

**18<sup>th</sup> MEETING OF THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE**  
*14-16 March 2023, Bonn, Germany*

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**DRAFT PRIORITY LIST OF POPULATIONS FOR ACTION AND MANAGEMENT  
PLANNING IN 2023-2025**

*Compiled by Wetlands International and the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat*

**Introduction**

A routine task of the Technical Committee mandated by the Meeting of the Parties (MOP) (Resolutions 5.8 and 6.8) is to review and update at its first meeting after each MOP, as necessary, the list of International Species Action and Management Plans required for priority species/populations, involving adaptive harvest management processes where relevant, taking into account the possible need to develop new plans and retire, revise or extend existing plans.

This document reviews the latest criteria agreed by the Technical Committee for the prioritisation of species/populations for action and management planning, proposes some additions and amendments and presents the draft priority lists resulting from these latest versions of the criteria.

**Action requested from the Technical Committee**

The Technical Committee is requested to review the proposed additions and amendments to the latest criteria for prioritisation of species/populations for action and management planning, approve them with or without changes and approve the resulting priority lists for 2023-2025.

**I. Priority list of species/populations for development of International Single and Multi-Species Action Plans**

The latest criteria for prioritisation of species/populations for action planning were discussed and agreed by the Technical Committee at its 16<sup>th</sup> meeting (TC16) in January 2021 (document AEWATC 16.12 Rev.1 Ins. 1). Based on these criteria, a priority list of species/populations for action planning in the post-MOP8 period was compiled (annexes to that document).

Due to some further changes in the IUCN Red List that affected AEWAs species since January 2021, the resulting amendments to Table 1 of AEWAs Annex 3 approved by MOP8 in September 2022 were somewhat different from the version of January 2021. This requires that the priority list for action planning is revisited.

Further to that, some amendments and additions to the criteria agreed at TC16 are proposed, which are presented below.

**I.1. Prioritisation criteria for action planning**

The Technical Committee had agreed at TC16 to adopt three categories of priority for action planning:

**Priority 1:** Globally Threatened and Near Threatened species listed on Annex 2 of AEWA based on their global Red List Status<sup>1</sup>;

**Priority 2:** populations of Least Concern species listed in Categories 1(a), 1(c), or 2 or 3 and marked with an asterisk in Table 1 of AEWA Annex 3 and in long- or rapid short-term decline;

**Priority 3:** populations of Least Concern species listed in Category 1c in Table 1 of AEWA Annex 3 not in long- or rapid short-term decline.

The regular reservations entered after each session of the MOP to the uplisting of populations to Column A of Table 1 of AEWA Annex 3 create challenges for the conservation of such populations as the appropriate provisions of the treaty do not apply to them in those countries that have entered reservations. This creates urgency and requires particular attention to those populations, especially when they have been identified to be in long- or short-term decline. For this reason, it is proposed to place into Priority 1 all declining populations listed in Column A, categories 1(a), 1(c) or 2 or 3 marked with an asterisk and populations belonging to Globally Threatened/Near Threatened species that are under reservation of their listing. Where populations belong to Globally Threatened or Near Threatened species, the entire species with all AEWA-listed populations shall be placed in Priority 1.

The newly proposed categories of priority, with some further proposed additions and changes explained in the footnotes, are as follows:

**Priority 1:** populations of Least Concern IUCN Red List category listed in Column A of Table 1 of AEWA Annex 3, Categories 1(a), 1(c) or 2 or 3 marked with an asterisk in long- or short-term decline and Globally Threatened/Near Threatened species listed on AEWA Annex 2 of which for least one population at least one Contracting Party has entered a reservation to their uplisting to Column A of Table 1 of AEWA Annex 3;

**Priority 2:** species of Globally Threatened and Near Threatened IUCN Red List categories listed in Annex 2 of AEWA based on their global Red List Status<sup>2</sup> (other than those in Priority 1);

**Priority 3:** populations of Least Concern IUCN Red List category listed in Column A of Table 1 of AEWA Annex 3, Categories 1(a), 1(c) and in long- or rapid short-term decline or in categories 2 or 3 and marked with an asterisk<sup>3</sup> (other than those in Priority 1);

**Priority 4:** populations of Least Concern IUCN Red List category listed species listed in Column A of Table 1 of AEWA's Annex 3, Categories 1(a)<sup>4</sup> and 1(c) in Table 1 of AEWA Annex 3 not in long- or rapid short-term decline.

