

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

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**DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR A REVIEW OF THE NATURE AND EXTENT OF  
WATERBIRD HARVEST AND THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE OF  
WATERBIRDS**

**1. Project title**

**A review of the nature and extent of waterbird harvest and its socio-economic importance in the AEWA Region**

**2. Background**

AEWA requires Contracting Parties to undertake a range of measures to ensure that all migratory waterbird populations within the region are maintained in a favourable conservation status and that any use of migratory waterbirds is based on an assessment of their ecology and is sustainable (see Annex 1: Article II and Article III)<sup>1</sup>. These measures also help governments that are Contracting Parties to other major global treaties, such as the Convention on Biological Diversity under which was adopted the Global Biodiversity Framework and the Sustainable Development Goals, meet commitments to sustainable use.

Furthermore, the AEWA Action Plan sets out those species and populations for which Contracting Parties shall exercise sustainable harvest (paragraphs 2.1.1, 2.1.2 and Table 1 of AEWA's Annex 3), and the accepted methods and justifications for take (paragraphs 2.1.2 and 2.1.3 of AEWA's Annex 3; also see Annex 1 of this document). Of particular importance is the requirement that Parties shall regulate the taking of birds and eggs of all populations listed in Column B of Table 1.

The AEWA Strategic Plan (2019-2027)<sup>2</sup> also requires Contracting Parties to ensure that any use and management of migratory waterbird populations is sustainable across their flyways and to undertake a range of activities to achieve this, including:

- Establish systems to estimate waterbird harvesting at national level (Activity 2.1.b);
- Align domestic law with AEWA requirements, especially in relation to waterbird harvest (Activity 2.2.b);
- Review and strengthen compliance with and enforcement of legislation, especially for waterbird harvest limits and the list of quarry waterbirds species (Activity 2.2.c).

AEWA also requires Contracting Parties to address socio-economic considerations, as these are highly relevant to many aspects of waterbird conservation. In the Strategic Plan, target 2.6 states: "Consideration of the ecosystem services derived from migratory waterbirds is integrated into policy and decision-making processes that affect waterbird habitats in at least two-thirds of AEWA Parties". These requirements are reflected in the

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<sup>1</sup> The full AEWA agreement text is available at:

[https://www.unep-aewa.org/sites/default/files/basic\\_page\\_documents/agreement\\_text\\_english\\_final.pdf](https://www.unep-aewa.org/sites/default/files/basic_page_documents/agreement_text_english_final.pdf)

<sup>2</sup>[https://www.unep-aewa.org/sites/default/files/basic\\_page\\_documents/aewa\\_strategic\\_plan\\_2019-2027\\_final.pdf](https://www.unep-aewa.org/sites/default/files/basic_page_documents/aewa_strategic_plan_2019-2027_final.pdf)

following task within the Technical Committee work plan 2023-2025<sup>3</sup>: 2.4. Sustainable harvests and the socio-economic importance of waterbirds.

Despite these requirements, many Contracting Parties are currently unable to provide the data required for flyway-scale assessments of the sustainability of waterbird harvests. However, in recent years a number of common and widespread huntable waterbird species have declined to the extent that they are now included on columns A or B of the AEWA Annex 3 Table 1 (see 8<sup>th</sup> edition of the AEWA Conservation Status Report<sup>4</sup>). Concurrently, there has been a number of positive developments to support Contracting Parties to develop and maintain national systems for the sustainable management of waterbird harvests; these include provision of updated guidance by AEWA (Madsen *et al.* 2015) and the development of an adaptive harvest management mechanism through the European Goose Management Platform<sup>5</sup>.

This review is part of a suite of tasks mandated to the Technical Committee to provide an assessment of the status quo with waterbird harvesting methods, scale, management, sustainability and best practice. The outputs of these tasks will also provide a foundation for the continued enhancement of sustainable waterbird harvest management going forwards, for example through the provision of best practice guidance and tools for assessing and reporting national waterbird harvests. The other tasks are:

- Developing Guidance on Methods and Tools for Waterbird Harvest Data Collection;
- Undertaking a Rapid Assessment of Sustainability of Harvest of AEWA Waterbird Populations.

