

**FORMAT FOR REPORTS
OF THE PARTIES**

**AGREEMENT ON THE CONSERVATION OF AFRICAN-EURASIAN MIGRATORY
WATERBIRDS (The Hague, 1995)**

Implementation during the period 1999 and 2008

Contracting Party: FINLAND

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1. Overview of Action Plan implementation

Summary of progress to date

- preparation of national programs for protected areas and establishment of protected areas
- implementation of MEAs (Ramsar, Bern, CMS, AEWA)
- implementation of Natura 2000-network and preparation of management plans
- implementation of an **international/national** action plan for the Lesser White-fronted Goose (*Anser erythropus*)

1.2 Outline of planned actions for national implementation over the next three years

- finalization of national protected area plans and Natura 2000 network
- preparation and implementation of management plans continues
- implementation of the action plan for the Lesser White-fronted Goose (*Anser erythropus*) continues
- implementation of the action plan for the Dunlin (*Calidris alpina schinzii*) begins

1.3 Outline of priorities for international co-operation over the next three years

- implementation of the action plan for the Lesser White-fronted Goose (*Anser erythropus*)
- participation as an expert and funding partner in the action plan
- development of cooperation with the Scandinavian and Baltic countries as well as Russia
- participation into the implementation of the Commission Communication on Halting Biodiversity Loss by 2010
- implementation the National Strategy and Action Plan for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity in Finland 2006-2016

2. Species conservation

Legal measures

2.1 Has a national policy/strategy or legislation to protect and conserve species covered by the Agreement (Table 1: column A; column B) and their supporting important areas been developed? If so:

- a. What are the main features of the policy/legislation?
- b. Which organisations are responsible for implementation?
- c. How does it relate to other national initiatives (e.g. national Biodiversity Action Plans)?

2.1.a. All the birds, except those mentioned in the Hunting Act, are protected by the Nature Conservation Act. Nearly 50 species in column A and B exist in Finland. The hunting of five of those species is allowed in Finland.

Many of the supporting areas are, or are going to be protected areas, where the changing of the habitat is forbidden and in some cases other human activities, for example hunting or moving.

The Water Act forbids changing water-courses without an appropriate permit. If the activity is considered to cause considerable changes in the water environment e.g. in wetlands, change, no permit may be issued.

- 2.1.b Ministry of the Environment
Finnish Environment Institute
The Regional Environment Centers
Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry
The Game Management Districts

2.1.c In the national policy and legislation the conservation of biodiversity and obligations of international conventions have been extensively included.

2.2 What legal measures or practices has your country developed to prohibit or regulate for the following (refer also to section 4 on hunting):

- a. Taking of, and trade in birds listed in Column A and B of Table 1 (where utilization or trade contravenes the provisions set out in paragraphs 2.1.1 (a) and 2.1.2 of the Action Plan)?
- b. Methods of taking?
- c. Setting of taking limits and monitoring these limits?
- d. Sustainable hunting of species listed in Categories 2 and 3 (and marked by an asterisk) in Column A only?
- e. Exemptions to the provisions set out in paragraphs 2.1.1, 2.1.2 and 2.1.3?

2.2.a. The hunting of the Bean Goose (*Anser fabalis*), the Northern Shoveler (*Anas clypeata*), the Pintail (*Anas acuta*) and the Garganey (*Anas querquedula*) is permitted in Finland. The hunting of the Velvet Scoter (*Melanitta fusca*) is allowed in the Province of

Åland Isles. The trade of the Pintail and the Northern Shoveler is also permitted.

2.2.b. Methods of taking are regulated by the EU Birds Directive and the Finnish Hunting Act.

2.2.c The Game and Fisheries Research Institute prepares a yearly assessment of the numbers and reproductive success of waterfowl based on inventories. Recommendations will be given to hunters on that basis before the start of the hunting season on 20 August. The Institute collects and maintains statistics on the bag based on data from hunters. Certain waterfowl could have been hunted also in the spring. Ministry of the Agriculture and Forestry and the Provincial Government of Åland Isles declare yearly species-specific maximum numbers for each huntable species.

2.2.d. Not applicable

2.2.e. Concerning paragraph 2.1.1: none of the species listed in column A are huntable.

Concerning paragraph 2.1.2: hunting is restricted in time and only allowed during part of the year.

Concerning paragraph 2.1.3. exemptions has been given for air safety and for the purposes of research.

Single Species Action Plans

2.3 Of the species covered by the Agreement (species listed in Table 1: column A), which spend part or all of their life history in your country, which have formal international (Category 1, species marked with an asterisk) or national (column A) Single Species Action Plans:

- a. Proposed?*
- b. In preparation?*
- c. Being implemented?*

Please append a list of species and their action plan status. (For international plans indicate which other countries are involved in plan development/implementation.)

2.3.a

For the Steller's Eider no national management plan exists. The species occurs in Finland as a wintering bird and the numbers vary between 150-500 ex. depending on the ice conditions. The most important wintering area is selected to be an EU's SPA-site.

