

REPORT OF THE 13th MEETING OF THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE¹

14 - 17 March 2016, Israel

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¹ Report finalised after a process of consultation with the Technical Committee and other participants of TC13.

Agenda item 1. Opening

1. On behalf of the Israel Nature and Parks Authority (INPA), Wildlife Ecologist and Coordinator for International Treaties, Mr Simon Nemtzov welcomed the participants to Israel, explaining that Israel had already been a Party to AEWA for 15 years and was therefore proud to host a meeting of the AEWA Technical Committee, the body which laid the groundwork for the protection of migratory waterbirds.

2. Ms Livia Link from the Department of International Organisations, Specialised Agencies and Global Issues of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs went on to address the Meeting, stressing how happy she was that Israel was able to host such an important gathering of scientists and experts from many countries. She went on to report that Israel was becoming increasingly engaged in all issues crucial to future generations and was eager to share its experience and expertise with others, including through the United Nations and its many frameworks. She wished all those present fruitful and successful discussions and a wonderful stay in Israel.

3. On behalf of the Ministry of Environmental Protection, Department of International Affairs, the Coordinator of International Treaties, Ms Ayelet Rosen welcomed the Meeting participants, stressing the importance of international solutions and of the technical meetings, which represented the core of the work of agreements, formulating and developing conservation actions. Israel was the pathway for millions of migratory waterbirds, despite the fact that the Middle East was a difficult place for humans, even the most vulnerable species could fly across borders with a safe passage – she hoped that this would also become possible for humans in the future.

4. Mr Yehoshua Shkedy, INPA Chief Scientist reported that INPA covers a wide range of issues in Israel. He had been involved with AEWA for many years and very much identified with AEWA's vision, i.e. that *all countries along the African-Eurasian Flyways share viable waterbird populations, and people throughout the region understand, respect and sustain the phenomenon of their migration*, which he was sure could be realised in Israel by focussing on migratory waterbirds, habitats and protected areas. He wished those present a very fruitful meeting.

5. Mr Dan Alon, Director of the Israel Ornithological Center hoped that the participants enjoyed the Meeting. He was sure that the planned excursion to the Hula Valley would offer an opportunity to see many species crossing Israel.

6. Mr Jacques Trouvilliez, Executive Secretary of the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat thanked all the Israeli institutions involved in the preparation of the meeting and their representatives for the very warm welcome to Israel. He particularly thanked Mr Simon Nemtzov for his untiring efforts and dedication, as well as the other INPA staff members involved and all the many others behind the scene. He went on to report that AEWA was a small, but flexible and innovative Agreement, unique among the UN Treaties and proving that international cooperation can function. He welcomed the opportunity of holding the Meeting in Israel, which was a crucial passway for mankind and animals. He went on to welcome the members of the Technical Committee – old and new, which was the core body of the Agreement and highly appreciated by all the AEWA Parties.

7. In his capacity as retiring Chair of the Technical Committee, Mr David Stroud also thanked the hosts for their opening remarks and welcomed all those present, particularly the new TC members. He also stressed the important function of the Technical Committee as the 'technical engine' of AEWA, with the mandate to provide the Parties with guidance and assessments. The Meeting was the first in the triennium and the main agenda item was to plan the work of the Committee for the triennium up to MOP7 in 2018.

Agenda item 2. Welcome Addresses

8. There were no further welcoming addresses.

Agenda item 3. Modus Operandi of the Technical Committee

9. Mr Stroud introduced the TC Modus Operandi (document TC13.2) as the guidance document for the work of the Technical Committee, explaining that no changes had been made since TC12.

Agenda item 4. Adoption of the Agenda and Work Programme

10. Mr Stroud introduced the Provisional Agenda (document TC 13.3) and Work Programme (document TC 13.4), explaining that due to the necessity of regular liaison of the Committee with other bodies, it was suggested to add an agenda item (9 bis) to cover the issue.

