



FORMAT FOR REPORTS

OF THE PARTIES

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

Implementation during the period September 2002 and September 2005

Contracting Party: GEORGIA

**Designated AEWA Administrative Authority: Ministry of Environment Protection and
Natural Resources**

**Full name of the institution: Ministry of Environment Protection and Natural
Resources of Georgia**

Name and title of the head of the institution: George Papuashvili

Mailing address: 6 Gulua str, Tbilisi, 0114, Georgia

Telephone: (+995 32)

Fax:

Email: gmep@access.sanet.ge; biodepbonn@moe.gov.ge

**Name and title (if different) of the designated contact officer
for AEWA matters: Ms. Irine Lomashvili**

**Mailing address (if different) for the designated contact
officer:**

Telephone: (+995 99) 46 07 50

Fax:

Email: biodepbonn@moe.gov.ge; ilomashvili@yahoo.com

Table of Contents

1. Overview of Action Plan implementation	5
2. Species conservation	6
Legal measures	6
Single Species Action Plans	6
Emergency measures	6
Re-establishments	7
Introductions	7
3. Habitat conservation	8
Habitat inventories	8
Conservation of areas	8
Rehabilitation and restoration	8
4. Management of human activities	9
Hunting	9
Eco-tourism	9
Other human activities	9
5. Research and monitoring	10
Status of research and monitoring programmes for species	10
6. Education and information	11
Training and development programmes	11
Raising public awareness	11
7. Final comments	12
8. Progress to implement Resolutions and Recommendations of the Meeting of the Parties	13
9. OPTIONAL SECTION – Planned and future actions	14
List of abbreviations and acronyms used in the report	15
References	16
Appendices	17
Appendix 1: Status of Single Species Action Plans	17
Appendix 2: List of sites of international importance	
Appendix 3: Status of management plans for sites of international importance	17
Appendix 4: List of research and monitoring programmes and projects	17
Appendix 5: List of national institutions involved in migratory waterbird conservation	17

Appendix 6:	List of relevant World Wide Web addresses for national institutions involved in migratory waterbird conservation	17
Appendix 7:	List of relevant migratory waterbird and habitat conservation projects initiated, ongoing or completed in the last three years	17

1. Overview of Action Plan implementation

1.1 Summary of progress to date

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

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

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?

1. *The Act on the Protection of Wildlife of Georgia*

ARTICLE 3. GEORGIAN LEGISLATION IN THE FIELD OF WILDLIFE PROTECTION AND USE OF ITS OBJECTS

Georgian legislation on the wildlife is based on the Constitution of Georgia, Georgia's international agreements and treaties, acts "On the Environmental Protection" and "On the System of Protected Territories", this Act and other legislative acts and statutes in the field of protection of wildlife, its habitats and use of objects of wildlife.

ARTICLE 8. DIVISION OF OBJECTS OF WILDLIFE BY GROUPS

1. Objects of wildlife are divided into groups of state and local importance according to their geographic distribution and transfer, quantity, condition of species and populations, economic importance and other indicators.

2. The group of state importance includes:

- a) Endangered species;
- b) Populations and individuals, dwelling within protected territories and hunting lands;
- c) Species and individuals, dwelling in Georgia's territorial waters, continental shelf and special economic zone;
- d) Species, defined by Georgia's international treaty and agreement;
- e) Individual species, naturally migrating in the territory of two or more territorial units (regions) of Georgia

ARTICLE 17. PROTECTION OF HABITATS, REPRODUCTION AREAS, SURVIVAL STATIONS, MIGRATION AND WATER-REACHING WAYS AND WATERING PLACES

1. Any activity, which has an effect upon the condition of wildlife, habitats, reproduction areas, survival stations, migration and water-reaching ways and watering places of wild animals, must be implemented in accordance with those requirements, which ensure their protection.

2. During the designing, arranging, constructing of populated areas, enterprises, buildings and other installations, the perfecting of existing ones and implementation of new technological processes, the getting of virgin lands, over humid territories, coastal territories and territories, covered by bushes into economic circulation, land reclamation, use of forests, the fulfilling of geological research works, the mining of minerals, the determining of pastures and driving places of agricultural animals, the working out of tourist routes and arranging of recreational paragraphs the measures for preservation of habitats and reproduction areas, survival stations, migration and water-reaching ways, watering places of wild animals must be taken into account and implemented. Also, inviolability of parts of especial value for normal existence of wild animals must be ensured.

