



Secretariat provided by
the United Nations Environment Programme
(UNEP)

Agenda item: **10.b.**
Doc: **AEWA/MOP 3.7**
Date: **30 September 2005**
Original: **English**

**3rd SESSION OF THE MEETING OF THE PARTIES TO THE AGREEMENT ON THE
CONSERVATION OF AFRICAN-EURASIAN MIGRATORY WATERBIRDS (AEWA)**
23 – 27 October 2005, Dakar, Senegal

REPORT OF THE CHAIR OF THE AEWA TECHNICAL COMMITTEE TO THE 3RD
SESSION OF THE MEETING OF THE PARTIES

Introduction

In accordance with Article VII paragraph 3 (C) of the Agreement the Technical Committee (TC) is submitting to the third Meeting of Parties (MoP3) this report describing the activities undertaken by the TC to implement its work plan for 2003-2005 and the results achieved.

In the period 2003-2005, the second triennium since the Agreement came into force, the Technical Committee held three meetings, TC4, TC5 and TC6 - in different locations and at the generous invitation of several governments. The fourth TC meeting, chaired by Dan Munteanu, was held on 12 and 13 May 2003 in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. The fifth and sixth meetings, chaired by Yousoof Mungroo, were held from 30 March to 2 April 2004 in North Berwick, Scotland and from 8 to 11 May 2005 in Flic en Flac, Mauritius respectively. We would like to express our sincere gratitude and thanks to the host governments for their generous invitations and the excellent logistics and conditions provided and contributed much to the success of these meetings.

At the 4th TC meeting in Tashkent all major tasks were discussed, work was planned and working groups were established to look more closely at the issues intersessionally. At TC5 and TC6 draft documents prepared by the working groups were discussed in depth, and at the last meeting (TC6) were signed off for submission through the Standing Committee to MOP3.

Record of completed tasks:

1. **Revised *modus operandi* for the Technical Committee.**

A working group consisting of Olivier Biber, Rachelle Adams and the Secretariat drafted a paper examining how to improve the effectiveness of the TC and considering the turnover of TC members. As a result the TC delivered a proposal for a modified *modus operandi* for the TC, presented in Draft Resolution 3.13.

2. **Criteria for the acceptance of funding proposals by the AEWa Secretariat.**
The TC established a working group to develop and suggest criteria for acceptance and funding of project proposals occasionally submitted to the Secretariat. The working group, consisting of David Stroud, Preben Clausen, Ward Hagemeyer and the Secretariat, developed a proposal for guidance on the issue, which was signed off by the full TC in May 2005. The guidance is available in AEWa/MOP 3.27.
3. **Improvement of the format for national reporting.**
A working group consisting of Olivier Biber, Preben Clausen, John O’Sullivan and the Secretariat examined possible options for improvement of the format. An option for an online reporting system based on the existing one for the MoU on the Conservation and Management of Marine Turtles and their Habitats in the Indian Ocean and South-east Asia was first presented by WCMS to the Secretariat and later to the TC at its 6th meeting in 2005. The TC decided to suggest to the MOP that a similar online reporting system for AEWa should be developed in the next triennium in coordination with CMS. For this purpose draft Resolution 3.5 was drafted.
4. **Reviews of four populations of the Pintail, the Mallard and the Common Eider.**
Reviews of the populations of the three species were drafted by Preben Clausen and Ward Hagemeyer, and are attached as MOP3 document AEWa/MOP 3.31.
5. **Extending the taxonomic scope of the Agreement.**
This issue, raised by MOP2, was looked at more closely by a working group consisting of David Stroud, Ward Hagemeyer, Preben Clausen, John O’Sullivan and the Secretariat. A proposal developed by the working group was signed off by the full TC and is presented as document AEWa/MOP 3.16.
6. **Guidance on the definition of the term “long-term decline”.**
Following the instruction of MOP2 to develop such guidance, the TC established a working group consisting of David Stroud, Preben Clausen, Ward Hagemeyer, Dan Munteanu and Valentin Serebryakov. A draft paper developed by David Stroud was agreed by the working group and later approved by the full TC. It is attached as document AEWa/MOP 3.11.
7. **Guidance on the definition of the biogeographical populations of birds.**
Again MOP2 called upon the TC to develop guidance on this issue. A draft was prepared by David Stroud and agreed by the working group consisting also of Ward Hagemeyer, Preben Clausen, Dan Munteanu, Valentin Serebryakov, Elena Kreuzberg and Guy-Noel Olivier. The paper was approved by the full TC and is presented in document AEWa/MOP 3.12.

8. **Enhancing the analytical content of the Report on Status and Trends of Populations.**
MOP2 suggested that the format of the Report on Status and Trends should be made more succinct and contain more analysed information. A small working group consisting of David Stroud, Ward Hagemeijer and Christoph Zoeckler drafted a proposal for a modified format that was approved by the full TC. The Report on the status and trends was commissioned to Wetlands International to be prepared in the newly approved format with enhanced analytical content. The Report is available as MOP3 document AEWA/Inf. 3.1.
9. **Global register of migratory species (GROMS).**
The Technical Committee had already established a working group on GROMS in the previous triennium. At the fourth meeting the working group reported on its findings regarding GROMS and its capacity to fulfil the information needs of the Agreement and the Contracting Parties. The TC formulated an opinion of the full Committee, which was reiterated in the following meetings. GROMS was not considered to be the appropriate means for fulfilling the information needs of AEWA. This opinion was taken up during the evaluation process of GROMS initiated by CMS and fed into the final report.
10. **Recruitment of National TC Focal Points.**
The TC instructed the Secretariat to act on its behalf in identifying National TC Focal Points pursuant to Resolution 2.5. So far approximately 28% of the Contracting Parties (14 out of 51) have appointed National Focal Points for TC matters.

