
1st Meeting of the AEWA Lesser White-fronted Goose International Working Group
30. November – 1. December 2010, Helsinki, Finland

Report of the Meeting



Welcome and Introduction

AEWA Technical Officer Sergey Dereliev welcomed the participants to the meeting on behalf of the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat. He also thanked the Norwegian Directorate for Nature Management for their financial support and the Finnish Ministry of the Environment for hosting the meeting as well as providing simultaneous Russian-English translation.

The Finnish National representative in the AEWA Lesser White-fronted Goose International Working Group (LWfG IWG) Matti Osara also welcomed the participants on behalf of the host country and added that Finland hopes the meeting will help kick start the speedy implementation of the International Single Species Action Plan for the LWfG (SSAP) in all range states.

Dereliev briefly reviewed the history of international LWfG conservation efforts which began with the adoption of a European Action Plan in 1995, followed by an expert workshop on the LWfG held in Lammi, Finland in 2005. These efforts ultimately resulted in the adoption of the AEWA Single Species Action Plan for the Conservation of the Western Palearctic population of the Lesser White-fronted Goose at the AEWA Meeting of the Parties in Madagascar in 2008. The SSAP foresees that conservation efforts for the species shall be coordinated by an inter-governmental Species Working Group, which the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat convened for the LWfG in 2009.

Adoption of the Agenda

A second revised version of the annotated agenda with minor changes to the program was distributed to the participants (LWfG IWG 1.2 rev. 2, 28.11.2010).

Decision: *The agenda (LWfG IWG 1.2 rev. 2, 28.11.2010) was adopted.*

Appointment of Chair Country

Dereliev introduced the agenda item and commented that although the SSAP states that the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat should chair the Working Group, it would be preferable to have a range state take over the Chairmanship. The work of the Chair will not only be restricted to chairing the meetings, but will also include a role in the intercessional period (close contact to Coordinator and the national representatives etc.). However, most of the work will be done by the Coordinator and it is not expected that the workload of the Chair will be very heavy. The Secretariat further recommended that the Working Group consider establishing a rotating Chairmanship, with a new Chair elected at every meeting or every second meeting.

Four of the LWfG range states (Finland, Norway, Sweden and Germany) are already strongly involved in the implementation of the SSAP and routinely meet within a regional subset of the Working Group, the so-called Committee for Captive Breeding, Reintroduction and Supplementation of LWfG in Fennoscandia (RECAP Committee). Therefore it would be welcomed if a Chair was found amongst one of the other range states. Preliminary consultations conducted by the Secretariat to find a Chair had not been fruitful so the floor was opened for suggestions.

Discussion:

Finland suggested that the Russian Federation take the position as Chair, being the single most important country for breeding LWfG. **Russia** declined on the grounds that the Russian government

has not designated a governmental representative to the group. There would also be no financial support from the government as national conservation priorities currently lie on the protection of big mammals. There has been an attempt to draft and implement a National Action Plan for the LWfG in Russia, but so far there has been no support from the government. Russia is not prepared to Chair the Working Group. Russia has also yet to join AEWA. The scientific community in Russia is working on changing the attitude of the government and is working mostly together with NGOs to implement conservation activities.

Dereliev added that hopefully the Working Group can somehow play a role in stimulating the Russian government to participate and the implementation of conservation measures.

Finland suggested Greece for the Chair. **Dereliev** explained that the Secretariat had already approached Greece and that Greece had also declined due to circumstances similar to the ones mentioned by Russia.

Sweden suggested Kazakhstan for the Chair. **Kazakhstan** declined explaining that although Kazakhstan is active in implementing conservation measures for the LWfG and is in the process of drafting a National Action Plan, it is not in the position to chair the group. Kazakhstan also cited not being a member of AEWA as a reason for declining to take over the position as Chair. Kazakhstan suggested that it might be prudent to have a country more experienced in LWfG conservation – such as Norway or Finland – chair the group, particularly now in the beginning of the process.