### **Priority 1 species/populations**

Species/populations are first ranked in descending order of their Red List status: Critically Endangered (CR), Endangered (EN), Vulnerable (VU), Near-threatened (NT), Least Concern (LC). Within each Red List category, they are then ranked in increasing order of their population size (using geometric mean when the population size estimate is a range<sup>5</sup>). This list should exclude all species that are already adequately covered by an AEWA ISSAP/IMSAP or a plan under another legally binding framework.

The resulting ranking of the Priority 1 species/populations is presented in Annex 1<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Note: only species which are red-listed due to the status of their populations in the AEWA region.

<sup>2</sup> Note: only species which are red-listed due to the status of their populations in the AEWA region.

<sup>3</sup> Wording was amended to correctly reflect that all populations in categories 2 and 3 marked with an asterisk shall be prioritised; previous wording was implying that only those population sin long or -short-term decline would be prioritized.

<sup>4</sup> Category 1(a) added as it was omitted by accident in the previous version

<sup>5</sup> Where the population size estimate is a range (e.g. 20,000-30,000 individuals), then the geometric mean will be used (in this example 24,495 individuals)

<sup>6</sup> Please note that Annexes 1-7 have been provided as separate Excel files on the dedicated TC18 meeting documents webpage.

## Priority 2 species

First the Globally Threatened and Near-Threatened species are ranked in descending order: Critically Endangered (CR), Endangered (EN), Vulnerable (VU) and Near-threatened (NT). Within each Red List category, they are then ranked in increasing order of their population size (using geometric mean when the population size estimate is a range<sup>7</sup>)<sup>8</sup>. This list should exclude all species that are already adequately covered by an AEWA ISSAP/IMSAP or a plan under another legally binding framework.

Then the following factors are used as additional filters to select the priority species for action planning amongst the Globally Threatened and Near Threatened ones:

1. Species will be excluded where a major portion of the range<sup>9</sup> of the population(s) listed in Table 1 of AEWA lies outside the Agreement Area. For example, this would lead to the exclusion of the Great Knot (*Calidris tenuirostris*)<sup>10</sup>;
2. AEWA provides the most appropriate international policy platform for the development and implementation of the Action Plan. This filter can lead to the exclusion of species that could be better covered by action plans under other legally binding treaties such as the EU and the Bern Convention, etc.

For priority 2 species which remain after the elimination process described above, the following factors could be considered as advantages and could lead to moving the species up in the ranking on the list by 1-7 steps depending on the number of factors which are valid:

1. The causes of decline are understood<sup>11</sup>;
2. Remedial actions have been successfully developed and tested;
3. The species is subject of utilisation;
4. The recovery is dependent not only on habitat conservation measures but also on species management actions<sup>12</sup>;
5. The species population can be subject of one or more international Multi-species Action Plans<sup>13</sup>;
6. There is a potential Contracting Party (or Non-Party Range State) champion for the species to fund the planning and implementation process;
7. There is a potential coordinator for the development and implementation of the Action Plan.

The resulting ranking of the Priority 2 species is presented in Annex 2.

## Priority 3 and 4 populations

Populations in these categories to be ranked within their own categories in an increasing order of their population size (using geometric mean when the population size estimate is a range<sup>14</sup>) while excluding populations that are

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<sup>7</sup> Where the population size estimate is a range (e.g. 20,000-30,000 individuals), then the geometric mean will be used (in this example 24,495 individuals)

<sup>8</sup> Added for clarity as it was omitted by accident in the previous version.

<sup>9</sup> As agreed at TC16, this filter was focusing on the portion of the global population within the Agreement area. It is proposed that the consideration should be rather about the range of the respective population(s)/species within the Agreement area. Even if an AEWA-listed population only constitutes 10% of the global one, but its range is mostly within the Agreement area, it should be acted on as a matter of priority should there be a critical mass of Contracting Parties within its range.

<sup>10</sup> The entire breeding range and the bulk of the non-breeding range of the AEWA-listed population of the Great Knot is outside of the Agreement area.

<sup>11</sup> Priority 1 species for which the causes of decline are not understood will be considered within the TC work on identifying, prioritizing and addressing priority gaps in information related to the implementation of AEWA.