The presence of the Bittern (*Botaurus stellaris*) has been one of the criteria for sites to be selected to the national Waterfowl Habitats Conservation Programme (see 3.). The sites are also nominated to the network of SPAs. BirdLife Finland has surveyed in 2005 the occurrence and numbers of the Bittern in Finland. Altogether 1000 territories were found. There is no national management plan for the species but on quite a considerable portion of its breeding sites are or have been subject to restoration activities.

For the Bewick's Swan (*Cygnus columbianus*) no national management plan exists. The species occurs in Finland only during migration. The most important staging areas of the species belong to the network of SPAs.

The presence of the Smew (*Mergellus albellus*) has been one of the criteria for sites to be selected to the national Waterfowl Habitats Conservation Programme (see 3.) Many of these sites belong also to the network of SPAs. The number of breeding pairs is 1000-2000. Wintering in Finland happens on an irregular basis depending on the ice conditions. There is no national management plan for the species.

The presence of the Corncrake (*Crex crex*) has been one of the criteria for sites to be selected to the national Waterfowl Habitats Conservation Programme (see 3.) Many of these sites belong also to the network of SPAs. There is no national management plan for the species, but farmers have been informed about the concerns for the species in the context of farming the fields and harvesting. In the restoration of wetland habitat particular attention is given to habitat requirement of the species. There are big yearly fluctuations in the occurrence of the Corncrake but it has clearly increased during the past ten years. The population estimate is 2000-8000 pairs.

The presence of the Broad-billed Sandpiper (*Limicola falcinellus*) has been one of the criteria for sites to be selected to the national Waterfowl Habitats Conservation Programme (see 3.) Most of these sites belong also to the network of SPAs. The number of breeding pairs has been estimated to be 5000-15000 which is more than half of the European population. There is no national management plan for the species.

The Dotterel (*Eudromias morinellus*) nest in Finland on the tops of the fjells. These sites are included either national parks, strict nature reserves or wilderness areas. Moreover its most important staging areas during the migration belong to the network of SPAs. The number of breeding pairs has been estimated to be 500-2000. There is no national management plan for the species.

The important nesting islands of the Caspian Tern (*Sterna caspia*) belong to the network of SPAs. The number of breeding pairs is around 800-900. There is no national management plan for the species.

2.3.b.

The Dunlin, southern race, (*Calidris alpina schinzii*)

A management plan for the southern race, *Calidris alpina schinzii*, was finalized early 2006. The comprehensive plan contains individual management plans for each present and potential nesting area of the species in the coastal region of Finland. These sites are 54 in total, and they are all existing or future protected sites and in addition belong to the Natura 2000 network as SPAs. Overgrowing and changes in vegetation zones have diminished the quality of or even destroyed coastal meadows which are necessary nesting and feeding areas for the species. The purpose of management is by clearing the vegetation or by mowing to restore the openness of these sites. Coastal meadows are maintained by grazing the cattle and repeated mowings. Small predatory mammals especially alien species like the American Mink and the Raccoon Dog are among the top predators for nests and young. Removal by hunting of these predators in the nesting sites of the Dunlin is encouraged in

cooperation with local hunters.

The Lesser White-fronted Goose (*Anser erythropus*)

The current estimate for the Fennoscandian population (Norway, Sweden, Finland, excluding the Russian Kola Peninsula) is 20-30 breeding pairs. The breeding areas of the Fennoscandian population are unknown at the moment; the majority of the Fennoscandian population seems to breed in the Norwegian Lapland, but single pairs are likely to breed in northernmost Finland (current estimate 0–5 breeding pairs annually) and Sweden, depending on the year. There are single records of the Lesser White-fronted Geese in the Finnish Lapland almost annually, but the latest confirmed breeding in Finland took place in the summer of 1995. There is a statistically significant negative population trend (ca 3–4% annual decrease) in Fennoscandia since the year 1993.

The Finnish (WWF) Lesser White-fronted Goose conservation project, supported by the Ministry of the Environment, has carried out or participated in a number of conservation research activities, e.g. satellite tracking of Lesser White-fronted Geese in order to reveal the migration routes and staging/wintering areas, and studies on the genetics of the LWfG populations. See e.g. www.piskulka.net and www.wwf.fi/tiedotus/raportit/raporttien_lisaaineistoa/fennoscandian_lesser_white_2.html

for details.

The Finnish (WWF) Lesser White-fronted Goose conservation project, supported by the Ministry of the Environment, is monitoring annually all known staging sites of Lesser White-fronted Geese in Finland, and also surveying potential breeding grounds in co-operation with Metsähallitus (Finnish Forest and Park Service). See e.g. www.piskulka.net and www.wwf.fi/tiedotus/raportit/raporttien_lisaaineistoa/fennoscandian_lesser_white_2.html

for details.

In Finland, the Lesser White-fronted Goose is fully protected; the Finnish (WWF) Lesser White-fronted Goose conservation project has carried out or participated in different activities aiming for the protection of the species in flyway countries (e.g. Kazakstan). See e.g. www.piskulka.net and www.wwf.fi/tiedotus/raportit/raporttien_lisaaineistoa/fennoscandian_lesser_white_2.html

for details.