3. During the designing, arranging, also, constructing of railways, highways, pipelines and other transport mains, electric power and communication lines, also, channels, dams and other hydro technique buildings, the allotting of pastures and arable lands, the measures, which ensure preservation of migration and water-reaching ways, reproduction areas, survival stations and watering places of wild animals must be worked out and implemented.

4. The Ministry, according to the procedure, set by the legislation, stops or prohibits activities of all types (including that, noted in paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 of this article), which may have an effect upon wildlife, habitats, reproduction areas, survival stations, migration and water-reaching ways and watering places of wild animals and, which is fulfilled without environmental permission on activities, or is violating legislative rules on environmental protection.

ARTICLE 65. GEORGIA'S INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS AND TREATIES IN THE FIELD OF THE PROTECTION OF WILDLIFE AND USE OF ITS OBJECTS

If Georgia's international agreements and treaties take into account the rules, different from the Georgian legislation on wildlife and it doesn't contradict the Georgian constitution, then the rules of international agreements and treaties are used.

All species included into the Columns A and B of the Table 1, which are presented in Georgia, are included in the new Red List of Georgia. Taking of and hunting these species is strictly prohibited according to the Law on the Red Book and Red List of Georgia.

2. Law of Georgia on Protected Areas

Article 20. Activities in the Protected Territories

1. Permitted activities within the protected territories shall be determined according to categories of the protected territories, as well as international agreements and conventions.
2. Any activity related to the protected territory shall be organized through:
 - regulation within the territory;
 - regulation out of the territory;
 - temporary regulation.
3. The procedure of regulating shall be set out in detail in the regulations and management plan of each protected territory.
4. Within the protected territory hereby is prohibited:
 - a) to ruin or modify natural ecosystems;
 - b) to destroy (exterminate), extract (seize), ruin, damage (injure) or scare any natural resource for the purpose of exploitation or for any other reason;
 - c) to damage natural ecosystems or species as a result of pollution;
 - d) to introduce and multiply alien and exotic species of living organisms;
 - e) to import into the territory explosive or poisonous materials;
 - f) any other activity prevented by the regulations or the management plan of the protected territory.
5. Within the protected territory subject to regulation shall be:
 - a) access of visitors to certain areas;
 - b) hunting, fishing, camping, fire setting, trading or retailing, constructing facilities, roads and other structures or modifying their historical appearance, using land, air or water transport over or under it;
 - c) visitors' behaviour over 24 hours, in compliance with the requirements of the regulations;
 - d) collecting, seizing or deporting animals or plants out of the territory;
 - e) freeing, isolating or killing abandoned domestic animals.
6. Within the protected territory subject to control shall be:
 - a) all sorts of permitted scientific activities;
 - b) all sorts of permitted educational activities;
 - c) all sorts of permitted economic activities;
 - d) tourist/recreational activities, by which there will be ensured:
 - equal distribution of visitors to all protected territories;
 - preliminary registration of protected territories selected according to the visitors' interests;
 - conformity of the time and duration of the visitor's intervention with the goals of the protected territory;

- conformity of the limit of visitors established in a given protected territory with the actual number of visitors;
 - e) threat of natural calamity or catastrophe.
7. The protected territory shall be controlled on the basis of temporary regulation:
- a) until the category has been determined and the first management plan has been approved;
 - b) during the liquidation of the consequences of natural calamities and catastrophes (emergency rules shall be established by appropriate regulations).
8. Out of the protected territory subject to control shall be:
- a) status of ecosystems and natural resources within the buffer zone;
 - b) development programs related to the buffer zones and individual important economic and construction sites (for the purpose of assessing their adverse influence on the environment);
 - c) preventive measures against adverse activities (imposing penalties);
 - d) indemnification against losses resulted from the adverse effects.

3. THE LAW OF GEORGIA ON ESTABLISHMENT AND MANAGEMENT OF KOLKHETI PROTECTED AREAS

ARTICLE 44. INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS AND CONTRACTS IN THE SPHERE OF MANAGEMENT AND ESTABLISHMENT OF KOLKHETI PROTECTED AREAS.

In case of switching in the network of Kolkheti National Park, Kobuleti reserve and Kobuleti restricted areas or other territories anti areas the activities are implemented in accordance with international standards.

ARTICLE 45. INTERNATIONALLY DESIGNATED WETLANDS IN KOLKHETI PROTECTED AREAS.

1. The activities in Kolkheti National Park, Kobuleti Reserve and Kobuleti Restricted areas internationally announced wetlands are commenced in accordance with Ramsar Convention.