<sup>12</sup> E.g. it is unclear whether any species conservation measures are feasible for High Arctic breeding waders such as Bar-tailed Godwit (*Limosa lapponica*), Red Knot (*Calidris canutus*) and/or Curlew Sandpiper (*Calidris ferruginea*).

<sup>13</sup> On the other hand, the above mentioned species could be potentially addressed through a multi-species action plan because they share wintering and (partly breeding) habitats.

<sup>14</sup> Where the population size estimate is a range (e.g. 20,000-30,000 individuals), then the geometric mean will be used (in this example 24,495 individuals)

already adequately covered by an AEWA ISSAP/IMSAP or a plan under another legally binding framework. Then filter out all populations for which AEWA would not be considered the most appropriate framework for action planning and they would be better covered by an action plan under another legally binding treaty. It should be noted that for the resulting list of priority 3 and 4 populations most likely only the development of conservation guidance will be feasible.

The resulting ranking of the Priority 3 and 4 populations is presented in Annexes 3 and 4 to this document, respectively.

## **II. Priority list of populations for development of International Single and Multi-Species Management Plans**

The latest criteria for prioritisation of populations for management planning was discussed and agreed by the Technical Committee at TC16 in January 2021 (document AEWA/TC 16.48). Based on these criteria, a priority list of populations for action planning in the post-MOP8 period was compiled (annexes to that document).

Some additions to the criteria agreed at TC16 are proposed in this document below and explained in the footnotes, which requires the priority list to be revised accordingly.

### **II.1. Prioritisation criteria for management planning**

#### *II.1.1 Management plans with a recovery objective*

This category applies to species/populations listed in Column B Category 2c (showing long-term decline) and 2e (showing rapid short-term decline) of which taking occurs and which may or may not cause damages to agriculture and fisheries.

The populations are prioritised in the following order:

1. Populations listed in Column B in both Categories 2c and 2e (ranked according to population size – smallest to largest)<sup>15</sup> – these populations are in long-term decline and also declining rapidly in the short-term;
2. Populations listed only in Column B Category 2c (ranked according to population size – smallest to largest)<sup>16</sup> – these populations are in long-term decline but do not decline rapidly in the short-term;
3. Populations listed only in Column B Category 2e (ranked according to population size – smallest to largest)<sup>17</sup> – these populations are in short-term decline but have not been identified to have declined in the long-term<sup>18</sup>.

Then the following factors are used as additional filters to select the priority populations amongst the list resulting from the ranking described above:

1. The population is legally huntable (in at least one AEWA Range State);
2. A population will be excluded where a major portion of its range lies outside the Agreement Area<sup>19</sup>;
3. There is a critical mass of Contracting Parties within the respective range of the population<sup>20</sup>.

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<sup>15</sup> Where the population size estimate is a range (e.g. 120,000-150,000 individuals), then the geometric mean will be used (in this example 134,164 individuals)

<sup>16</sup> As above

<sup>17</sup> As above

<sup>18</sup> This is a new category of priority which is now proposed for inclusion after re-consideration

<sup>19</sup> This is a newly proposed filter

<sup>20</sup> This is a newly proposed filter

Annexes 5-7 to this document show a first prioritisation of the relevant populations based on these criteria and additional filters. It should be noted that a full analysis of which of these populations in Categories 2c and 2e of Column B are harvested still needs to be undertaken (information is to be requested from Contracting Parties in the course of 2023); thus this filter will be applied later once available.

In addition, the Technical Committee is foreseen to implement in this triennium a process of rapid assessment of the sustainability of harvest of the prioritised huntable populations. When this assessment becomes available, it will be used as an additional criterion for prioritising populations for management planning by drawing focus to those where harvest may be having an important contribution to the decline of the population.

#### *II.1.2. Management plans that aim to manage populations causing significant damage to agriculture or fisheries whilst maintaining a favourable conservation status*

The initiation of flyway-scale management of populations causing significant damage to crops or fisheries is ultimately a policy decision responding to the need of resolving a concrete human–wildlife conflict at population level when the respective range states have identified the need for a coordinated action. It is therefore proposed that management-planning process for such populations will only be initiated by the Secretariat if mandated through a MOP Resolution. As such no prioritisation of these populations will be undertaken by the Technical Committee.