In Finland, the Lesser White-fronted Goose sites are mainly protected (staging sites as Natura 2000 sites, potential breeding areas as Wilderness areas); however, autumn hunting of waterfowl is still allowed in the (otherwise Natura 2000 protected) historically most important autumn staging site on Hailuoto, and the Finnish (WWF) Lesser White-fronted Goose conservation project has made appeals to the regional environmental authorities to stop hunting in the area during the potential autumn staging period of Lesser White-fronted Geese; the Finnish (WWF) Lesser White-fronted Goose conservation project has carried out or participated in different activities aiming for the protection of the habitats in flyway countries (e.g. Kazakstan). See e.g. www.piskulka.net and www.wwf.fi/tiedotus/raportit/raporttien_lisaaineistoa/fennoscandian_lesser_white_2.html

for details.

Emergency measures

2.4 Describe any bilateral or multilateral co-operative action that your country has undertaken to develop and implement emergency measures to conserve species in response to unfavourable or endangering conditions occurring in the Agreement area.

Finland has played a major role part in a EU Life Nature project “Conservation of Anser erythropus on European migration route” (2005–2009). WWF Finland is the beneficiary of this project, other Finnish project partners are Metsähallitus (Finnish Forest and Parks Service), Finnish Environment Institute, BirdLife Finland and the Finnish Ministry of the Environment (co-financier). This project contains a variety of different research, monitoring, awareness raising and conservation activities in Norway, Finland, Estonia, Hungary and Greece (including e.g. annual population monitoring in Finland., and preparation of the Finnish national Action Plan for the conservation of the species). More information on the project will be available on the www.wwf.fi web pages.

Re-establishments

2.5 Has a policy on species re-establishments been developed in your country? If yes, please outline the main features of the policy and give details of any re-establishment programmes for species covered by the Agreement.

Breeding in captivity of the Lesser White-fronted Goose Ranching has been practiced on two facilities, of which one is now out of function. The remaining facility has still birds. These birds contain indication of hybridization with the White-fronted Goose and Graylag.

Introductions

2.6 Has your country developed and implemented legal measures to prohibit the introduction of nonnative species? Please provide details, particularly describing measures to control the release or introduction of non-native species (please indicate which species and their status).

Finnish legislation strictly regulates introduction of species. According to the Hunting Act Import and releasing of non-native mammals or birds or non-native game animal stocks is forbidden without the permission of Ministry of the Agriculture and Forestry. The permission can not be given, if the action is harmful for the nature and original animals.

According to the Nature Conservation Act non-native species falling outside the purview of the Hunting Act or Fishing Act are not to be released in to the wild if there is a cause to suspect that the species may become established permanently.

3. Habitat conservation

Habitat inventories

3.1 Has your country developed and published inventories of important habitats for species covered by the Agreement? If yes, please provide details, including any provisions to maintain or update these inventories.

Finland has had from 1923 a Nature Conservation Act, based on that a number of National Parks and Strict Nature Reserves, as well as other protected areas on state-owned land and at the initiative of private landowners also on private land have been established. These activities were first administered from State Nature Conservation Counsellor's office which was situated in the Forestry Research Institute. In 1972 this unit was transferred to Ministry of the Agriculture and Forest as Bureau for Management of Natural Resources which in practice meant considerable improvement resource-wise and for making possible long-term and targeted activities. The Bureau started preparing national protection programs at the end of 1970s and beginning of 1980s. The first priority was the further development of the National Park and Strict Nature Reserve network, protection of mires and wetlands important for birds. The first Ramsar-sites, 11 altogether, were notified in 1976.

In the preparation of all these programs very extensive nation-wide field surveys in potential areas were conducted for fauna, particularly birds, and flora. Flora related surveys were supplemented by inspection of a large aerial photo material available for the whole of the country.

Survey data in archives and consists of field inventory forms, summaries of these and field maps used to calculate areas for different habitat types. The total material is very extensive and inventories have been repeated when needed.

In 1983 Ministry of the Environment was established and Bureau for Management of Natural Resources was transferred to the Ministry as the Nature Conservation Unit in the Department of Environmental Protection. The preparation of national protection programs was continued to target eskers, herb-rich deciduous forests, old-growth forests and from AEWA-point important shore and beach areas.

When preparing the national conservation programs a target was set to cover all representative habitat types and their variation. For example the program for wetlands important for birds is based on a zone division system of the sea coast and lake types in Finland, Within each zone wetlands important for birds have been surveyed for bird fauna including the number of pairs using standardized methods, similarly the vegetation has been mapped and particularly the occurrence of threatened and rare plants noted. On the basis of bird-fauna a so-called protection score has been calculated and on this basis wetlands in a zone have been ranked for their conservation value which is further qualified on the basis of the vegetation. As a consequence the national Waterfowl Habitats Conservation Programme consists of the best sites in each zone and the program is representative for the diversity of this habitat type for the whole of the country.

The same principle has been used in the Mire Protection Program which consists of representative sites in all mire zones.