Decision: The Meeting adopted the Agenda and Work Programme with the addition of agenda item 9 bis.

Agenda item 5. Admission of Observers

11. Introducing this agenda item, the AEWA Technical Officer, Mr Sergey Dereliev informed those present that four of the AEWA NGO partner organisations were permanent observers to the Technical Committee, all of which played a critical role by contributing additional expertise towards the delivery of the work of the Committee: the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust (WWT), BirdLife International, the Federation of Associations for Hunting and Conservation of the EU (FACE) and Migratory Birds of the Western Palearctic (OMPO). Other observers included representatives of the Contracting Parties Uganda (also Chair of the AEWA Standing Committee) and South Africa, as well as Mr Olivier Biber, Chair of the CMS African-Eurasian Migratory Landbirds Working Group.

Decision: The Meeting agreed to admit the observers present (see Annex IV– list of participants) and welcomed them to the Meeting.

Agenda item 6. Election of Officers

12. The Meeting elected the regional representative for Eastern Europe, Mr Saulius Švažas as the new Chair of the Technical Committee and the regional representative for North and South-western Europe, Ms Ruth Cromie, as vice-Chair.

Agenda item 7. Reports by the Regional Representatives

13. The attending regional representatives delivered progress reports to the meeting from their respective regions. The reports by the regional representatives on the implementation of AEWA in their respective regions are available in Annex I. These include reports from the Central Europe, Eastern Europe, North and South-western Europe, Northern Africa, Southern Africa and Eastern Africa regions.

Agenda item 8. Report by the Secretariat

14. Mr Trouvilliez introduced the Report of the Secretariat (document TC 13.5), which explained the structure of the four units within the Secretariat:

- Executive Management Unit;
- Science, Implementation and Compliance Unit;
- African Initiative Unit; and
- Communication Unit.

15. He was particularly pleased that since TC12, the recruitment of Ms Evelyn Moloko as Coordinator of the AEWA African Initiative had been completed and that MOP6 had also approved a 50% Programme Assistant position to support the African Initiative.

16. He reported that the daily work of the Secretariat had been heavily impacted by the introduction of a new all-encompassing Enterprise Resource Programme (Umoja), requested by the UN Parties. The new system in combination with stricter regulations had led to less flexibility and more time-consuming work processes. The Secretariat had been doing its utmost not to reduce efficiency and hoped that the initial challenges related to the new system will lessen with time.

Agenda item 9. TC Work Plan 2016-2018

17. Introducing this agenda item, Mr Dereliev explained that the TC would proceed by reviewing its Work Plan 2016-2018, as approved by MOP6 and will make further detailed planning and prioritisation of the tasks (document TC 13.6), carrying out preparatory work at the meeting, wherever possible.

18. He went on to explain that the TC had 18 months to deliver the major outcomes (in time for TC14, which was tentatively planned for March 2018, StC12, tentatively planned for July 2018 and MOP7, tentatively planned for November 2018). A template had been prepared for task planning, whereby the output, participating WG members, funding requirements and deadlines would be specified. The resulting list of tasks will be posted on the TC Workspace. The Working Groups 1-8 were established as follows:

- 9.1. Working Group 1 – Field of Application
- 9.2. Working Group 2 – Species Conservation
- 9.3. Working Group 3 – Habitat Conservation
- 9.4. Working Group 4 – Management of Human Activities
- 9.5. Working Group 5 – Research and Monitoring
- 9.6. Working Group 6 – Education and Information
- 9.7. Working Group 7 – Implementation
- 9.8. Working Group 8 – Strategic, reporting, emerging and other issues

The following decisions were made in plenary under agenda item 9, after which the Working Groups retreated in break-out sessions to cover the rest of the business.

19. Mr Dereliev introduced TC13.7 Delineation of Biographic Populations of the Lesser White-fronted Goose (*Anser erythropus*), explaining that the revision process for the LWfG International Single Species Action Plan (ISSAP) was launched in preparation for MOP6, however this process has shown that clarification is required with regard to the definition of populations.