Norway replied that it had hoped that one of the other range states critical for the species would take over the Chairmanship. This could also be Syria, Iran or Iraq. For Norway it is also a question of capacity, as the country is already actively involved in many processes – including chairing some of these. Norway sees the situation in Russia and other countries as a reason to take over the Chairmanship in an effort to boost implementation nationally and to raise the country's profile. Norway is ready to offer support in the form of human resources as funding if needed.

Dereliev suggested Hungary for the Chair. **Hungary** replied that the representatives present were not authorized to take over the Chairmanship, as they were not governmental representatives from the Ministry of the Environment.

Dereliev then suggested Ukraine, as they had a governmental representative present with long-standing experience in inter-governmental work in many fora. **Ukraine** declined stating similar limited capacity due to other commitments. Ukraine also suggested Finland. Dereliev concluded that both Finland and Norway wish to abstain from chairing.

After a 10 minute break for further consultations amongst the range states Dereliev concluded that the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat will accept to serve as interim Chair until next meeting. At the next meeting hopefully one of the range states will be willing to take over the Chairmanship of the group.

Decision: *The UNEP/AEWA Secretariat represented by Sergey Dereliev will serve as interim Chair of the Working Group until the next meeting, when it is expected that one of the range states will take over the Chairmanship.*

Confirmation of Observers

The UNEP/AEWA Secretariat had invited the expert organizations WWT, Wetlands International, FACE, BirdLife International and CIC to join the Working Group as observers – the first four of which were represented at the meeting. Experience shows that such observers can contribute substantially to the work of inter governmental groups. Dereliev requested that the group confirm the appointment of these observer organizations to the group.

Decision: *The status of the aforementioned organizations as observers to the group was approved. Any new proposals concerning observers will be communicated to Working Group members for consideration during the interim period or decided upon at the next working group meeting.*

Terms of Reference (TOR)

The draft Terms of Reference for the Working Group provided by the Secretariat were based on a generic format for species Working Groups developed and adopted by the AEWA Technical Committee in 2009. This format had been customized to fit the LWfG IWG.

Dereliev briefly presented the draft ToR. The roles set out in the ToR are standard and foresee the election of a Chair as well as appointment of a Coordinator to facilitate the day to day work of the group. Currently the Coordinator is situated within the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat funded mainly by the Norwegian Directorate for Nature Management. The Secretariat does not have the means to fund this position without voluntary contributions. The Working Group is intergovernmental in nature, i.e. the members to the WG are the LWfG range states represented by appointed national focal points and national experts. Working Group meetings are envisaged to be held every three years dependant on available funding. The ToR also includes a passage on reporting under the Working Group. Funding for the Working Group is the one limiting factor for working group work and implementation on conservation measures. Additional funding will be required for the further operation of this WG.

Discussion:

Sweden had submitted several suggestions for changes in the ToR in writing, for example, that the WG should continuously monitor the scientific evidence-base for the SSAP and that the WG should meet every two instead of every three years. The other range states agreed regarding the meeting frequency and the wording was changed to “meet every two years, but no later than every three years”. Dereliev reminded the representatives that the frequency of meetings will mostly be dependent on available funding.

Greece asked about the role of the European Commission in the WG. Dereliev replied that as a Contracting Party to AEWA the Commission had been invited to attend the WG meeting and that they should be included in the ToR as members of the group.

Norway and Sweden commented that the role of the WG should be reformulated to make clear that the WG is only a coordinating and advisory body. The member states are in charge of implementing conservation activities in their own countries. The text under goals was amended accordingly.

Norway commented on the suggestion by Sweden to include that the group should commission scientific reviews when needed to take an issue forward. Norway argued that the main focus of the WG and the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat should not be on undertaking different reviews, but that the focus should be on the preservation of the species. Dereliev agreed stating that the main task of the WG is to coordinate the implementation of the SSAP not to undertake a scientific role or to undertake reviews. Sweden felt it important that the WG can commission such independent reviews particularly as they can help to solve disagreements. Norway replied that the WG should just focus on the wild population and that controversial issues - for example concerning reintroduction – should be dealt with in the RECAP Committee set up for those issues.

The heading *remit* was changed to *scope* following a suggestion by WWT.