### 3. Duties of the contractor

#### *Scope*

It is intended that this review will be comprehensive and consider all types of waterbird harvesting, the harvesting of both birds (fledged and nestlings) and eggs, all relevant data sources, all harvest management approaches and all relevant socio-economic factors. All countries within the AEWA Agreement Area should be included, whether or not they are a Contracting Party. All waterbird species listed in Annex 2 of the AEWA Agreement that are hunted in at least one AEWA Range State should be included. The review should not seek to determine whether or not the harvesting of a species or population at any spatial scale is sustainable.

The temporal period under consideration varies depending on the aspect under consideration. When looking at management approaches, national quarry lists, motivations and modes of take, we are primarily concerned with a detailed understanding of the current situation, but it would also be beneficial to document significant changes where they have occurred since AEWA entered into force (1999), *e.g.* the availability of technology that resulted in changes to the scale and effectiveness of traditional hunting (*e.g.* the use of equipment such as faster boats and semi-automatic shotguns in the Arctic) or changes in legislation and enforcement (*e.g.* bans on the use of lead shot under certain circumstances or reductions in the use of poisons). However, when considering harvest data collection, a longer timeframe back to 1950 is desirable to ensure that all data sources and analyses are identified.

The key target audiences are<sup>6</sup>:

- AEWA National Focal Points and other decision-makers (within and outwit government) responsible for wildlife management;

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<sup>3</sup> Full details of these tasks as show in Annex 1.

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.unep-aewa.org/sites/default/files/document/aewa\\_mop8\\_19\\_csr8.pdf](https://www.unep-aewa.org/sites/default/files/document/aewa_mop8_19_csr8.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> <https://egmp.aewa.info/>

<sup>6</sup> Other user groups (*e.g.* representatives of hunting clubs or local communities) are also important recipients of information from this review, but different methods of communication are likely to be needed. These outputs are likely to be separate AEWA products.

- The Secretariats and National Focal Points for other Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) of relevance to sustainable use, including the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS), as well as others within governments responsible for sustainable development.

### *Output / results*

The review should include at least the following aspects:

#### Waterbird harvest

- A summary of each national (or regional where sub-national differences occur) harvest management regime, including the responsible authority/authorities, the relevant national legislation and policies (if any), the legal harvest status of each AEWA species/population, and the type of harvest monitoring system (if any).
  - The summary of the harvest management regime to include: (i) who is responsible for managing national/regional harvest management processes, (ii) how it is administered and funded (*e.g.* whether a licensing system exists), (iii) how data are collated, analysed and shared, (iv) what decision-making processes exist for changing the harvest status or annual harvest quota of a species, (v) relevant national and regional legislation, (vi) any reservations that have been entered on AEWA provisions, and (vii) other mechanisms for regulating harvest (*e.g.* severe weather restrictions).
  - The summary of the harvest monitoring system to include: (i) what data are collected (*e.g.* is crippling or illegal harvest included), (ii) the method and frequency of data collection, (iii) how data are used, and (iv) whether data (or summary data) are publicly available.
- A stakeholder map of key international / national / sub-national stakeholders, their role and activities in relation to waterbird harvest, *e.g.* provision of best practice information or training, their organisational view and understanding of sustainability.
- A review of harvest motivations and modes of take, both for those directly making the harvest and for those creating the opportunity; see section 7 of Madsen *et al.* (2015), with additional categories added as required, noting that some activities may derive from more than one form of motivation, *e.g.* hunting tourism is both recreational (for the hunter) and commercial (for the tourism provider).
- A description of the national legislative framework for, and scale of, stocking for hunting, including related management (*e.g.* disease management) and monitoring (*e.g.* ringing of released birds) protocols.
- An assessment of international efforts to share data and conduct joint analyses.
- A summary of key projects related to harvest management that have been undertaken.
- How key terminology is applied in national / stakeholder contexts, *e.g.* traditional, sustainable, or livelihoods.
- A summary of national challenges facing the future development of enhanced management of sustainable harvesting.
- Gaps in knowledge should be identified.
- Glossary of terms.
- An assessment of the compatibility of the range of approaches taken by national harvest monitoring schemes.