20. In this context, Ms Ruth Cromie, in her capacity as regional representative for North and South-Western Europe read out a letter from the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency and the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Protection, Building and Nuclear Safety, Germany, which was also posted on the TC Workspace.

21. Mr Dereliev corrected two of the facts pointed out in this statement:

- a) Related to the geographic definition of the regions valid for the LWfG in the Agreement text '*Following a proposal from the AEWA Secretariat, a new wording was adopted at MOP5*', which was not correct, as the proposal resulted from the work of the Technical Committee in the triennium preceding MOP5 and the proposal itself was officially made by the Government of Kenya.
- b) Referred to the IUCN clarifying that the population was wild and reinforced. In fact, this was an opinion voiced by Dr Seddon, Chair of the IUCN Introduction Specialist Group, in individual capacity and not by IUCN as a whole.

22. A smaller group met to discuss the issues of guidance and principles of definition of species populations under AEWA in general and for the Lesser White-fronted Goose in particular and drafted the following documents, which were presented to the Meeting: *The Definition of Species Populations under AEWA* (Annex II) and *AEWA Technical Committee Recommendation Regarding the Delineation of Biographic Populations of Lesser White-fronted Geese (Anser erythropus) under AEWA* (Annex III).

Decision: Both above-mentioned documents were approved by the Meeting:

23. Mr Dereliev introduced the Delineation of Biogeographic Populations of the Sociable Lapwing (Doc TC13.8), explaining that based on recent telemetry results, migration was more complex than previously assumed. Observations suggested that the species was panmictic, thus the species could qualify as being a single population under AEWA.

24. Mr Stroud introduced document TC13.9 on migratory waterbird populations relating to three north Atlantic seabird species. In the case of the Black-tailed Kittiwake and the Common Murre, sufficient evidence existed that their respective populations listed on Table 1 were in fact separate. In the case of the Atlantic Puffin, recent

genetic studies and morphological evidence existed, challenging the existence of the *grabae* sub-species. These conclusions were supported by a substantial amount of references.

Decision:

Documents TC 13.8 Delineation of Biogeographic Populations of the Sociable Lapwing (*Vanellus gregarius*) and TC 13.9 *Delineation of Biogeographic Populations of the Black-legged Kittiwake* (*Rissa tridactyla tridactyla*), *the Common Murre* (*Uria aalge* and *U. a. albionis*) and *the Atlantic Puffin* (*Fratercula arctica*) were approved by the Meeting.

25. Relating to the TC task 4.2 Extractive industries – cumulative impact assessment, Mr Stroud introduced document TC13.11 on identifying evidence needs to inform assessment of cumulative impacts from offshore renewable energy developments, which outlined the difficulties involved in undertaking cumulative impact assessments of offshore wind farms on seabird populations because of a lack of understanding of how these populations were affected by wind farms. The situation could be improved by addressing the issue through existing research projects and the development of a clear statement of priorities for data collection by AEWA. The identification of key evidence needs for these seabird populations would be an essential first step for the TC to deliver on this task.

26. Representing BirdLife International, Ms Nicola Crockford suggested that this issue could be taken up by the CMS Energy Task Force, the scope of which had not yet been defined.

27. The Meeting considered it of utmost importance that the CMS Energy Task Force, which was being funded by the German Government, should become operational as soon as possible so that implementation could commence.

Action: Mr Stroud agreed to lead on developing document TC13.11 further in the coming months and start a forum on the TC Workspace. Representing Israel, Mr Ohad Hatzofe offered to contribute to this task.

28. Mr Dereliev went on to present an overview of the TC task-funding requirements for those tasks on the TC Work Plan considered as being essential.

Decision: Following a short discussion on the prioritisations for fundraising, it was decided that the decision as to which tasks would receive funding would ultimately be left to the donors, who had their own priorities.