The basic principle for both the Waterfowl Habitats Conservation Programme and Mire Conservation Programme has been a thorough inventory of sea-bays, river deltas and lakes and rivers for their variable characters which are influenced by climatic and nutritional factors, formation of different vegetation zones and their interaction. A special feature influencing wetlands in the western coast of Finland is the phenomenon of continuing land upheaval and the consequent changes in shore lines and shore vegetation. Research on these topics have a history of nearly 100 years in Finland.

The Finnish Government has approved seven nature conservation programs, covering the following areas:

- national parks and strict nature reserves
- mires
- wetlands important for birds
- eskers
- herb-rich woodland
- shores, and
- old-growth forests.

The programs concerning national parks and strict nature reserves, mires, wetlands important for birds and shores, contain the most important habitats for species covered by the Agreement.

Programme for the development of National Parks and Nature Reserves (1979) includes 17 new National Parks and expansion of 6 old National Parks with a total area of 174 500 ha, and 7 new Nature Reserves and expansion of 4 old Nature Reserves with a total area of 116400 ha.

The Mire Conservation Programme (1981) includes 600 sites with a total mire area of 627 2000 ha. In January 2003 the number of established, state-owned Peatland Reserves was 173 with a total area of 467 700 ha.

The Waterfowl Habitats Conservation Programme (1982) were made during 1967–1980 in 1 300 areas of which the 287 with highest biological value were incorporated into the Conservation Programme. The total area of these sites is 78 800 ha, of which ca. 58 200 ha is water.

The Shore Conservation Programme was approved in 1990. The programme includes 29 sites representing marine nature and 98 sites representing the lake habitat. The total area is 104 300 ha with the total length of the shoreline of the rivers about 80 000 km. The purpose of the program is to protect the targeted shores unbuilt and in natural condition by establishing them as protected areas. The programme areas are of considerable importance for birds inhabiting sea archipelago, big lakes and groups of small ponds.

Herb-rich deciduous forest, esker ja old-growth forest programmes may also contain shore areas and small ponds where AEWA-species occur.

TABLE 1: Nature Conservation Programmes 1.1.2008 contains data for the contents and degree of implementation of the national conservation programmes

3.2 Has your country undertaken a strategic review of sites to develop a national network of important sites or areas for species covered by the Agreement? Please append a list of identified sites of international importance.

In 1995 Finland joined the European Union. The Cabinet approved in 1998 the Finnish proposal for EU's Natura 2000 network which has since being supplemented by further Cabinet decisions in 1999, 2002, 2004 and 2005. The Finnish Natura 2000-sites (SCIs and SPAs) include aforementioned protected areas and sites being part of national conservation programmes complemented by sites in provincial land use plans and general land use plans. Altogether The Finnish Natura 2000 network contains 1860 sites with a total area of 4,9 million ha. The land area is 3,6 million ha. The SCI-sites number 1715 with a total area of 4,8 million ha. The number of SPA-sites is 467 with a total area of 3,1 million ha. Apart from separate SCI- and SPA-sites, some sites are overlapping to various degrees. The autonomous province of Åland Islands has nominated a further 87 Natura 2000-sites.

The internationally most important Finnish SPA-sites plus further sites important to birds and of Ramsar importance have been selected and nominated as Ramsar sites (2003 **Vuosiluku**)

TABLE 2: The SPA sites of international importance and important sites for species covered by the Agreement, FINLAND

Conservation of areas

3.3 Describe the legal frameworks and other measures through which sites (including transfrontier sites) including of international importance gain practical protection. (Please append a list of internationally important protected sites.)

Site protection is based on Nature Protection Act enacted in 1923 and reviewed in 1996. On the basis of the Act it is possible in Finland to establish on state-owned land National parks with open access, Strict Nature Reserves meant for scientific research and other smaller protected areas. Additionally it is possible to establish protected area on privately owned lands.

According to the Act it is possible to prepare for the protection of natural values of national importance nature protection programmes with a purpose of reserving areas for nature protection. The programme includes an assessment of specific activities which for a threat to nature's values to be protected. When the Government has approved the programme It is forbidden to pursue activities in a programme site which could threaten its natural values.

According to a financial plan approved by the Government's Economic Policy Committee the aforementioned conservation programmes will be implemented by the end of 2007 either by purchasing programme sites to the Government ownership or paying the private land owners a compensation of their economic losses because of protection. Funds for the implementation of the programmes total 574 000 000 euro. In 2005 the financing plan was extended to 2009.

TABLE 3: Nature Conservation Areas in Finland; present protected area system, number of sites and surface areas.

3.4 Has your country developed a management planning process for protected sites? If yes, please outline the types of management plans and organisations responsible for development and implementation.

A management plan has been prepared for all National Parks and Strict Nature Reserves and for a considerable part of other state-owned protected areas. The management plan contains activities for securing natural values of the site and measures for restoring areas changed by human activity. The management plan also contains activities for channeling visitors by constructing hiking paths, information points and other service structures. The Finnish Forest and Parks Service and Forestry Research Institute are charged with the practical implementation of the management plan with funds from the yearly state budget.

Private protected areas are mostly of small area, still most of them have management plans. They are normally implemented by the land-owner and regional environment centers in cooperation.

