues at selected key sites (wetlands of the Cape Bon, Ichkeul National Park, Salines de Thyna and desert wetlands in South Tunisia). Site monitoring protocols have been developed by Association “Les Amis des Oiseaux” and Local Conservation Groups for Lake Tunis, Sebkhet Soliman, Maâmoura Lagoon and Korba Lagoon) which are now applied since 2015.

Problematic cases threatening waterbirds or their habitats

- A potential threat to migratory waterbirds is emerging in Tunisia with plans to enhance the use of alternative energies such as wind and solar power. A 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.
- Lake Ichkeul continues to face serious threats namely due to siltation, reduced fresh water inflow due to dams, overgrazing and illegal hunting and fishing which are also directly affecting bird populations.
- Sebkhet Sejoumi, the most important remaining wetland in the Tunisian capital with more than 30 000 wintering waterbirds, is subject to a development and management planning process which also includes scenario of complete transformation of the sebkhet into a lake, which would completely change the ecological features. This process is run by the Ministry of Equipment in a non-inclusive way with the risk of non-involvement of qualified state institutions and NGOs.
- Pollution in all forms remains a major threat to waterbirds or their habitats in Tunisia.

A Workshop on the identification and mitigation of the impact of electricity infrastructure on birds in Tunisia took place on 01-02 December 2018, exchange and training: between STEG, DGF, AAO and IUCN Med - Training and Development Center from Khledia

Workshop for Spoonbill Experts – Djerba, Tunisia, November 2018

The AEWA Eurasian Spoonbill International Expert Group (ESIEG) in conjunction with the Association “les Amis des Oiseaux”, is organizing a workshop to be held on Djerba Island from 14 to 18 November.

The workshop is open to members of the Expert Group as well as the wider Eurasian Spoonbill network and any additional stakeholders with an interest in wetland conservation. It will be of interest to staff from a variety of nature conservation organizations, including scientists, statutory agencies, NGOs, volunteers and students.

Launch of the first anti-poaching platform in Tunisia

The [STOP poaching platform](#) allows Tunisian citizens to claim illegal killing or taking of wild birds.

This first meeting of the [Intergovernmental Task Force on Illegal Killing, Taking and Trade of Migratory Birds in the Mediterranean \(MIKT\)](#) has the task of agreeing the Programme of Work (POW) for the period 2016-2020 and finalizing the text of the Cairo Declaration. One of the Task Force's principal responsibilities is to ensure that monitoring was stepped up and trends examined.

The Results of BirdLife International's review of the scale and extent of illegal killing and taking of birds in the Mediterranean

- The review contained results for all species and it was estimated that between 11 million and 36 million birds were being taken illegally in the Mediterranean region. The only territories reporting that illegal killing, taking and trade were not serious problems were Gibraltar and Israel, while topping the table were Italy, Egypt and the Syrian Arab Republic.
- Among the worst locations, the top 32 sites each had an annual toll of more than 100,000 birds, and the worst 20 sites accounted for 30 per cent of all birds taken.
- The reasons why people killed and took birds illegally included for food, for sport and for caging, but a considerable proportion of the birds taken for food was not consumed by the hunters themselves but sold restaurants as delicacies.

Update on Recommendation No 164 (2013) of the Bern Convention Standing Committee on the implementation of the Tunis Action Plan 2013-2020 for the eradication of illegal killing, trapping and trade of wild birds. Outcomes of the 3rd Meeting of Special Focal Points for Illegal Killing of Birds, 14-15 April 2016, Tirana (Albania)

- The issue of the illegal killing of birds was receiving higher priority on the agendas of various international fora, such as CBD, CMS and the Bern and Barcelona Conventions.
- The Tunis Action Plan contained ten straight-forward elements; these were:
 - identification of national wildlife crime priorities
 - conservation impact
 - identification and standardization of gravity factors
 - elaboration of sentencing guidelines
 - take account of the biological and institutional aspects
 - national stakeholder dialogue
 - establish trust
 - awareness raising and education
 - publication of enforcement results, crime statistics
 - networking and capacity-building

EU Roadmap towards Eliminating Illegal Killing, Trapping and Trade of Birds and Update on the EU Action Plan on Wildlife Trafficking

Case Studies

- The situation of IKB of raptors in the Mediterranean
- The case of the implementation of the Tunis Action Plan in Malta
- Trapping of Goldfinch in Algeria by Mohammed Hadjeloum (Algeria)
- Tour du Valat Biological Research Station