After the break-out sessions, the Working Groups reported the outcomes of their discussions on the tasks to be included in the TC Work Plan 2016-2018. A clean version of the resulting Work Plan 2016-2018 would be provided by the Secretariat on the TC Workspace. The Working Groups were encouraged to participate actively in the accomplishment of the tasks, the deadlines for some of which were coming up soon.

Agenda item 9 bis. Institutional and Other Issues

29. The Chair introduced the following issues:

Appointment of a liaison officer between AEWA Technical Committee and the Ramsar Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP)

Decision: Mr David Stroud agreed to take on this role.

Waterbird Monitoring Partnership input into the work of the TC

30. Mr Dereliev reported that the Waterbird Monitoring Partnership (WMP), of which the Secretariat was a member, had been established upon a request by the MOP to ensure sustainable funding for the IWC and waterbird monitoring in the broader sense. It was an interactive and productive body, which was already invited to provide costed proposals for the delivery of some TC tasks. It would be useful to inform the TC by posting the minutes of the WMP, as well as any other relevant material on the TCWS.

Decision: The Secretariat would request the WMP to provide meeting minutes and other relevant material for the information of the TC.

The TC, through the Secretariat, would also commit to informing the WMP on relevant tasks and issues.

Register of Interests

31. The Chair requested the TC members, NGO observers and other appointed and invited experts to fill out the relevant form relating to the register of interests which the TC had been requested to create and maintain through [Resolution 6.17](#).

Agenda item 10. Date and Venue of the next Technical Committee Meeting

32. The Chair reported that the 14th Meeting of the Technical Committee was scheduled to take place between February and April 2018 and would probably be located at the UN Campus, the headquarters of the Secretariat in Bonn, Germany.

Agenda item 11. Any Other Business

33. No further issues were raised.

Agenda item 12. Closure

34. The Chair thanked all those present for attending the Meeting and for their active participation and excellent contribution to the success of the Meeting. He also thanked the host for all the efforts made to ensure the smooth running of the Meeting, as well as the technicians and security staff for their diligence.

35. Mr Trouvilliez thanked Mr Švažas for chairing the Meeting so efficiently and the TC members and observers for their hard work during the three intensive meeting days. He went on to thank Mr Nemtsov and his colleagues, as well as the hotel staff, for the excellent arrangements made to cover all aspects of the Meeting and for giving those present a glimpse of the country and the multi-faceted work of the Nature and Parks Authority. The good spirit, commitment and hard work of all those involved had led to excellent results and he hoped the momentum established in Israel would provide the motivation to continue the good work until the next Technical Committee Meeting.

ANNEX I - Reports by the TC Regional Representatives on the Implementation of AEWA in their Respective Regions

North and South-western Europe – Ms Ruth Cromie

Ms Cromie reported that the region consisted of 16 Parties and the European Union and 4 non-Party Range States. The economic crisis in the region had resulted in major implications for government expenditure on conservation.

Activities to Implement ISSAPs in the Region

- The **European Union** was co-financing the LIFE project ‘[Coordinated Efforts to International Species Recovery](#)’ ([EuroSAP](#)), through which a multi-species action plan for eight grassland breeding wader species would be drafted.
- **France** had reported that the national action plan for the Black-tailed Godwit was being implemented and the national action plan for the Madagascar Pond Heron was being developed for Mayotte. France was hosting the kick-off meeting for the establishment of a European Goose Management Platform (EuroGMP) under the auspices of AEWA (see Resolution 6.4).
- **Norway** was hosting the 3rd Meeting of the Lesser White-fronted Goose International Working Group, in April 2016, which would focus on the revision of the LWfG ISSAP. Norway was also a major player (and funder) to the International Species Management Plan of the Svalbard Pink-footed Goose.
- **Sweden** was preparing the implementation of the Taiga Bean Goose ISSAP (within the Goose Management Platform framework). Sweden’s involvement with the international and national LWfG SSAPs was ongoing. Work on the Long-tailed Duck and Eurasian Curlew was due to begin during 2016. Sweden was also planning to begin work on the species involved in the EuroGMP.
- **UK** had initiated work on the Eurasian Curlew. An emergency range state meeting was being planned due to the continuing decline of the Greenland White-fronted Goose. [The 4th Birds of Conservation Concern Assessment \(BOCC4\)](#) had been published.