3.5 How many protected sites have formal management plans (please append a list of sites and their management planning status):

- a. Proposed?*
- b. In preparation?*
- c. Being implemented?*

See TABLE 2.

The Finnish Environmental Institute has prepared together with regional environment centers a priority list of wetlands important for birds on the basis of their restoration needs. By the end of 2005 of the total of 163 sites in need of urgent management measures in 55 a restoration plan has been or is implemented. A restoration plan is ready or under preparation for further 34 sites, which still leaves 74 sites without such a plan.

A very important way to advance restoration of wetland important as bird habitat and for AEWA convention has been EU's LIFE Nature funding. Finland has been implementing altogether 24 LIFE Nature projects. Further information on these can be found in: <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/project/Projects/index.cfm?fuseaction=home.home...>

In these projects management action has particularly targeted sea bays, river deltas and smaller lakes, as well as aapa mires of Northern Finland and sea archipelago areas important for birds. Two of the projects is on the conservation of the Lesser White-fronted Goose (details in 2.3.b.).

A list of LIFE Nature projects relevant to AEWA:

- Protection of Taiga and Freshwater Ecosystems in Central Finland (LIFE99 NAT/FIN/006251)
- Integration of protection and usages of bird areas in Lapland (LIFE99 NAT/FIN/006276)

- Management of the most valuable wetlands in SW-Finland (LIFE99 NAT/FIN/006278)
- Protection and usage of aapa mires with a rich avifauna (LIFE00 NAT/FIN/007060)
- Protection and management of the valuable wetland Siikalahti (LIFE00 NAT/FIN/007061)
- Restoration and management of meadows in Finland, Sweden and Estonia (LIFE00 NAT/FIN/007067)
- Protection of aapa-mires in Lapland and Ostrobothnia (LIFE97/NAT/FIN/004095)
- Conservation of the Lesser White-fronted Goose in Finland (LIFE97/NAT/FIN/004098)
- Conservation and Management of the Porvoonjoki Estuary Stensböle Natura 200 Area (LIFE97/NAT/FIN/004102)
- Viikki-Vanhankaupunginlahti: a birdlife paradise in the middle of Helsinki (LIFE97/NAT/FIN/004105)
- Quark Arhipelago (LIFE97/NAT/FIN/004110)

3.6 What measures does your country have in place to ensure the wise use of wetland habitats and to prevent habitat degradation e.g. pollution control and managing water resources? Please provide examples of best practice initiatives particularly involving cross-sectoral co-operation or public participation.

In addition to the protected area system described in 3.3 also the activities outside the protected areas but having an impact is being regulated (see 4.6) Additionally the Land Use and Building Act requires taking the biodiversity into account in planning for land use and quantifying land use needs. In practice land use is regulated by preparing provincial land use plans and general land use plan which include in addition to protected areas of national importance also regionally important sites.

The Water Act contains a general prohibition to change the state of water-courses with a permit.

Rehabilitation and restoration

3.7 Does your country have a policy for the identification, rehabilitation and restoration of wetlands important for species covered by the Agreement? Please provide examples of rehabilitation and restoration projects and initiatives undertaken.

In 3.1 3.2 and 3.3 above described protected area system forms a nation-wide network for AEWA species. Ministry of the Environment is funding and supervising the Finnish Forest and Parks Service, Finnish Environment Center and Regional Environment Centers in relation to monitoring required by management plans as well as basic inventories, development of management measures and generally preparation of management plans.

Results of site monitoring was e.g. used when the priority order for restoration (see 3.5.) was prepared as well as in setting up the Natura 2000 network.

Examples can be found above in 3.4 and 3.5.

4. Management of human activities

Hunting

4.1 Outline the main features of legislation or legal measures in your country to control hunting of the species covered by the Agreement (e.g. use of lead shot and poisoned baits, and to eliminate illegal taking).

Hunting in Finland is regulated by the Hunting Act and the Hunting Order. The Act lists the species of waterfowl which are huntable (2.2.a) and the Order set the hunting periods.

Every hunter is obliged to pass a hunter's test. To pass that requires knowledge about huntable species and game management.

The use of hunting methods described in Annex IV of the Birds directive is forbidden. Also the use of lead shots in the hunt of waterfowl in Finland has been forbidden from 1.9.1996.

4.2 Does your country monitor hunting levels? If so, how is this information collated and reported?

The Finnish Game and Fisheries Institute keeps records of the bag which are collected by random sampling among the hunters. The bag statistics is published yearly in hunter's magazines and information bulletins.

4.3 Describe action undertaken by hunting clubs and organisations to manage hunting activity e.g. cooperative action, issuing of licences and proficiency testing of individual members.

In Finland there are about 300 000 hunters who almost all belong to local game management societies (about 300 in total). Finland is divided into 15 game management regions under which the local societies operate. The Finnish Hunters' Central Organization is the umbrella organization in this system. Every hunters pay the yearly game management fee in order to hunt. This fee among other things allows the hunter to receive Metsästäjä (The Hunter) -magazine (6 issues per year). This magazine is an important way to disseminate information and education among the hunters. Game management societies are very active providing various courses, training for the hunter's test, educating school children, directing various game management activities.