2. The responsibilities undertaken by Ramsar Convention on excessive moisture territories on Kolkheti Protected Areas is performed by the terms determined by Georgian legislation.

b. Which organisations are responsible for implementation?

Ministry of Environment Protection and Natural resources of Georgia

c. How does it relate to other national initiatives (e.g. national Biodiversity Action Plans)?

The Biodiversity Action Plan envisages some activities of different strategic components related to AEWA species and their habitats:

1. Design national system plan for protected areas network.
2. Legal designation of protected areas and implementation of their management plans
3. Elaboration of management plans for conservation and wise use of wetland ecosystems.
4. Preparation of potential Ramsar sites for inclusion in the list of wetlands of International importance.
5. Preparation of documentation for protected areas management which qualify for designation as Biosphere Reserves for submission to UNESCO
6. Provision of remedial assistance to the existing protected areas in order to maintain their integrity and operational capacities.
7. Preparation and adoption of adequate subsidiary legislation for protected areas management.
8. Define potential transboundary protected areas and critical areas for international/transboundary cooperation and facilitate partnership with responsible agencies and NGO's in Russia, Turkey, Azerbaijan and Armenia
9. Promote cooperation with international organizations and facilitate partnership between individual protected areas in Georgia and other countries
10. Elaboration of methods and criteria for assessment of status of species.
11. Assessment of status of species
12. Creation of a new Georgian Red List and Red Book
13. Assessment of human impact on ecosystems and species
14. Identification of important habitats, "hot spots" and key species for conservation
15. Identification of adverse/favorable natural and anthropogenic factors in sites of high diversity and in corridors connecting these species
16. Development of conservation management or action plans for threatened species and ecosystems
17. Development of a national program of ex-situ conservation.
18. Creation of a captive breeding (conservation) center for ex-situ conservation of endangered species.
19. Develop captive breeding and reintroduction programs for species that fall under high categories of threat (extinct in the wild, critically endangered).
20. Mapping of ranges of key species
21. Taxonomic research using modern methods and technologies (mitochondrial Dna analysis, etc.)
22. Study of genetic structure of populations to predict potential changes in the population
23. Radio-telemetry studies of seasonal and interpopulation migration

- 24 Identification of critical refuges for species
25. Elaboration of methods and criteria for biodiversity monitoring
26. Elaboration of methods for monitoring of migratory species
- 27 Monitoring of Migratory species
28. Creation of a National monitoring system and establishment of monitoring infrastructure
29. Creation of a monitoring data base
30. Monitoring of migration (seasonal and among populations) using modern techniques such as telemetry, marking-chaining, etc.
31. Preparation of a list of hunting species/

32. Inventory of hunting species
33. Definition of hunting seasons for each game species.
34. Elaboration of criteria for identification of hunting quotas.
35. Planning and implementation of measures for recovery of hunting species.

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)?

A new Red List and Red Book of Georgia is being developed. The new Red List contains all species, which were listed in previous Red List of Georgia and all species listed in Column A of the Annex. Some species from the column B depending on their population state are also included in the New Red list.

The Act on the Protection of Wildlife of Georgia

ARTICLE 29. HUNTING ECONOMY AND TERRITORIES, SPECIALLY DETERMINED FOR HUNTING

1. Physical and juridical persons may be given the right of creation and management of hunting economy for the purpose of protection, regeneration and catching of wild animals (except for the subjects, given in paragraph 2 of article 37).

2. For the purpose of creation of hunting economy, hunting lands may be allotted, only after preliminary ecological, biological, economic research, full-fledged accounting of animals and fixing of a situation, establishment of regeneration and catching norms, registered as a conclusion of the Ministry and represents the framework of consideration of the issue of creation of a hunting economy. Preliminary allotting of hunting lands takes place by the consent of land, water and forest owners.

3. The procedure of preliminary ecologic, biologic and economic research, full-fledged accounting of animals and fixing of a situation, establishment of norms of regeneration and catching of animals and issuing a conclusion on the creation of hunting

economy, is determined by the provision “on the procedure of preliminary ecologic, biologic and economic research, full-fledged accounting of animals and fixing of a situation, establishment of norms of regeneration and catching of animals and of issuing a conclusion on the creation of hunting economy, for the purpose of creation of hunting economy for the allotting of hunting lands”, which is worked out by the Ministry.

4. The owners of hunting economy have the right to give out one-time license, inscribed with the owner’s name, in correspondence with the established rule, on the use of animals within the limits of hunting economy.