Record of pending tasks:

1. **Signing off guidance on avoidance of introduction of alien species.**
The TC was unable to approve this document as it has to be finalised by the Secretariat. It is expected to be completed in 2006.
2. **Signing off guidance on national legislation on protection of waterbirds and their habitats.**
Although it had already been prepared and submitted to the Secretariat by the IUCN Law Centre and tabled at MOP2; the general feeling was that the document should be rewritten in a more user-friendly language. The Secretariat is working on this and hopes that this can be finalised before end of 2005.
3. **Considering Pintail populations in the light of definition of biogeographical populations.**
This task was planned to be performed after receiving results from the project entitled *Pilot study/review of potential from waterbird ringing recovery analyses for the Agreement area* (PARDAEW), which was contracted out to the Avian Demography Unit of the University of Cape Town, South Africa. However, the PARDAEW project was unable to deliver results in time due to unforeseen

circumstances, and thus the related task of the TC could not be fulfilled. The TC drafted resolution 3.11 in which Wetlands International, *inter alia*, is requested to continue to assess the limits of biogeographical populations of migratory waterbirds and to prioritise which waterbird taxa would benefit from an early review of the limits of their populations in the light of recent data and information, and to bring this assessment to MoP4. Therefore Pintail populations will be considered in the next triennium under the activities of Wetlands International.

4. **Signing off review of good practise policies on phasing out use of lead shot from wetlands.**

The review in question was not produced and the Secretariat will prepare it in collaboration with CIC in the next triennium.

Other TC activities:

1. A representative of the TC (Preben Clausen) was invited to take part in the working group on evaluation of the Global Register of Migratory Species (GROMS). Although Mr. Clausen had to cancel the teleconference in the day of the meeting of the working group, he provided a written report and statement in advance.
2. The TC Rules of Procedures were reviewed at each meeting and corrections and amendments suggested, which were later approved by the Standing Committee.
3. The TC reviewed and approved for submission to the MOP3 drafts of Single Species Action Plans for five waterbirds (Northern Bald Ibis, Light-bellied Brent Goose East Canadian High Arctic population, Ferruginous Duck, White-headed Duck, and Corncrake).
4. The TC reviewed the drafts of the AEWA Communication Strategy and signed off the final version.
5. At each meeting the TC reviewed the progress made in implementation of the AEWA International Implementation Priorities (IIP) 2003-2007 and gave directives to the Secretariat as to how to enhance the performance of implementation.
6. At each meeting and intersessionally the TC regularly reviewed project proposals submitted, and provided advice to the Secretariat on funding of these.
7. The TC reviewed and signed off quotations for several IIP projects.
8. The TC reviewed and updated the Register of International Projects. However, the TC felt that the Register cannot match the pace of project development in the Agreement area and therefore does not play the role it was intended to play.

Moreover, once in operation, the proposed online reporting format will entirely replace the function of the Register. Therefore it was suggested this should be closed down (Resolution 3.1).

9. At each meeting the TC discussed and expressed and reiterated its opinion concerning the development, under the aegis of CMS, of the Action Plan for the Conservation of Migratory Waterbirds and their Habitats in the Central Asian Flyway, as well as the institutional framework for its implementation.
10. The TC discussed the avian influenza outbreaks and the role of AEWA in this case. It was decided that for the time being AEWA has no role to play as most of the problems do not occur in wild birds. However as the disease moved in the summer of 2005 to Kazakhstan, the AEWA Secretariat initiated a telephone conference with representatives of the CMS Secretariat, CMS Scientific Council, Wetlands International, Birdlife International, CIC and the Agreement Secretariat to discuss whether CMS and AEWA should play a pro-active role. The outcome of this telephone conference was the establishment of a Task Force Avian Flu under the auspices of CMS and AEWA, which will take a pro-active role in the discussion on the disease. It became clear that there are many uncertainties regarding migratory birds being a vector for spreading the disease, on the incubation period of the virus H5n1, its impact on wild birds, etc. It is also clear that much more research is needed, and in due course CMS and AEWA Secretariat will draft a research proposal and submit this to the European Union.
11. At its 6th meeting the TC reviewed and signed off the proposal for IIP 2006-2008, which is being presented to MOP3 as document AEWA/MOP 3.18.
12. The TC at its 6th meeting reviewed the progress report of the Secretariat on the implementation of the previously adopted Single Species Action Plan. In order to enhance its implementation the TC included some specific paragraphs in Resolution 3.12 urging the Secretariat to establish a mechanism for international coordination of the action plans.

Vote of Thanks

Finally we would also like to express our thanks to the members of the Technical Committee, and especially of the various intersessional working groups for their dedication and hard work, as well as to the Secretariat for their timely finalisation of discussion documents.