



 **AEWA**

FORMAT FOR REPORTS

OF THE PARTIES

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

Implementation during the period of 2005 - 2008

Contracting Party: Republic of Lithuania

Designated AEWA Administrative Authority:

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1. Overview of Action Plan implementation

1.1 Summary of progress to date

The main activities undertaken in the last three years were focused mainly on the monitoring of migratory birds and habitat conservation.

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

Monitoring of migratory and wintering birds.

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?

All the species of Table 1 of the Agreement and their habitats are protected by these national legal acts:

- Law on Protected Areas (1993, (as) amended in December 2001),
- Law on Wild Fauna (1997, (as) amended in December 2001),
- Law on Protected Plant, Animal and Fungi Species and Communities (1997, (as) amended in December 2001),
- Law on Hunting (2002),
- Government Resolution No. 130 of 7 February 2005 on the approval of the National Biodiversity Monitoring Programme for 2005-2010,
- Government Resolution No. 819 of 25 August 2006 on the approval of the List of the Protected Areas of the Republic of Lithuania, which Include Important Bird Areas and Delineation of Important Bird Areas boundaries,
- Order of the Minister of Environment No. D1-302 of 15 June 2005 (amended on 6 November 2006 (No. D1-518) on the approval of the List of the Sites that Meet pSCI's Criteria and the Submission of the List to the EU,
- Rules on Hunting in Lithuania (2002),
- Rules on Trade in Wild Animals (2004).

b. Which organisations are responsible for implementation?

- Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Lithuania;
- State Protected Areas Service under the Ministry of Environment;
- The State Environmental Protection Inspectorate;
- Regional Environmental Protection Departments.

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

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)?

The Lithuanian Law on Hunting prohibits taking of the birds listed in Column A of Table 1, except *Anser albifrons* whose hunting is allowed in the restricted period. Two bird species listed in Column B of Table 1 are hunted in Lithuania (i.e. *Anas querquedula*,

Gallinago gallinago). However, the taking of these bird species is regulated by the Lithuanian legislation on hunting.

The trade in birds in Lithuania is regulated by the Rules on Trade in Wild Animals. The international trade in birds is regulated by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and EU Regulations.

b. Methods of taking?

Only firearms are allowed.

c. Setting of taking limits and monitoring these limits?

There are no limits. Regional Environmental Protection Departments summarise information collected from hunters and provide reports on hunted birds/animals in their region to the MoE (twice during the hunting season).

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

No hunting of such species is allowed.

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?

At present, national species action plans have been developed for the following species, listed in Table 1: Column A – Black Stork (*Ciconia ciconia*) and Little Tern (*Sterna albifrons*). Also, a national action plan has been prepared for the Great Snipe (*Gallinago media*), which is listed in Column B of Table 1. However, all these action plans are pending ratification.

c. Being implemented?

Funding received for the implementation of all the above-mentioned plans during the coming five years.

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

Lithuanian experts have also participated in the preparation of several international single species action plans commissioned by the European Commission

(specialists from the Ministry of Environment have provided comments to several species management plans, for example concerning Common Snipe, Golden Plover, Common Gull).

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.

No.

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.

Re-establishment of species in Lithuania is controlled by the Order of the Minister of Environment No 352 of June 1, 2002, on the approval of the Order of the Introduction, Reintroduction and Relocation, Control and Eradication of Invasive Species Organisms and the Composition of the Committee on Invasive Species Control . No re-establishment programmes are in place.

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).

According to the Law on Wild Fauna and the Rules on the Introduction of Wild Animals in case of Deliberate Introduction of Non-Native Species it is necessary to get a permit from the MoE.

The prohibition of the introduction of invasive and alien species and the mitigation of their impacts in Lithuania are also controlled by the Order of the Minister of Environment No 352 of June 1, 2002, on the approval of the Order of the Introduction, Reintroduction and Relocation, Control and Eradication of Invasive Species Organisms and the Composition of the Committee on Invasive Species Control .

No introduction activities are in place at present.

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.