5. The license for the creation of hunting economy and the hunting within it is to be issued by the Ministry.

6. The procedure of creation, management of hunting economy and of issuing of a one-time license, inscribed with the owner’s name, within its limits is determined by the provision “on the procedure of creation, management of hunting economy and of issuing of the one-time license, inscribed with the owner’s name, within its limits”, which is worked out and confirmed by the Ministry.

7. In preservations and the zones, allotted specially for this, of other categories of protected territories allotted specially for this the hunting is regulated by the provision “ on the procedure of use of animals in preservations and the zones, of other categories of protected territories”, which is worked out by the protected territories service and is approved by the Ministry.

b. Methods of taking?

Methods of taking are regulated by Normative Act on “Taking, Methods and Time allowed for taking of the listed species of Wildlife”.

c. Setting of taking limits and monitoring these limits?

Taking limits are determined in Normative Act on “Taking, Methods and Time allowed for taking of the listed species of Wildlife”.

d. Sustainable hunting of species listed in Categories 2 and 3 (and marked by an asterisk) in Column A only?

Hunting of species listed in column A is prohibited according to Georgian Law on Red List and Red Book

e. Exemptions to the provisions set out in paragraphs 2.1.1, 2.1.2 and 2.1.3?

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.)

Birdlife Georgia is going to implement a few projects aiming at development of the Single Species Action Plans. The projects are under development.

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 unfavorable or endangering conditions occurring in the Agreement area.

There are not any actions undertaken to develop and implement emergency measures to conserve species. The only step undertaken by Georgia is bilateral agreements with Armenia and Azerbaijan, envisaging cooperation in providing joint measures to protect migratory species of birds and their migration routes.

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 programs for species covered by the Agreement.

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).

This issue is regulated by:

The Act on the Protection of Wildlife of Georgia

Article 23. Translocation and Hybridization of Wild Animals

1. Self-willed movement of wild animals to new habitats and introduction of species, alien to

Georgian wildlife by physical and juridical persons is prohibited, except for the cases, noted in articles 5 and 22 of this Act.

2. Hybridization of wild animals is permitted by rule, established by the legislation of Georgia for scientific institutions by the competent authorities, specially authorized by the Ministry.

3. Release of hybrid forms into nature is prohibited, except for the case, noted in article 5 of this Act.

Article 5. Goals of the Act on the protection of the Wildlife of Georgia

1. The main goal of this act is to ensure protection and restoration of wildlife, its habitats, preservation and sustainability of species diversity and genetic resources, creation of conditions for sustainable development, taking into account the interests of present and future generation;
2. The goal of the Act is also legal ensuring of wildlife protection (including in-situ and ex-situ conservation, translocation and reproduction of wildlife) and state based provision of use of wildlife objects.

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.

1. In 2004 the Black Sea Regional Activity Centre for Biodiversity Conservation undertook a pilot study on development of a common methodology for the preparation of a Black Sea Habitats Red Data Book. It was carried out with assistance from the Europe Aid Black Sea Environmental Program project (implemented by ARCADIS Euroconsult) and is intended to provide a basis for discussion with other Black Sea range states in the development and adoption of a common methodology, based on GIS technology.

The ultimate goal of the Habitat Red Book is to afford better protection and management for important habitats and their associated species, by knowing their exact location and condition and at the same time having a baseline to monitor them. In this way conservation efforts can be more focused.

Until now no systematic approach to classifying, mapping and assessing habitats and their associated species in the Black Sea region has been undertaken. The concept of the Black Sea Habitat Red Data Book builds on the work of Helsinki Commission for the Protection of the Environment of the Baltic Sea that published a Red List of marine and coastal biotopes in 1998.

Given that the Habitat Red Book will eventually cover the whole Black Sea region, and the

need to ensure compatibility with pan-European initiatives (such as Pan-European Ecological Network- PEEN), it was decided to use the EUNIS habitat classification system (see <http://eunis.eea.eu.int/habitats.jsp>). This system is anyway already used by several Black Sea range states.

For the purposes of the pilot study, the threatened species to be considered along with the habitats were listed in Provisional List of Species of Black Sea Importance. Among them there are 22 bird species.

Risk assessment criteria should be as quantitative as possible. . Given the increasing availability of powerful computers and GIS technologies, as well as pan-European harmonization of the basic categorization of habitat types, a move to more quantitative or objective criteria seem justified, and has been adopted in this pilot study for the Black Sea Habitat Red Book. It is not claimed that these criteria are yet definitive, but they can provide a basis for further discussion and testing.