Decision: *The Terms of Reference for the Working Group were adopted including the changes as discussed at the meeting.*

National Reporting – Draft Reporting Format

Dereliev briefly presented the agenda point. The WG shall closely monitor the implementation of the SSAP. Not all LWfG range states are Parties to AEWA, so the national reports will help in collecting the necessary data. The draft national reporting format distributed to the countries for discussion was drafted by the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat on the basis of the SSAP.

Discussion:

Sweden found the draft format very good in general and inquired whether there should be more space for additional voluntary reporting – perhaps in the form of an annex to the main report - on conservation measures undertaken in response to the threats? Dereliev replied that the “*general information*” slots situated after each question had been preconceived for such further elaborations. Greece added that the “*optional information*” fields could also be used for further elaborations.

Greece also commented that more site based information is needed under the heading “critical sites”. This should include the number of birds, hunting pressure, management plans etc. Wetlands International added that the Critical Site Network Tool (CSN tool) does offer much of this information, but that it will be updated much less frequently than the submission of the national reports. Germany proposed that a list of critical sites could be added in the form of an annex.

WWT suggested that instead of giving countries the choice of answering “yes” or “no” there should rather be four categories, for example: complete/largely complete/partially complete/no. WWT also suggested adding categories for reporting on progress and on the other hand for reporting on barriers to success.

BirdLife International inquired how the reports were being analyzed. Dereliev replied that so far the reports are being analyzed manually by the Secretariat, but that in future following the development of the AEWA online reporting tool it might be possible to move to an online reporting system within the species working groups as well. This would allow for a more efficient analysis of the data.

Decision: *An annex based on the German proposal listing critical sites with columns will be developed by the Secretariat and be sent to the Working Group for comments via email. In addition the draft reporting format will be modified according to the*

comments made during the discussion. The reporting format will be kept open and will be under constant development.

Timetable for Reporting

The Chair proposed that reports be submitted to the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat biannually, three months prior to the next Working Group meeting at the latest. As an incentive for countries to submit reports the Secretariat also suggested that the timely submission of reports be linked to the reception of financial support for participation in the WG meetings for those countries eligible to receive travel and accommodation support.

Discussion:

Iran commented that financial resources are needed for the implementation of LWfG conservation measures, otherwise there will be nothing to report. Dereliev replied that if this is the case countries would report that no implementation has happened due to lack of funding. However, lack of funding is not a hindrance to reporting on the situation.

Iran responded that indeed funding is not likely to be needed for the submission of national reports, but external funding is needed for the implementation of the SSAP. National funding is not enough. The availability of national funding depends on the priorities and programs in each country. External financial resources would allow for a more effective implementation of the SSAP.

Dereliev agreed and included that it is also role of Working Group to facilitate access to other financial resources for priority conservation measures. **Norway** commented that following the CBD COP in Nagoya all countries will be revising their national biodiversity action plans. This should be used as an opportunity to include the LWfG in these national plans due to its status as a threatened flagship species. Representatives should focus on this and request assistance from their governments. This will make national funding more easily available. In addition this would act as a signal for potential donors that a country is serious about actively implementing conservation measures for the species.

Decision: *The group agreed on bi-annual reporting with a general deadline for submission three months before the next meeting as well as linking the timely delivery of reports to receiving financial support to attend Working Group meetings. These points will be included in the ToR.*

IUCN Species Red Listing

Sharif Jabour from the BirdLife International Middle East Office explained the procedure of red listing bird species managed by BirdLife for IUCN. An evaluation of the red list status for different species is not done annually. If there is a need to re-evaluate the status of the LWfG, the message should be passed on from the Working Group - which will have the most up to date information on the species – to BirdLife International. BirdLife would then facilitate the process following a procedure developed for re-evaluations.

Germany commented that red listing should be done at sub-population level. Dereliev replied that this is being done for waterbird species protected under AEWA.

Decision: *As observer to the Working Group, BirdLife International can follow the status of the LWfG through the discussions in the Working Group and see if/when there is a need to update the red listing status of the species.*

Implementation Progress – Summary of the submitted National Reports

Mikander briefly presented some conclusions on the implementation of the SSAP on the basis of the national reports received before the meeting. Submitting reports was not yet mandatory but will be mandatory in future according to the procedure agreed upon by the Working Group above.