#### Socio-economics

- A summary of the main socio-economic effects (positive and negative) derived from waterbird harvesting. These should be presented at the national scale unless common effects across neighboring countries can be summarised at a regional scale. These should include:
  - Effects from harvesting on local communities, businesses and culture.

- Effects from harvesting on wider communities, businesses and culture, *e.g.* the cost of derogations and conflict management to tax payers, attitudes of harvesters towards conservation both of huntable species and more generally.
- Effects of harvesting on the wider environment, *e.g.* use of lead ammunition, disturbance, habitat management by hunters.
- Scale of livelihoods supported by the commercial use of harvested waterbirds (direct consumption or sale) and documentation of the components, functioning and equity of waterbird value chain systems.
- The scale of income or other benefits fed back to conservation initiatives.
- The significance of these harvests in the context of food security and human sustainable development. This should include birds or eggs harvested for all motivations, including the consumption of birds culled as part of conflict management programmes.
- The extent to which harvesters contribute to data on the conservation / management / use of birds and fund / support conservation initiatives.
- These should be summarised, and quantified where possible, referring to published studies and other sources of information.

#### *Deliverables*

- A project plan, including milestones and report/data structure – to be provided for the first meeting of the Project Advisory Group (see Section 4)
- A progress report – to be provided for the second meeting of the Project Advisory Group
- A draft report – to be provided for the third meeting of the Project Advisory Group
- A final report and briefing note – to be provided for the fourth meeting of the Project Advisory Group. These outputs should be translated into French as part of the final delivery of the project.

#### *Operational aspects*

- This is anticipated to be a desk-based project collating existing data and information, including from AEWA national reports, with some original interpretation of this information when needed.
- The results should be presented geographically and taxonomically, *e.g.* by setting out data and information per species/population per country.
- There is no expectation that this project will require fieldwork or other travel.
- The working language for the task will be English, but it is preferable the contractor to have good command of French. Competence in other official languages of the Agreement (Arabic, Russian) would be desirable.
- Questionnaires are likely to be an effective means of collating the required information, *e.g.* via AEWA National Focal Points (AEWA Secretariat can provide contact details as required) or national hunting organisations.
- Contractors should be familiar with the relevant grey literature across the region of interest.
- Ownership of any raw data submitted as part of this project will remain with the original data provider.
- A Project Advisory Group established by the AEWA Technical Committee will oversee the project delivery (see Section 4).
- Contractors may propose additional areas to be included in the review.

Key sources of information:

- Madsen, J., Bunnefeld, N., Nagy, S., Griffin, C., Defos du Rau, P., Mondain-Monval, J.Y., Hearn, R., Czajkowski, A., Grauer, A., Merkel, F.R., Williams, J.H., Alhainen, M., Guillemain, M., Middleton, A., Christensen, T.K. & Noe, O. 2015. Guidelines on Sustainable Harvest of Migratory Waterbirds. AEWA Conservation Guidelines No. 5, AEWA Technical Series No. 62. Bonn, Germany. [https://www.unep-aewa.org/sites/default/files/publication/ts62\\_cg5\\_sustainable\\_harvest\\_guidelines\\_0.pdf](https://www.unep-aewa.org/sites/default/files/publication/ts62_cg5_sustainable_harvest_guidelines_0.pdf)

#### **4. Management of the project**

In order to benefit from the wide geographic and other experience of members, observers and other experts of AEWA's Technical Committee (TC), the work will be steered by a Project Advisory Group established by the TC (although ultimately project management is the responsibility of the AEWA Secretariat).