2. A report has been prepared by NGO NACRES based on the data gathered during the surveys conducted in 1999-2000 within the project “Conservation of Javakheti Plateau Wetlands”, which was funded by Ramsar Bureau. More than 40 species of waterfowls have been recorded in the above-mentioned territory during migration and breeding territory. Two of them are listed in the IUCN Red List (*Crex crex* and *Pelecanus crispus*), 3 (*Grus grus*, *Egretta alba*, *Ciconia nigra*) in the Georgian Red List, and 32 species are covered by AEWAs.

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.

A strategic review of sites to develop a national network for areas for species covered by the Agreement is not done in Georgia.

Existing information made possible to identify two important sites in Georgia for migratory water birds: 1. Kolkheti wetlands and 2. Javakheti Plateau Lakes

Kolkheti wetlands are designated as Ramsar sites since 1997.

Javakheti Plateau Lakes (Lakes Khanchali, Madatapa and Bugdasheni) are identified as potential Ramsar sites.

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.)

In 1999 a Law of Georgia on the Establishment and Management of Kolkheti Protected Areas was adopted. According to this law the Kolkheti National Park and Kobuleti Natural Reserve were established. Both of these National Protected Areas cover nearly whole territory of Kolkheti Wetlands of International Importance.

1. Kolkheti National Park
2. Kobuleti Natural Reserve

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.

Kolkheti Protected Areas Management Plans are developed (within Georgian ICZM Project). The Management Plans are developed according to the Ramsar guidelines. They are submitted to the Government for adoption according to Georgian Legislation. Every year a separate Action Plan is developed in accordance with the general management plan.

Ministry of Environment Protection and Natural Resources of Georgia is responsible for implementation of the Plans.

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

a. Proposed?

Two Management Plans: 1. Kolkheti National Park
2. Kobuleti Natural Reserve

b. In preparation?

c. Being implemented?

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.

Ramsar sites are protected from one hand by Ramsar Convention and from the other hand by the Law of Georgia on Protected Areas. The Ramsar sites have the management plans. Protected Areas have Administration unit – Park Administration - which develops annual operational plans, including large number of public participation and awareness raising activities.

There also exist the Advisory Council, which overseeing the implementation of Park objectives. National legislation for Integrated Coastal Zone Management (draft, intergovernmental consultation to be lodged) will provide the framework for meeting Park's conservation objectives without compromising development of objectives along the coast.

A Kolkheti National Park public Awareness working Group (PAWG) was established within the frame of Georgia Integrated Coastal Management Project in order to strategize and facilitate implementation of public awareness activities. PAWG helped to organize an impressive array of activities, including the establishment of a website for the KNP (www.KNP.ge), development of a video documentary on the KNP and KNR, a series of activities along the coast in conjunction with the World Wetlands Day, and a KNP booth at the Third International Tourist Fair in Tbilisi.

WWF Caucasus with the financial support of German government is planning to create Javakheti National Park.

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.

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).

The Act on the Protection of Wildlife of Georgia

Article 28. Hunting

1. Hunting is the special type of use of wild animals, for the purpose of satisfaction of financial, recreational and other demands of physical and juridical persons.
2. Hunting is permitted in correspondence with the rule, set by Georgian legislation, on the basis of license, in the form of amateur hunting

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

reported?

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.

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.

Department of tourism of the Ministry of Economic Development of Georgia is considering a development of eco-tourism in Georgia as one of the priorities. However at the state level there is not developed a general program for development of eco-tourism. At the time being there are some NGOs engaged in these activities.

NGO - Center for Sustainable Development of Tourism has implemented different programs, including training (together with DCI).

WWF Caucasus has provided financial support for a project “Perspectives of Development of Tourism in Chiukhi massive”. The main goal of this project was to develop a field camping center for eco-tourists.

WWF Caucasus has implemented a component “development of eco-tourism” of the project “Establishment of the Borjomi-Kharagauli National Park”.

Bird watching becomes quite popular in Georgia. There are two NGOs – NACRES and GCCW, which can provide bird watching tours. Total income from such activities the mentioned NGOs directly transfer to finance projects aiming at conservation of biodiversity. This can be considered the outcome.

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

The local population can receive some income from the infrastructure serving the tourists.

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.

EIA procedures are envisaged in Georgian legislation: Law on Ecological Expertise, Law on Environmental Permits and licenses.