The Secretariat received nine reports before the meeting from Estonia, Finland, Hungary, Iran, Kazakhstan, Norway, Syria, Sweden and Ukraine. Concerning the population status in each country two countries marked the population as increasing (Kazakhstan and Ukraine) whilst in the other countries the status was marked as stable or decreasing. Concerning the critical sites there are still substantial gaps in knowledge and several potential key sites have not been properly identified.

The threat from hunting was marked as low in the breeding areas and in some range states along the European flyway, but was marked as medium to high along the Eastern flyway and especially in the wintering areas. Poisoning was not deemed to be a threat. Human disturbance was mostly marked as moderate with some range states reporting an increase in human disturbance in their countries. Predation was classed as a high threat specific to the breeding areas. Habitat loss was ranked as medium to high along the eastern flyway but was ranked as low or no threat in the European range states.

Concerning national legislation and activities many range states – particularly along the eastern flyway – reported not having enough human and financial resources for implementation. National Action Plans for the LWfG are in place in Estonia, Finland, Norway and Sweden. Ukraine has a NAP but it is not being implemented. Kazakhstan is in the process of drafting a NAP. Out of the nine reports received seven countries reported having monitoring schemes in place for the LWfG.

Discussion:

Germany commented that the national report for Germany would be submitted soon. The LWfG is not a priority species in Germany. However, much work still needs to be done, particularly concerning the lack of information on the importance of different sites.

Finland asked if the Finnish report will be included in the summary despite being submitted very late. Mikander replied that the preliminary report sent to the Secretariat by Finland had already been taken into account in the summary.

Germany inquired what exactly the term human disturbance covers. Dereliev replied that the term covers human disturbance as a whole, because this is the definition used in the SSAP.

Conclusion: *The implementation of the SSAP has not yet gotten very far. Hunting remains the number one threat to the LWfG. In addition substantial gaps in knowledge are hampering the implementation of adequate conservation measures.*

In future the Secretariat will be able to produce a more comprehensive summary and analysis on the basis of the national reports submitted by range states. The

conclusions thereof will be useful for future prioritizations of implementation measures.

Sweden – Information point

At its own request Sweden presented information on the basis of which it considers that certain changes should be made to the SSAP, where - according to Sweden – there is erroneous and incomplete information that describes the history and status of Sweden's LWfG. Sweden presented evidence including observations made of wild LWfG, including pairs with young, in Swedish Lapland during the time of the release of captive bred birds in the area, and that the Swedish Species Information Centre has not classified the LWfG as regionally extinct (RE; as breeding in the wild) in Sweden in any of the national red-lists published between 1975-2010. Sweden concluded that this information qualifies its LWfG population as supplemented (or re-enforced) according to the IUCN (1998) terminology and not as reintroduced.

The Chair suggested that as the information presented by Sweden is somewhat controversial amongst some of the range states, the matter be deferred to the RECAP Committee for further discussions.

Decision: *The information presented by Sweden and possible modifications to the SSAP resulting thereof will be discussed at the next RECAP Committee meeting in late spring/early summer 2011.*

Critical Site Network Tool

Taej Mundkur from Wetlands International presented the Critical Site Network Tool (CSN) developed under the Wings over Wetlands Project, which brings together data from the IWC, IBA and Ramsar data sets. The site has been developed to assist flyway conservation and covers 3020 sites within the AEWA region with a general focus on countries eligible for GEF funding.

Discussion:

Germany commented that the tool does not include all the critical sites which are in the SSAP. Dereliev added that through the national reports the Working Group will have a more updated list of critical sites for the LWfG than what is available through the CSN tool.