This Project Advisory Group will be available to guide the contractors at any time through the project's duration – including establishing relations with other stakeholders as necessary and appropriate, and in providing peer review of both draft and final products as specified above.

Timelines should allow for time to convene at least four meetings of the Project Advisory Group indicatively timed, after project commencement, as follows:

1. After [1-2] months with the purpose of reviewing a project plan;
2. After [8-10] months with the purpose of reviewing a progress report;
3. After [12] months to review the draft report;
4. After [16] months to review the final documents.

Other meetings may be convened at either the request of the contractor, the Project Advisory Group or the Secretariat.

The contractor shall be responsible for organising meetings with the Project Advisory Group, including circulation of the agenda and papers for these meetings as well as taking minutes, drafts of which will be circulated within one month of each meeting.

Contacts with AEWA National Focal Points will be facilitated by the AEWA Secretariat, as required.

#### **5. Duration of the project**

The work will be conducted over a period of 18 months. A final report shall be delivered by 28 February 2025.

## **Annex 1**

### **ARTICLE II Fundamental Principles**

1. *Parties shall take co-ordinated measures to maintain migratory waterbird species in a favourable conservation status or to restore them to such a status. To this end, they shall apply within the limits of their national jurisdiction the measures prescribed in Article III, together with the specific actions determined in the Action Plan provided for in Article IV, of this Agreement.*
2. *In implementing the measures prescribed in paragraph 1 above, Parties should take into account the precautionary principle.*

### **ARTICLE III General Conservation Measures**

*2 (b) ensure that any use of migratory waterbirds is based on an assessment of the best available knowledge of their ecology and is sustainable for the species as well as for the ecological systems that support them;*

### **Annex 3 ACTION PLAN**

*2.1.1 Parties with populations listed in Column A of Table 1 shall provide protection to those populations listed in accordance with Article III, paragraph 2(a), of this Agreement. Such Parties shall in particular and subject to paragraph 2.1.3 below:*

- (a) prohibit the taking of birds and eggs of those populations occurring in their territory;*

Further, 2.1.1 states: *By way of exception for those populations listed in Categories 2 and 3 in Column A and which are marked by an asterisk, and those populations listed in Category 4 in Column A, hunting may continue on a sustainable use basis. This sustainable use shall be conducted within the framework of an international species action plan, through which Parties will endeavour to implement the principles of adaptive harvest management. Such use shall, as a minimum, be subject to the same legal measures as the taking of birds from populations listed in Column B of Table 1, as required in paragraph 2.1.2 below.*

*2.1.2 Parties with populations listed in Table 1 shall regulate the taking of birds and eggs of all populations listed in Column B of Table 1. The object of such legal measures shall be to maintain or contribute to the restoration of those populations to a favourable conservation status and to ensure, on the basis of the best available knowledge of population dynamics, that any taking or other use is sustainable.*

### **Technical Committee work plan**

The relevant Technical Committee task is as follows. Note that elements of this, *e.g.* reference to Aichi targets, are now outdated.

#### *2.4. Sustainable harvests and the socio-economic importance of waterbirds*

Increase knowledge and understanding of the extent of traditional and other harvests; their modes of regulation; the conditions under which harvests are sustainable; and the significance of these harvests in the context of food security and human development.

Initial work should compile Terms of Reference for a modular programme, identifying possible collaborating individuals and organisations as well as funding possibilities that will progressively address the following issues:

- Identifying those geographical areas where harvesting waterbirds for subsistence and/or commercial purposes is prevalent and the species concerned;
- Information, as available, on trends in prevalence of harvesting for socio-economic motivations;

- Identification of case studies demonstrating good practice in the sustainable management and regulation of waterbirds harvests; and
- Options to highlight the importance of sustainable and well-regulated waterbird harvest within the context of development and aid programmes, notably in the context of national delivery of Aichi target 2 and the Sustainable Development Goals.

This work relates to AEWA Resolutions 6.4, 6.15 and 7.2