Law of Georgia on Environmental Permit of October 15, 1996 provides the legal basis for: 1. issuance of environmental permits for the activities to be performed on the territory of Georgia. 2. State Ecological Expertise while issuing the permits. 3. Public participation and information in the EIA procedure.

The regulatory framework of the EIA system has been further complemented by the Law of Georgia on State Ecological Expertise (October 15, 1996). According to Article 1 of the Law, the state environmental assessment is a necessary environmental measure to be carried out in the process of decision-making on the issuance of environmental permits. These activities include business, industrial and other activities, drafting and development of plans, infrastructure projects, construction and sector development plans, projects for exploitation and use of waters, forests, mineral resources, land and other natural resources on the territory of Georgia; also activities required for major reconstruction and technical and technological renovation of the existing enterprises

Since February 2005, CENN (Caucasus Environmental NGO Network) started implementation of the program in the field of Environmental Assessment (EIA/SEA) system in the South Caucasus region. Currently, CENN undertakes two projects:

Strengthening of Environmental Assessment (EIA/SEA) System in the South Caucasus Countries supported by the Bank Netherlands Partnership Program (BNPP) and the World Bank.

Improvement of Environmental Assessment (EA) Practice in Georgia through Development of EA Implementation Tools supported by the Government of the Netherlands.

The overall objective of the Projects is improvement of EA legislation, capacity, practice and public awareness in Georgia and the South Caucasus Region.

Among the projects which may have impact on wetlands and for which the EIA has been carried out followed by issued Environmental permits can be named:

- Development of Irrigation and Drainage Consumers Organizations Project, funded by World Bank;
- Construction of oil and oil-products terminal at the Khobistskali river estuary (Kulevi Oil Terminal);
- BTC project (Baku-Tbilisi-Chaikhan pipe-line project) .

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

The strong resistance was encountered from the local population due to strict coastal conservation regime, when the park was established. Solution: Some areas of the park become “traditional use zones”. This was reflected in some legislative changes, allowing local villages to use limited amounts of natural resources (wood, fish, pastures) from limited areas. Management plans provide delineation of traditional use zones, and local villages will have access to sustainable amount in accordance with the quota established by Park Management. This approach may safeguard the valuable forest resources from other park

areas.

Similar approach is applied for fishing in the lake Paliastomi and other water bodies, grazing (water buffalos, cows), but not for hunting, which is strictly forbidden for severe problems of enforcement.

5. Research and monitoring

Status of research and monitoring programmers for species

5.1 How are priorities for research identified in your country? Please briefly describe your country's research programmers, 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.

Priorities are identified on 3 levels:

- Global - according to IUCN principles;
- European – according to Birdlife International principles;
- National – according to National legislation;

Within the frame of **ICZM program** annual counts are implemented in wintering places in Georgia.

The NGO - Birdlife Georgia (GCCW) since 1995 implements a research, monitoring and conservation of more than 20 vulnerable species of global level and more than 100 vulnerable species at the European level.

Birdlife Georgia in 1999-2000 conducted the project Integrated Wetland Management in Javakheti.

Birdlife Georgia is also implementing Inventory of Important Bird Areas, which covers 31 internationally recognized sites.

Birdlife Georgia also proposed and submitted the Wetlands Inventory Project to the Ramsar Grants Program.

WWF Caucasus is implementing a Fresh Water Ecosystems Inventory Program.

NGO NACRES has implemented the project Conservation of Javakheti Plateau Wetlands in Southern Georgia, focused on inventory and monitoring of the species, creating a data base, monitoring of water resources and quality and main threats to Javakheti wetlands.

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 programmers initiated, ongoing or completed in the last three years

6. Education and information

Training and development programmers

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

The training programs connected to Kolkheti National Park have been conducted within the ICZM program, financed by GEF.

The training programs have been conducted in Adjara region (Black Sea Coastal zone) by Birdlife Georgia with the financial support of Birdlife Swiss.

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

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)?

A Kolkheti National Park public Awareness working Group (PAWG) was established within the frame of Georgia Integrated Coastal Management Project in order to strategize and facilitate implementation of public awareness activities. PAWG helped to organize an impressive array of activities, including the establishment of a website for the KNP (www.KNP.ge), development of a video documentary on the KNP and KNR, a series of activities along the coast in conjunction with the World Wetlands Day, and a KNP booth at the Third International Tourist Fair in Tbilisi.

Several leaflets, brochures and posters on Kolkheti wetlands were produced and distributed by GICMP.