Conclusion: *Countries are requested to produce/update national lists of critical sites for the LWfG together with the Secretariat and Wetlands International. This process should be synchronized with the CSN tool. Countries are also requested to check the sites currently listed in CSN tool and make sure that the sites mentioned reflect the actual situation.*

Prioritization of Implementation Activities - Discussion

Meeting participants were divided into two groups according to range states along the European flyway (*Norway, Sweden, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Estonia, Romania*) and the Eastern flyway (*Russia, Kazakhstan, Syria, Iran, Iraq*). Turkey and Ukraine were represented in both groups as they most likely host birds from both Fennoscandian and the Western main populations. A table was distributed with all the conservation actions listed in the SSAP. Countries were asked to rank all

activities on a scale from essential to low as well as to choose five top priorities per country. The chosen priorities will be the focus of implementation work within each country during the next two years until the next Working Group meeting. The groups were also asked to specify what activities should be undertaken in order to achieve the prioritized actions and if known to specify who should carry out these actions. The group discussions were then summarized in the plenary by the designated group rapporteurs.

Tolvanen (Finland) summarized the prioritization discussion in the European flyway group:

Many range states chose to prioritize activities related to hunting, such as enhancing hunting legislation, introducing (more advanced) obligatory training for hunters as well as launching information campaigns for hunters. The introduction of voluntary red light systems for local hunters has proved efficient in Finland and seems to be a good way of cooperating with local hunting organizations. Illegal hunting within protected areas was deemed to be a particularly serious problem in some European range states (such as Greece).

The importance of continuing to use satellite telemetry as well as establishing a network of coordinated counts in an effort to fill knowledge gaps was also highlighted.

Sweden added that a new activity was added under knowledge gaps concerning the need for more knowledge on supplementation and release methods which is a priority for both Sweden and Norway.

Cranswick (WWT) summarized the prioritization discussion in the Eastern flyway group:

Activities related to hunting were also given top priority in the range states along the Eastern flyway. Several countries expressed the need for better training of and support for staff responsible for the protected areas. More detailed information on where birds are present is needed in order to bring the necessary level of sophistication into national hunting legislations and other conservation measures. Awareness-raising of hunters, other stakeholders and within the governments on both local level and national levels was also given high priority, as well as encouraging governments to commit to the conservation of the species.

The situation in the known breeding areas was deemed to be alright due to their remoteness. However, knowledge gaps on key sites remain in the breeding areas as well. Therefore satellite tagging and increased monitoring is needed in all the range states along the Eastern flyway in order to obtain more basic information on key sites and site use. Funding and resources were concluded to be very limited, with several projects often competing for the same resources.

Discussion/Conclusion:

Dereliev concluded that the chosen priorities will be internationally recognized as priorities for international funding in the respective countries – which is why countries were asked to select the most critical activities so that we can harness threats to the species in the short term.

The top threat is the hunting/killing of birds. The UNEP/AEWA Secretariat is establishing closer contacts with FACE. FACE is at present developing general guidelines on look-alike species for the Secretariat. Implementation of measures to combat the illegal hunting of LWfG should be carried

out by the governments in cooperation with hunting organizations. In addition to hunting key knowledge gaps are still substantial and there is clearly a need to work on closing these gaps.

Middleton/FACE asked countries to send any ideas on working closer together with hunters such as establishing red light systems etc. to FACE. He also added that hunters cannot in practice be trained to distinguish between LWfG and Greater White-fronted Geese it being difficult for trained ornithologists to distinguish between the two. The only viable option at this stage is to protect the key sites.

Decision: *The Secretariat will put together the tables and summarize the priorities chosen by the countries to be the focus of implementation efforts within the next two years. The priorities will be reassessed at the next Working Group meeting.*

Common Monitoring Scheme

The group, led by Dereliev in a brainstorming session, discussed the need to establish a common monitoring scheme. Outcomes of the discussion included the decision that there should be one common monitoring scheme for both flyways as there is a certain amount of overlap and, that the most accurate estimations for the different populations can be obtained in Greece (late winter) and Norway (Valdak, spring) for the Fennoscandian population, in Kazakhstan (autumn) for the Western main population and in Sweden (autumn) and the Netherlands (winter) for the Swedish free-flying population.

It was also discussed that monitoring should on species level provide information on annual trends, distribution, site importance, age ratio, brood size, presence of look-alike species in LWfG flocks, survival rate and reproduction success. More information is also needed on the sites being used including status of and pressure on the sites (including hunting pressure) as well as responses to the pressures and information on habitat use.