Eco-tourism

4.4 What is the status of eco-tourism programmes or initiatives in your country? Please provide examples of projects with an indication of the significant outcomes.

It is possible to pursue various outdoor activities and use facilities provided for that in all National Parks. In the Province of Lapland eco-tourism is among the important sources of income and there is a wide variety of service providers for these activities.

Wetlands are favored as points of visiting, and to some of them organized trips are provided. Among these the most prominent are the Liminganlahti Bay has in addition to the customary paths and bird observation towers also an information center, as well as the Preiviikinlahti Bay, the delta of Kokemäenjoen River, Puurijärvi-Isosuo National Park, the Siikalahti Bay and many bird wetlands and sea bays in Southwestern Finland.

4.5 What social and economic benefits accrue to the local communities from the conservation of important waterbird sites?

There is no statistical study of the social and economical impacts, but just on the basis the visitors studies conducted in various protected areas, it is possible to assume that there are considerable benefits. The Finnish Forest and Parks Service maintains an extensive network of information centers in their protected areas. These information centers are locally important for employment. In addition there are a number of local entrepreneurs offering various services for visitors.

The Government has made in 2003 a Decision on Nature Protection and Recreation and associated objectives until 2010. According to this decision the nature tourism should provide about 64 000 direct or indirect jobs. This would require in practice a considerable investments to protected areas bird wetlands among them for new information centers, bird observation towers and other structures as well as salaries for personnel in charge of guidance, maintenance and provision of other services.

Other human activities

4.6 Does your country carry out Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) of activities potentially affecting protected sites or areas important for species covered by the Agreement? If yes, briefly describe the main features of your EIA policy and procedures.

The Act on Environmental Impact Assessment Procedure (EIA) (468/1994) came into force on 1 September 1994. Its aim is to further the assessment of environmental impact and the consistent consideration of this impact in planning and decision-making, and at the same time to increase the information available to citizens and their opportunities to participate in decision-making.

The act is applied to projects where compliance with international agreements involving Finland requires assessment to be carried out, or which may have significant adverse environmental impacts on Finnish wildlife or other special features of the environment.

The environmental impact of programmes, policies and plans by the authorities must be assessed and taken into account, which requires all spheres of government to re-assess their own operations.

Certain projects always require an EIA procedure. These include oil refineries, pulp, paper and board mills, large harbour projects, motorways and major hazardous waste disposal facilities. The procedure can also be applied in individual cases to a specific project or in the case of an essential change in an already completed project. In such cases, the Ministry of the Environment decides on the need for an EIA.

The functions of various Finnish environmental authorities concerning the EIA procedure can be found in the Decree on Environmental Impact Assessment Procedure.

The amendments to the act and a new decree on EIA (268/1999) came into force on 1 April 1999. The amendments deal with the scope of legislation. Also, the list of projects to which the assessment procedure is applied was changed.

In Natura 2000 areas and their surroundings, only activities which would endanger the specific natural features that justified the area's inclusion in the network will be prohibited. Any significant proposed development is to be assessed and discussed on this basis before it is approved by the authorities

4.7 Please describe the main features of your planning policy and provide examples of practical implementation (e.g. activities to minimising disturbance of species populations or limit the impact of species populations on crops or fisheries). Please summarize any land-use conflicts especially emphasising successful solutions to problems encountered in promoting the wise-use of waterbirds and their habitats.

Land use in Finland is regulated by the Land Use and Building Act which was reviewed to considerable extent in 1999. The methods available for land use planning are Provincial Land Use Plans made on a province basis, General Land Use Plans targeting single municipalities or its part, and Local Land Use Plans to provide for details in General Plans. The objectives in land use planning contain among other things requirements for the ecological sustainability of building, possibilities for an extensive public participation in the preparatory phase of projects, high quality of planning and expertise as well as transparent dissemination of information.

To provide for the ecological sustainability and quality a decision has been made on the national objectives for land use, in addition certain requirements for the contents of various land use plans are included in the Land Use and Building Act.

Abovementioned protected areas and sites in national conservation programmes are included in land use plans. Planned activities in the vicinity of protected areas are possible to assess according to a procedure described in 4.6. Land use plans cannot be ratified if an assessment indicates that a planned activity would considerably diminish the natural values for which an area has been nominated to Natura 2000 network or if it would put into danger nature conservation objectives of the land use plan. Whole of the country has at the moment approved Provincial Land Use Plans which will be reviewed as needed. In the period when the new Land Use and Building Act has been in force since 1999 Ministry of the Environment has ratified 21 Provincial Land Use Plans.

Provincial Land Use Plans as well as General Land Use Plans often include cases where the impact of planned activities to sites of AEWA importance has been assessed with a view to find a sustainable solution from the point of conservation. The most complicated among the cases is no doubt the attempt to reconcile the building of the Vuosaari Harbour of Helsinki City and the adjacent Östersundom Bay, a Natura 2000 site.