77 areas have been designated as Special Protected Areas (SPA) according to the requirements of EEC Bird Directive (79/409/EEC). 5 of these are the Ramsar Sites according to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands. The information on these sites has been published in a book and on the web site: <http://stk.vstt.lt/stk/>

Additionally, in September 2007, the Institute of Ecology developed a report "Assessment of SPA Network in Lithuania", which is based on bird species monitoring data of 2005-2007.

Svazas S., Drobelis E., Balciauskas L., Raudonikis L., (2000) Important Wetlands in Lithuania;

Raudonikis L., Kurlavicius P., (2000), Important Bird Areas in Lithuania;

Raudonikis L., (2004), Important Bird Areas of the European Union Importance in Lithuania;

Inventory of Coastal and Important Marine Bird Areas in the Baltic Sea, (2000);

Švažas S., Kozulin A., Grishanov G., (2003), Important Transboundary Belarussian-Lithuanian and Lithuanian-Russian Wetlands;

Švažas S., Kozulin A., (2002), Waterbirds of Large Fishponds of Belarus and Lithuania.

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.

See Point 3.1

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.)

The most important sites for wintering, migrating and breeding waterbirds have been included in the Lithuanian Natura 2000 protected areas network. Special attention has been paid to the survey and identification of the transboundary areas important to waterbirds.

Several projects have been dedicated to that – transboundary sites between Lithuania and Belarus as well as Lithuania and the Kaliningrad Region of the Russia Federation were investigated in 2001–2002, while a special INTERREG project, dedicated to the protection of Lake Drukšiai and its environs – an important wetland complex on the border of Belarus and Lithuania, was carried out in 2006–2007.

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.

According to the Law on Protected Areas (Art. 28) all activities in protected areas are organized according to the territorial planning (management plans) and strategic planning (nature management plans, monitoring programmes) documents. Has the right to develop nature management plans the Ministry of Environment. Directorates of protected areas, various NGOs and scientific institutions have experience in the planning and management of protected areas. Directorates of protected areas (sometimes NGOs) are usually responsible for the implementation of nature management plans. Management plans (territorial planning documents) can be prepared by only licensed institutions (for example, the State Institute of Land Use).

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?

19 nature management plans. 19 management plans.

c. Being implemented?

52 nature management plans. 26 management plans.

26 management plans (territorial planning documents) for protected areas are approved. 19 management plans are being developed (one is for the establishment of a very important Natura 2000 site for migrating and wintering waterbirds – the Curonian Lagoon). Additionally, 102 nature management plans (strategic planning documents) for various Natura 2000 sites are developed, but at the moment, only 52 are officially approved by the orders of the Minister of Environment. The procedure of the approval of the rest plans is ongoing. The implementation of the 52 approved nature management plans has already started. *Note* that for some big sized national protected areas, several nature management plans (for different smaller parts of the area) could be prepared .

[Information about above mentioned management plans and nature management plans is on the home-page of State Service for Protected Areas under the Ministry of Environment: http://www.vstt.lt/en/VI/index.php](http://www.vstt.lt/en/VI/index.php)

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.

The most relevant legal instruments regarding conservation and wise use of wetland are the following:

Law on Environmental Protection (1992),
Law on Protected Areas (1993, (as) amended in December 2001),
Law on Wild Fauna (1997, (as) amended in December 2001),
Law on Protected Plant, Animal and Fungi Species and Communities (1997, (as) amended in December 2001),
Law on Hunting (2002).

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.

Numerous habitat restoration and rehabilitation projects and initiatives have been carried out in Lithuania in order to improve conditions for the species covered by the AEWB Agreement. These include habitat management projects in Žuvintas Biosphere Reserve, the Island of Lake Kretuonas, Kalviai gravel quarry islands, Novaraistis peatbog, and a number of smaller but not less important initiatives. Important habitat management measures are implemented by the directorates of state protected areas in various Natura 2000 sites. The ongoing African-Eurasian Flyways Project, implemented in the Nemunas Delta, also includes a wetland restoration component.