Countries also discussed where the accumulated data should be gathered and stored in order to make it available to everyone. Depending on the population and flyway data is possibly already being gathered somewhere as is the case for the Fennoscandian population, for which sightings and data are gathered on the piskulka website (www.piskulka.net). It was agreed that a list of links to the different databases should be created and put on the future WG website/intranet. In addition there is a clear need to coordinate work with the IUCN/WI Goose Specialist Group common goose database and the IBA database for population parameters and site data sets.

Decision: *A group consisting of representatives from Norway, Finland, Germany, Kazakhstan as well as WWT and BirdLife International will draft a suggestion for a common monitoring scheme on the basis of the brainstorming discussion. The Secretariat will communicate with said representatives on timetable etc.*

Budget - Funding of Working Group Activities

Mikander briefly presented the expenditures and budget of the Working Group so far (Doc LWfG IWG 1.7). The past two years since the adoption of the Single Species Action Plan and the appointment of a Coordinator at the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat the yearly running costs for facilitating the implementation of the SSAP have been around 53.000€ (including UNEP 13% overhead). The costs mainly consist of the salary, office and travel expenses of the LWfG Coordinator as well as the

production of logo, website and PR-video for the LWfG. The amount mentioned does not cover additional LWfG conservation activities, which have also been funded through voluntary contributions. The cost of organizing a LWfG Working Group meeting is between 50.000€-60.000€.

Funding of activities has so far been covered through voluntary contributions – mainly from Norway, but also from Finland, Sweden and Germany. Range states should consider how the funding of coordination and other activities should be handled in the future.

Discussion:

Dereliev inquired whether range states wished to set up a budget for working group activities or whether countries would prefer to continue funding the work through voluntary contributions.

Sweden commented that the Swedish Nature Protection Agency (SEPA) works with an annual budget which is decided year to year. After funding two independent scientific reviews in 2010 Sweden hopes to be able to contribute 15.000€ to international LWfG work and coordination next year. **Finland** also confirmed its wish to continue supporting international LWfG work in 2011, but was at this stage unable to promise any definite sum.

Norway also noted that national budgets are set up on a yearly basis and that funding very much depends on the political climate. At the moment the LWfG is a very high priority in Norway. Norway is prepared to step up funding for international conservation efforts next year, including supporting the Lesser White-fronted Goose Coordinator post at the AEWA Secretariat for another two years. However, Norway stressed that the focus should be on finding new partners and launching new conservation projects in order to allocate higher amounts of funding. The LWfG range states should work together on co-funding projects; whilst some can offer financial aid others can participate through “in-kind” contributions. The prioritization of the activities done at the workshop will assist potential donors in picking out projects. Projects should focus on the protection of key staging and wintering sites and on how to manage these sites. More projects involving hunters are needed, they should be involved positively. To this end closer cooperation with FACE and CIC is needed. Norway thanked the AEWA Secretariat for their good work and added that the European Commission should be implementing these conservation activities within the EU.

Dereliev thanked the range states for their support - in light of the comments made the functioning of the Working Group is secured at least for the next two years. But the recovery of the species will not happen within the next two years, it is a long-term process. He also concluded that the preparation of big proposals requires a lot of work and that such project proposals cannot be done without the assistance and active contribution of the range states.

Decision: *Funding of Working Group activities will continue through voluntary contributions. For the next meeting the Secretariat will prepare a more elaborated proposal for the Working Group budget and discuss voluntary contributions with countries beforehand.*

Funding Possibilities for Urgent Conservation Activities

Mikander also briefly presented possibilities to obtain funding for urgent conservation activities (Doc LWfG IWG 1.8). Whereas in the long run range states will be expected to fund basic activities such as monitoring and adequate protection of key sites from national sources, in the short term the

Secretariat will assist range states in acquiring outside funding for conservation measures that urgently need to be implemented.

Possibilities range from voluntary contributions for small-scale projects made by other range states to large-scale projects running over several years connecting countries along the flyway like GEF. Mikander stressed again that range states are expected to play an active role in the fundraising. Only those range state governments that show their commitment to implementing activities for the conservation of LWfG by putting forward suggestions for projects etc. will receive assistance. The Secretariat does not have the capacity to fundraise without assistance from the range states.