The Water Act forbids changing a water-course without a permit. The Vuotos Artificial Reservoir was not granted a permit because it would have inundated the Mires of Kemihaara, a Natura 2000 site in Lapland. The argument was that the natural values of the site were so high and environmental problems caused by the construction of the reservoir so significant that a permit could not be issued.

It is possible in Finland to pay compensation from state funds for damages to e.g. agriculture and fish farming caused by species protected by Nature Conservation Act. Damages caused by Cranes (*Grus grus*) concentrate on a few large areas of fields where cranes gather in big flocks before the autumn migration. Damages to grain harvest can be quite considerable. In Söderfjärden area, in Western Finland, quite successful trials with so-called crane-fields have been made. These fields are cultivated in addition to barley with peas and potato with the objective of having cranes to feed there. Also damages caused by the Black-throated Diver (*Gavia arctica*), the Red-throated Diver (*Gavia stellata*), Terns (*Sterna paradisaea*, *Sterna hirundo*) and the Grey Heron (*Ardea cinerea*) to fish farming have been compensated. Using the same principle also damages caused by the Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo sinensis*) to fish farms can be paid. Generally the protection of fish farm tanks have been developed.

5. Research and monitoring

Status of research and monitoring programmes for species

5.1 How are priorities for research identified in your country? Please briefly describe your country's research programmes, including any bilateral or multilateral co-operative action, for wetland habitats and for species covered by the Agreement (e.g. studies into species population, ecology and migratory patterns). Please append a list of research activities initiated, ongoing or completed in the last three years.

5.2 What monitoring activities does your country undertake, including any bilateral or multilateral cooperative action, of wetland areas and species covered by the Agreement (e.g. national monitoring schemes, International Waterfowl Census)? Please append a list of monitoring activities or programmes initiated, ongoing or completed in the last three years

A working group set up by Ministry of the Environment has prepared a new report on threatened species, a list of threatened species included in the Nature Conservation Act and a list of species for which Finland is internationally responsible. The proceedings of this work are published in Finnish threatened species 2000. – Rassi, P., Alanen, A., Kanerva, T. & Mannerkoski, I. (eds) 2001, Ministry of the Environment and Finnish Environment Institute, Helsinki (see www.ymparisto.fi). The working work continues to prepare reports of threatened species on a regional basis.

The working group assessed in total the status of all 240 bird species regularly breeding in Finland. According to IUCN threatened species categories 3 bird species are extinct (RE), 6 species are critically endangered (CR), 6 species are endangered (EN), 20 species are vulnerable (VU) and 37 species are non-threatened (NT). One species was classified as data deficient (DD).

General bird monitoring programs are:

Monitoring programmes of the Finnish Museum of Natural History

1. Bird ringing, the whole bird fauna, informs about population changes and mortality factors.
2. Inland netting of birds, occurs in context of ringing, targets a few common species in about 30 sites, provides an indication of the yearly variation in the breeding success, a pan-european project.
3. Raptor monitoring, occurs in the context of ringing, provides an indication of the yearly variation in the population numbers and breeding success of raptors, the only monitoring programs targeting non-threatened raptor species.
4. Monitoring of long-term changes in the land-bird fauna, covers common species, line transect method (hundreds of lines).
5. Monitoring of yearly changes in the land-bird fauna, common bird species, line transects (about 50 lines) and point transects (about 40 points), yearly numbers of species and individuals.
6. Waterfowl census, numbers of inland breeding waterfowl and production of young is surveyed in standard sites by e.g. point census methods, yearly changes in population numbers and production of young.

7. Winterbird census, wintering birds recorded on standard routes (400 routes/winter) number of species and individuals, bird fauna of urban areas.
8. Winterbird feedingsite monitoring program, recording of birds visiting standard feeding stations (about 450), structure of winter bird fauna and mortality.

Monitoring programmes of the Finnish Environment Institute

1. Cormorant monitoring, yearly inspection of nesting sites and ringing of young, feeding study, census of migrating and wintering birds, provides information on numbers through the year, distribution, production of young and use of food.
2. Barnacle goose monitoring, yearly inspection of nesting sites and census of post-breeding population.
3. Census of wintering seabirds, four boat routes in Åland Isles, yearly number of species and individuals.

BirdLife Finland monitoring projects

1. Monitoring of rare and threatened bird species. Monitoring targets species with small populations in Finland and those threatened species which do not have a specific project, available information is collected for getting a general picture numbers and distribution of these species.

Monitoring projects targeting threatened species:

1. Osprey (Finnish Museum of Natural History, Finnish Forest and Parks Service)
2. White-tailed eagle (Finnish Museum of Natural History, Finnish Forest and Parks Service)
3. Caspian tern (Finnish Museum of Natural History)
4. Gyrfalcon (Finnish Forest and Parks Service)
5. Peregrine (Finnish Forest and Parks Service)
6. Golden eagle (Finnish Forest and Parks Service)
7. Lesser White-fronted goose (WWF)
8. White-backed woodpecker (WWF)
9. Dunlin, southern race (Regional environment centers, Finnish Environment Institute)

Monitoring programmes of the Finnish Game and Fisheries Research Institute:

1. Archipelago bird censuses, the population status of sea ducks, gulls and waders, done in cooperation with the Finnish Museum of Natural History since 1986.
2. Breeding waterfowl censuses to monitor the development of species populations and breeding success in cooperation with the Finnish Museum of Natural History since 1986.
3. Breeding bird censuses in agricultural environment, the size of breeding populations of about 30 species and changes of habitats in cooperation with the Finnish Museum of Natural History since 1984.
4. Triangle observation censuses, population sizes, structure and production of tetraonids, started in 1988.