The ongoing project “Conservation of Inland Wetland Biodiversity in Lithuania” is the largest wetland biodiversity project in Lithuania, implemented in 5 strict nature reserves (4 of them are the Ramsar sites). More information about this project is available on the web site: <http://www.wetlands.lt/index.php>

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 competent administrative authority for hunting policy in Lithuania is the Ministry of Environment. The MoE approves the hunting rules, lists of huntable species and terms of hunting; allowed and forbidden hunting methods and terms of their use; allowed and forbidden hunting tools, lists of species, whose hunting is limited, and their annual hunting limits evaluation order. Its also sets the order of the issuing of licences for huntable species and sets the order of hunting exams and programme.

There are two main legal acts regulating hunting in Lithuania: Law on Hunting (2002) and Rules on Hunting in Lithuania (2002).

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

Bag statistics in Lithuania has been collected since 1934. Our Regional Environmental Protection Departments under the MoE (we have 8 dep.) collect data on bird hunting bags twice a year.

Every year the MoE makes a report about harvested animals in all the country (based on the collected information from Regional Environmental Protection Departments). Every person can get the information about bag statistics for free.

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.

There is a common educational and examination programme for hunters in Lithuania approved by the Ministerial Order No. 510 of 2002 .

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.

A project "Management and Maintenance of Protected Areas" is being implemented during 2006-2008 (financed from the EU Structural Funds). One of the goals of the project is to allow the society to get acquainted with the protected values through educative activities and information presentation (helps the development of eco-tourism). The activities of the project are as follows: 1) to establish information systems in Anykščiai, Asveja, Biržai, Gražutė, Kaunas Lagoon, Kurtuvėnai, Nemunas Delta, Neris and Vištytis Regional Parks; 2) to install (build, reconstruct) visitors centers in Asveja, Kaunas Lagoon, Biržai Regional Parks, Kamanos Strict Nature Reserve and Žuvintas Biosphere Reserve.

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

Benefits to the local communities from the conservation of waterbird sites are insignificant.

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 provisions concerning requirements of Article 6.3-6.4 of the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) are set in the Law on Protected Areas (1993, amended in 2001), the Law on Environmental Impact Assessment of Proposed Economic Activity (2000, amended in 2005), in the Governmental Decision of the Republic of Lithuania on the Approval of the Order of the Assessment of the Effects of Certain Plans and Programmes on the Environment (2004), the Order of the Minister of Environment on Assessment of Impact of Certain Plans or Programmes and Projects of Proposed Economic Activity on the Potential or Designated Natura 2000 Sites (2006).

Paragraph 8 of Article 24 of the Law on Protected Areas (1993, amended in 2001) stipulates that: „Projects that are not directly connected with the management of the European ecological network Natura 2000 sites but likely to have a negative impact on the natural habitats and protected flora and fauna species, must be assessed according to the procedures set in the Law of Environmental Impact Assessment of Proposed Economic Activity. The assessment of plans and projects, that are not the subject of environmental impact assessment according to the requirements of the Law on Environmental Impact Assessment of Proposed Economic Activity, must be carried out according to the order set by the Government or its authorized institution. Institutions authorized by the Government shall approve the projects only after having ascertained that projects will not adversely affect the European ecological network Natura 2000 sites and, if appropriate, after having obtained the opinion of the public. If the implementation of projects is related to social or economic public interests and there are no alternative solutions, it is obligatory to apply compensatory measures, which are necessary for the protection of general wholeness of the European ecological network, and to conserve natural habitat types and the state of protected flora and fauna species.“

Paragraph 1.3 of Article 7 of the Law on Environmental Impact Assessment of Proposed Economic Activity (2000, amended in 2005) stipulates that: „Environmental impact assessment shall be carried out if the implementation of the proposed economic activity can cause an impact on the European ecological network Natura 2000 sites, and the institution responsible for the organization of the protection and management of protected areas determines that the impact of such an activity might be significant.“