Dereliev added that the focus of the Secretariat will be on finding funding for those range states which are already Parties to AEWA.

Presentation of Working Group Intranet and Logo

Mikander briefly introduced the agenda item. The logo was designed by Mr. Uwe Vaartjes from the Museum König in Bonn, who in previous years has been responsible for the AEWA World Migratory Bird Day design. The colors were chosen in part to reflect the northern breeding areas of the species as well as taking into consideration that they should fit in with the AEWA logo as the two logos will often be used side by side. The yellow eye-ring is meant to serve as the main element of species recognition.

During the course of the meeting many countries commented on the need for some sort of communication platform for the group. Unfortunately the planned working group intranet and associated website were not completed in time for the meeting. Mikander, however, described that a website for the working group is being developed which will include pages with general information open to the public as well as a password protected intranet area (workspace) for internal communication between working group members in the inter-sessional periods. This form of intranet is being used by the AEWA Technical Committee and has proven to be quite useful. The website and intranet should be functional by the end of January 2011. Mikander also explained that the pictures taken of all participants in the margins of the meeting will be uploaded on the intranet together with each participant's contact details.

Discussion:

Bulgaria suggested that "AEWA" should be featured more prominently on the logo. **Norway** suggested that the beak should be in red or pink to make it stand out more. **Ukraine** commented that a black and white version is also needed. Mikander answered that a black and white version has indeed been provided by the designer.

Decision: *The Working Group logo was approved. The Secretariat will contact the designer and discuss the suggestions made by the range states to see if they would be feasible.*

Working Group Recommendations

During the prioritization discussion several range states commented that it would be useful to have recommendations from the meeting which could be used for awareness raising and receiving government support for implementation. Subsequently recommendations were drafted in the

margins of the meeting by a small drafting group comprised of representatives from Iran, Ukraine, BirdLife International and WWT and were then discussed in the plenary.

Discussion:

Sweden suggested adding “the establishment of the Committee for Captive-breeding, Reintroduction and Supplementation of LWfG in Fennoscandia” to paragraph four.

Kazakhstan requested that the wording concerning accession to AEWA be changed to a more neutral text. Several other range states disagreed and as compromise the text was changed to “The meeting of the International Working Group *further encourages* non-contracting range states to consider ratifying the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds Agreement”.

Decision: *The first recommendations of the Working Group were adopted (Recommendation 1.1) as discussed by the range states.*

Next Meeting

Mikander presented the options for the next Working Group meeting, which – as previously agreed – should be held in two years’ time (late 2012). Funding for the next meeting have been included in the LIFE+ project application submitted to the European Commission in September 2010. If the proposal is accepted the meeting could be held in Greece at Kerkini National Park in November/December 2012. Should the project application not be successful another location outside the EU such as Syria could be considered, dependent on funding. Participants agreed that the chosen location and timing of the meeting should allow for a field visit to become more acquainted with the LWfG conservation issues on the ground in the particular location.

Discussion:

Sweden commented that the Single Species Action Plan is to be revised five years after its adoption, which means that a revision should take place in 2013. The Working Group meeting should therefore be held in September 2012 at the latest in order to be able to feed into the revision process.

Dereliev replied that the two processes are different and that it has to be considered how to link the work of the Working Group and the Action Plan revision process.

Decision: *The final dates for the meeting as well as the venue will be determined following the outcome of the LIFE+ project proposal. This will be discussed with the Working Group via the internal workspace.*

Any Other Business

Sweden wished to add that the recommendation of the CMS Scientific Council concerning the Swedish free-flying flock should be re-examined by the RECAP Committee, as the Council had concluded that the findings of the recommendation be re-examined after five years. Dereliev responded that the Scientific Council is meant to do the reviewing and that the next meeting of the CMS Scientific Council is in November 2011. The issue can of course be discussed in the RECAP Committee and the Secretariat will put it on the agenda for the next meeting.

Summary and Conclusion

Dereliev thanked participants for coming to Helsinki and actively participating in the meeting. He also asked range states to present the Secretariat with suggestions for improvements etc. as the whole species working group format is new and in an experimental stage.