Other research. In the assessment project concerning the Finnish protected area network (SAVA) done in cooperation between Finnish Environment Institute, Finnish Forest and Parks Service and Forestry Research Institute data was collected on bird fauna of coniferous and deciduous forests, mire bird fauna, Red-throated Diver, Lesser White-fronted Goose, White-tailed Eagle, Golden Eagle, Gyrfalcon, Peregrine, Osprey, Dunlin (southern race), Caspian Tern and White-backed Woodpecker.

In an Agriculture and biodiversity project bird fauna of agricultural environment was studied. The project was conducted by BirdLife Finland, WWF Finland, Finnish Association of Nature Conservation and Hunters' Central Organization.

6. Education and information

Training and development programmes

6.1 Describe the status of training and development programmes which support waterbird conservation and implement the AEWA Action Plan.

There is no specific program but conservation of waterbirds including objectives of AEWA Convention are clearly displayed in the visitor centers of the protected areas as well as in their brochures and internet pages maintained by NGOs and nature conservation authorities.

The so-called "Wetland days" are organized nearly on a yearly basis in Finland. They have been organized at wetland sites where it has been possible to focus on particular problems and solutions concerning the site. This event is meant for the authorities responsible for wetland management.

6.2 What bilateral or multilateral co-operative action is your country undertaking to develop training programmes and share examples of good practice?

Finland has had occasional cooperation with Estonia and Russia in organizing their wetland management. In addition wetlands in nearly all Baltic states have been visited.

Raising public awareness

6.3 Describe activities to raise public awareness of the objectives of the AEWA Action Plan. Please outline any particular successes generating public interest in, and securing support for, waterbird and wetland conservation (e.g. campaigns, information notes or other initiatives)?

Bird wetlands are very popular places for visiting and making observations of nature. Many of these have information points and brochures and bird watching towers. They are maintained by Finnish Forest and Parks Service as well as many cities and municipalities. BirdLife Finland and regional organizations as well as many cities organize trips to wetlands. BirdLife Finland has organized since 1994 the Contest of Bird Watching Towers where teams compete to see as many bird species in a single day as possible. In 2005 221 bird watching towers took part into the competition, major part of the towers at wetlands. One of the tasks of the teams was to educate visitors of the towers about birds and their protection as well as their habitat conservation. Normally several thousand people visit the towers on that day.

7. Final comments

7.1 General comments on the implementation of the AEWA Action Plan

As has been stated above Finland has implemented the provisions of the Convention concerning species protection and forbidden the use of lead shots in waterfowl hunt as well. The Finnish network of protected areas has for the most part safeguarded sites of AEWA importance and the site protection will proceed to the remaining areas (see points 3.1 and 3.3). Existing management plans for the areas are implemented and new prepared. The protection of natural values of the areas has been taken into account also when planning for activities outside the areas. The objectives of the Action Plan are thus fulfilled to large extent.

7.2 Observations concerning the functions and services of the various AEWA bodies

- a. The Agreement Secretariat*
- b. International organisations*
- c. AEWA NGO partners*

7.3 How might the Action Plan be further developed as a practical aid for national and international conservation of migratory waterbirds?

In our view a big task of the future will be the protection and management of staging and wintering areas of waterbirds in Africa.

8. Progress to implement Resolutions and Recommendations of the Meeting of the Parties

Please summarize progress to implement decisions of previous Meetings of the Parties.

Resolution 2.2: See para 4.1 above

Resolution 2.13: See para 2.3 above, The Dunlin (*Calidris alpina schinzii*), The Lesser White-fronted Goose (*Anser erythropus*)

9. OPTIONAL SECTION – Planned and future actions

Contracting Parties are invited to outline below any further information regarding the aims of the Agreement, for example, planned actions or other informative examples.

1. Species conservation
2. Habitat conservation
3. Management of human activities
4. Research and monitoring
5. Education and information

List of abbreviations and acronyms used in the report

References

Appendices

Appendix 1: Status of Single Species Action Plans: See para 2.3

Appendix 2: List of sites of international importance

Appendix 3: Status of management plans for sites of international importance: See Appendix 2

Appendix 4: List of research and monitoring programmes and projects. See para 5.1 and 5.2

Appendix 5: List of national institutions involved in migratory waterbird conservation : See para 2.1b

Appendix 6: List of relevant World Wide Web addresses for national institutions involved in migratory waterbird conservation

Appendix 7: List of relevant migratory waterbird and habitat conservation projects initiated, ongoing or completed in the last three years: See 3.4, 3.5 and Appendix 2