Article 7.3 of the Governmental Decision of the Republic of Lithuania on the approval of the Order of the Assessment of the Effects of Certain Plans and Programmes on the Environment (2004) stipulates that: „The assessment shall be carried out when the implementation of plans and programmes is related to or close to an established or potential „Natura 2000“ territory, and the institution responsible for the organization of the protection and management of such protected territories determines that pursuant to the provisions of Directive 92/43/EEC, the implementation of such a plan or programme (separately or together with other plans and programmes) might have significant effect on the established or potential „Natura 2000“ territories.“

Article 9.2 of the above mentioned Governmental Decision stipulates that: “Assessing stakeholders, according to their competence, examine the screening and scoping documents and assessment reports and provide conclusions concerning the quality of assessment and assessment documents. When a plan or a programme is assessed due to (alone or in relation

to other plans and programmes) possible significant effects on the established or potential „Natura 2000“ territories, the institution responsible for the organization of the protection and management of protected territories, according to its competence, examines scoping documents, assessment reports and provides conclusions concerning the quality of assessment and assessment documents, as well as conclusions concerning the adoption or approval of the plan or programme related to established or potential “Natura 2000” territories. These conclusions are binding for organisers of the plans and programmes.” State Protected Areas Service under the Ministry of Environment and directorates of state protected areas are the competent authorities responsible for the determination of possible significant effects (of the implementation of projects, plans and programmes) on Natura 2000 sites.

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.

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.

There is no unified strategy for the research related to the species covered by the Agreement in Lithuania. The research on the species covered by the Agreement is mostly done within the framework of different projects, initiated by various research institutions and NGOs. These projects include two LIFE-Nature projects, which aim at identifying areas most important to migrating and wintering birds in the Baltic Sea and the Curonian Lagoon and at ensuring their long-term protection (including the identification of threats and the preparation of nature management plans). A research into ecology and population growth of Great Cormorants is carried out as a part of the EU COST Action 635. A study has been developed for the conservation of White Storks in Lithuania. Some genetic population studies of the migrating bird species covered by the Agreement are underway.

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

The National Monitoring Scheme is based on the reporting requirements of the Birds

Directive, primarily in Natura 2000 sites (the most species are surveyed every 2–3 years, globally threatened are surveyed annually). A wintering waterfowl census in the Baltic Sea is a part of the State Monitoring Scheme (every 2–3 years, Steller's Eider is carried out annually), although more detailed wintering waterbird surveys were carried out in 2006–2008 in the Baltic Sea and the Curonian Lagoon as a part of the two aforementioned LIFE-Nature projects. Unfortunately, a wintering waterbird census in Lithuanian inland waters (a part of the previous State Monitoring Scheme) discontinued some years ago. Some small-scale long-term scientific studies of waterbird populations are ongoing. A White Stork survey was attempted to carry out by an NGO in 2004 and 2005, but it failed to cover the entire territory of Lithuania.

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 are no special training or development programmes specific to the AEWA Action Plan, but training in general nature conservation is taken care of by some NGOs.

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)?

Public awareness raising is a part of many conservation projects. Such activities for a greater part of LIFE-Nature projects, carried out in the Baltic Sea and the Curonian Lagoon, include maintaining informative websites, the dissemination of information through mass media, producing publications, etc. One of the most prominent projects in this respect is the African-Eurasian Flyways Project, which is implemented in one of the most valuable Lithuanian areas for waterbirds – the Nemunas Delta. In addition to practical wetland restoration measures, it includes an important public awareness component – the installation of a visitors center in the area, the educational path and the observation tower.

7. Final comments

7.1 General comments on the implementation of the AEWA Action Plan

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

MoE – Ministry of Environment

References

See 3.1

Appendices

Appendix 1: Status of Single Species Action Plans

See 2.3

Appendix 2: List of sites of international importance

http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter3/dokpaieska.showdoc_I?p_id 281951

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

See 3.5

Appendix 4: List of research and monitoring programmes and projects

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

- Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Lithuania;
- State Protected Areas Service under the Ministry of Environment;
- The State Environmental Protection Inspectorate;
- Regional Environmental Protection Departments;
- Institute of Ecology.

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

www.am.lt

www.vstt.lt

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