Website for Kolkheti National Park is regularly updated (www.knp.ge) and Kobuleti Natural Reserve website is launched.

Information needs assessment has been conducted for stakeholders at different levels in relation to Kolkheti Protected Areas, which was carried out by CENN (Caucasus environmental NGOs network) within the GICMP project. Efficient ways for information supply were identified and Media and information strategy were elaborated.

During the years 2003-2005 the great amount of awareness activities were conducted by the GICMP awareness team and Kolkheti National Park Administration:

- Well-designed leaflet “Kolkheti National Park” and thematic brochure on Kolkheti Flora “Save for Future Generations” was printed;
- KNP is regularly presented at international tourism fair in Tbilisi

- KNP logo was selected and developed. The Park logo and name was prominently displayed on all KNP vehicles, brochures, posters, etc.
- Kolkheti National Park and Kobuleti Natural Reserve web pages are launched
- A stakeholders' matrix was developed in order to identify effective ways for delivering information to stakeholders;
- Few video clips and documentaries about KNP was prepared;
- Several promotional activities (TV interviews, local seminars, TV advertisements and video clips, posters and stickers) in preparation of Wetland Day to be celebrated on February 2nd, 2004 was launched;
- Tourist guide to Kolkheti National Park was printed;
- A draft tourism plan for Lake Paliastomi and Pitchori River is available in Georgian. Simple facilities, such as boardwalks, picnic grounds, benches, interpretation sign boards, boat launches and bird-watching platforms should be designed and constructed by the end of 2005.
- Information about the existence and treasure nature of both KNP and KNR were disseminated through 300 different national and local stakeholders;
- Several article for national and local newspapers were also prepared and published ("24 hours", "Republic of Georgia");
- Preparation of the "Field Guide to the Birds of Kolkheti Wetlands" was initiated;
- Children's paintings were organized;
- A photo exhibition in Tbilisi was organized.
- partnerships with local NGOs was developed, especially in the educational field;
- a few nature conservation trainings for teachers and their school children, including site visits and boat tours to the two Parks were organized;
- a series of KNP supportive groups in local schools ("Friends of the National Park") were established, along with some permanent drawing exhibits about the values and functions of wetlands on the school premises;
- a wetlands library in local schools were established;
- the Park administrations organized a few seminars for local residents, resource users, and school teachers to introduce them to the concept of wetland nature conservation. These seminars are envisioned as local workshops to bring together different stakeholders and directly involve local communities in Park information and dissemination activities;
- a series of publications and brochures had been prepared by the Society for Conservation of Wild Nature and were distributed at the workshop in Poti.
- The clean up of Paliastomi lake and coastal beaches were conducted with the help of local school children

The measures, which ensured inclusion of local NGOs in public awareness activities should be also mentioned.

To raise Public Awareness of local population of Kolkheti Wetlands three Local NGOs (one from Guria, two from Samegrelo) were selected already by ICZM Centre.. The NGOs shall intensively cooperate with representatives of the KNP Administration. KNP will be involved in all Public Awareness planned activates carried out by NGOs.

- Guria NGO, in cooperation with Samegrelo NGOs, will finalize and, publish and disseminate the draft Brochure: "Ten Questions About the Kolkheti National Park",

- prepared by the ICZM Centre. The Brochure will be disseminated among the communities, adjoining the Kolkheti National Park.
- NGOs will organize meetings with local government and local population and facilitate discussions about the issues raised in the Brochure:
 - What is the Kolkheti National Park;
 - What are objectives of establishing KNP;
 - KNP traditional use zone;
 - NGOs will involve KNP administration, local population, local authorities and school children from Guria (Lanchkhuti district) and Samegrelo (Khobi, Sneaky, Undid and Abash districts) regions, in events organized through the KNP public awareness campaign;
 - NGOs will ensure popularization of the idea of KNP through the media:
 - broadcast on local TV channel KNP;
 - publish KNP support articles in local press.
 - NGOs will prepare and place information billboards in community centers (local authority building, cultural house, school, and etc) about the KNP;
 - NGOs will prepare and install permanent information billboards in selected schools (and KNP adjoining communities). Information about the Kolkheti Wetlands Ecosystem and KNP, pictures, KNP maps, posters and other materials will be advertised on billboards. The idea of permanent billboards will be to better involve local school children in KNP management;
 - NGOs, together with KNP administration, will arrange guide tours for local authorities, environmentalist group members, and school children school teachers, etc to KNP ("Paliastomi" lake, and "Imnati").
 - NGOs will organize excursions to the Borjomi-Kharagauli National Park, in close cooperation with KNP and Borjomi-Kharagauli NP administrations, to get familiar the population living in KNP adjoining area, local government and other stakeholders with the good practice of forming national parks in Georgia
 - Guria NGO will organize the events dedicated to the 2 February - Wetlands Day, 2006 in Guria and Samegrelo region. Will ensure the involvement of the KNP Administration, local youth and school children in planned activities.