Updates from other UN Agencies and International Organizations and Networks

- Lobna Ben Nakhla - Regional Activity Centre for Specially Protected Areas (RAC/SPA)

- presentation on CITES and the coordinated action to combat wildlife crime through the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime (ICCWC).
- European Network of Prosecutors for the Environment (ENPE)
- The Task Force's draft Programme of Work (PoW)
- Legal aspects, implications and gaps, improvement of law enforcement and training needs for the judiciary
- Conservation and monitoring issues. Communication, education and awareness-raising issues.
- Measures to promote education, communication and public awareness
- Socioeconomic study – Hunting and Illegal Killing of Birds along the Mediterranean Coast of Egypt follow-up work
- Review of Egypt's national legislation and enforcement mechanisms related to birds hunting and trapping
- Monitoring illegal bird hunting along the Mediterranean coast of Egypt Autumn 2015 & Spring 2016
- Preparations for COP12: Potential content of a new resolution on illegal killing, taking and trade of migratory birds
- Adoption of the Cairo Declaration on Illegal Killing, Taking and Trade of Migratory Birds in the Mediterranean

The [second meeting of the MIKT](#) took place in Sliema (Malta), on 22 and 23 June 2017. This was a joint meeting between the Bern Convention Network of Special Focal Points on Eradication of Illegal Killing, Trapping and Trade in Wild Birds (Bern SFPs Network) and MIKT.

Progress updates on the implementation of the MIKT POW 2016-2020 and the Bern Convention Tunis Action Plan 2013-2020. Mediterranean countries provided updates, focusing on achievements, obstacles and future priorities.

UNODC work on wildlife and forest crime, their role in ICCWC and the developments related to the Wildlife and Forest Crime Analytic Toolkit including the Indicator Framework for Combatting Wildlife and Forest Crime

- UNODC toolkit included an “Indicator Framework” which had served as a blueprint for the Scoreboard.
- UNODC did not focus on birds as its remit was wider, but the seriousness of the problem of illegal killing, taking and trade was recognized
- In 2016, a 100-page report had been published, the World Wildlife Crime report

Development of a Scoreboard to assess the progress in combating illegal killing, taking and trade of wild birds

A tool to facilitate monitoring and was being developed by the Bern Convention and CMS jointly. Its aim was to provide an internationally recognized monitoring tool, that was easy to use and informative. Beyond monitoring, the Scoreboard could serve as an incentive to Parties to do more with regard to leadership, capacity-building and transparency. It could support the process of developing national action plans and mobilize resources. The framework of the scoreboard which consisted of 28 indicators across five groups, these being (1) National Monitoring, (2) Comprehensiveness of national legislation, (3) Enforcement Response, (4) Prosecution and sentencing and (5) Prevention.

BirdLife review of illegal killing and taking of birds in Europe, the Arabian Peninsula, Iraq and Iran

BirdLife International's review of illegal killing, which had initially concentrated on the Mediterranean but was being expanded to cover the rest of Europe (except for the Republic of Moldova and the Russian Federation) and would later cover the Middle East. He stressed that the results were at this stage preliminary and were not for wider circulation.

- A project would be undertaken in conjunction with the MAVA Foundation related to the Tunis Action Plan and MIKT.

Achieving Awareness of Illegal Trafficking – mobilizing the support of falconry communities

Falconry was recognized by UNESCO as a part of cultural heritage, and research undertaken by the IAF had shown that collisions with powerlines rather than harvesting were the greatest driver in the decline of Saker Falcons. The IAF had also been instrumental in the establishment of the Peregrine Fund

The IAF had memoranda of understanding with the UAE and more recently Pakistan and it was hoped that similar arrangements would be made with countries of the Levant and the Maghreb.

Funding for activities related to the implementation of MIKT POW and Bern Convention Tunis Action Plan

- The work of INTERPOL and EUROPOL in the fight against wildlife crime and its support to MIKT
- Review of NGOs' awareness and contribution to the Bern Convention Tunis Action Plan 2020
- Recent developments on combating wildlife and forest crime in the Danube-Carpathian region
- Biosphere Reserves and Global Geoparks: UNESCO tools to achieve the SDGs and to Climate Action SDG 13 and Life on Land, SDG 15
- Funding for activities related to the implementation of MIKT POW and Bern Convention Tunis Action Plan
- Preparations for the 37th Standing Committee Meeting of the Bern Convention
- Preparations for COP12: Content of the new resolution on illegal killing, taking and trade of migratory birds

APPENDIX II – StC13 List of Participants

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