The project ``Support Government Conservation Agencies in the implementation and reinforcement of the International conventions and Agreements to biodiversity conservation and sustainable use`` also envisages public awareness and communication activities. Project is implemented by Union ``Ecopulse Association`` with support of Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF). The project Objective is the raising of information of local decision-makers about the international duties of Georgia and their fulfillment in the field of biodiversity conservation. The noted objective is reached by means of information-consultative meetings with the local authorities, administrations and NGOs, preparation and distribution of information editions.

7. Final comments

7.1 General comments on the implementation of the AEWA Action Plan

Remark

Table 1 of The Agreement annex does not contain some populations of the Black Sea Region species, which can be identified in Georgia. E.g. *Ciconia nigra* actually is presented in Javajeti and correspondingly is not included in the Black Sea Region List of the Agreement Annex.

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?

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.

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

Birdlife Georgia is going to implement a few projects aiming at development of the Single Species Action Plans. The projects are under development.

Appendix 2: List of sites of international importance

1. Kolkheti National Park
2. Kobuleti Natural Reserve
3. Javakheti Plateau Lakes:
Madatafa lake
Bugdasheni lake
Kartsakhi lake
Khanchali lake
4. Alazani river valley
5. Iori river valley
6. Low Kura valley
7. Jandara lake
8. Tabatskuri lake
9. Chorokhi delta

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

1. Kolkheti National Park (developed)
2. Kobuleti Natural Reserve (developed)
3. Javakheti Plateau Protected Areas (under development)
4. Chorokhi Delta Protected Area (under development)

Appendix 4: List of research and monitoring programmes and projects

The NGO - Birdlife Georgia (GCCW) since 1995 implements a research, monitoring and conservation of more than 20 vulnerable species of global level and more than 100 vulnerable species at the European level.

Birdlife Georgia in 1999-2000 conducted the project Integrated Wetland Management in

Javakheti.

Birdlife Georgia is also implementing Inventory of Important Bird Areas, which covers 31 internationally recognized sites.

Birdlife Georgia also proposed and submitted the Wetlands Inventory Project to the Ramsar Grants Program.

WWF Caucasus is implementing a Fresh Water Ecosystems Inventory Program.

NGO NACRES has implemented the project Conservation of Javakheti Plateau Wetlands in Southern Georgia, focused on inventory and monitoring of the species, creating a data base, monitoring of water resources and quality and main threats to Javakheti wetlands.

WB/GEF, Ministry of Environment of Georgia are implementing the Kololkheti National Park Program.

Birdlife International and Birdlife Georgia are implementing the project Monitoring of Migratory Flyway

WB/GEF and Ministry of Environment of Georgia are implementing Protected Areas Development program

Black Sea Regional Activity Center for Biodiversity Conservation has implemented a pilot project **Georgian Coastal Habitats Red Data Book**

Appendix 5: List of national institutions involved in migratory waterbird conservation

1.The NGO - Birdlife Georgia (GCCW)

2. WWF Caucasus

3. Black Sea Regional Activity Center for Biodiversity Conservation (Batumi)

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

WWF Caucasus: www.panda.org/caucasus

Birdlife Georgia: www.gccw.org

KolxeTi National Park: www.knp.ge

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

Javakheti Plateau National Park – The agreement between Georgian and German governments on financial support of this project is already developed and will be signed in the nearest future.

Ongoing:

1. Establishment of Chorokhi Delta Protected Areas
2. Kololkheti National Park program (WB/GEF, Ministry of Environment of Georgia)
3. Monitoring of Migratory Flyway Project (Birdlife International and Birdlife Georgia)
4. Conservation of Khanchali Lake (Birdlife Georgia)
5. Caucasus IBA (Important Bird Areas) Program
6. Protected Areas Development program (WB/GEF and Ministry of Environment of Georgia)

Initiated: 1. Establishment of Protected Areas in Javakheti (Birdlife Georgia)
2. Wetland Inventory in Georgia (Birdlife Georgia)
3. Fresh Water Ecosystems Program (WWF Caucasus)