Action on Invasive Alien Species

- **EU** – A list of invasive species of Union concern will be drawn up and managed with Member States using risk assessments and scientific evidence. The risk assessments are available [here](#).
- **France** – Control of Sacred Ibis and Ruddy Duck was ongoing – with improved monitoring.
- **Norway** – North American mink island control continued.

New or Major Habitat Activities

- **France** – National Action Plan for Wetlands (2014-18) was in place.
- **Norway** – The Norwegian BirdLife Partner, the Norwegian Ornithological Society had recently published a report on Important Bird Areas (IBAs). An [Emerald Network](#) announcement was expected in late 2016, leading to a review of the protected areas network. With regard to Aichi target work, 50% of mires and reedbeds are aimed to be restored by 2020.
- **UK** – The third UK Special Protection Areas (SPA) network review had been undertaken and 15 SPAs were currently undergoing classification including marine SPAs.

Progress on Lead Shot

- **EU** – Significant progress had been made; the Commission had requested the [European Chemical Agency \(ECHA\)](#) to produce a dossier for the restriction of proposals for lead (restrictions proposals for wetlands first followed by other uses).
- **UK** – The [Lead Ammunition Group](#) reported to the Government in 2015 was awaiting a decision before publishing the report.

Major Research / Monitoring Activities

- **France** – had started a Common Pochard PhD (ONCFS)
- **Norway** –reported on the SEAPOP programme, which was a long-term monitoring and mapping programme for Norwegian seabirds established in 2005, focussing on accessible information for politicians and public.
- **Sweden** – a number of health studies were being undertaken, e.g. thiamine deficiency in Eiders and geese as disease vectors.

Problematic Cases

- **Norway** – A planned dual carriageway across the Åkersvika Ramsar site was causing concern.

Conservation Guideline Usage

- **France** reported that the revised sustainable hunting guidelines (approved by MOP6) will be used in the case of the Eurasian Curlew ISSAP.

Northern Africa – Mr Sidi Imad Cherkaoui

Egypt

In Egypt the main focus during the last two years had been on strengthening the national capacity for conduction IWC, in support of ONCFS, Mediterranean Waterbirds project for North Africa in addition to some other initiatives from national NGOs as Nature Conservation Egypt (NCE).

Relating to this the achievements were as follows:

- Increase in the number of wetlands surveyed for IWC in 2012 to include Burullus and Manzalla Lakes (Northern Lake), Fayoum Lakes, Red Sea Islands, Southern part of the Nile River.
- Arabic waterbirds identification guides and CDs for rangers of protected areas. Distributed.
- IWC database of Wetland International updated by reformatting waterbird counts data of different sources.
- All wetlands in the country (Egypt is the first country has done it) digitised.
- IWC data collection form as the standard data sheet for waterbirds monitoring within protected areas endorsed.
- IWC was considered as priority biodiversity monitoring activity in the strategic plan of Nature Conservation sector for 2105-2020.
- IWC in Lake Nasser and Nile River in 2015 has been conducted with support of ONCFS, through signing cooperation MoU with EEAA for finalising this activity.

Research and monitoring projects:

Successful completion of AEWA small grant fund project titled: *Assessment of breeding waterbird population in 10 Red Sea Islands, Egypt*. It has been implemented by Nature Conservation Sector, EEAA in support of Nature Conservation Egypt (NCE- NGO, Birdlife affiliate).

Libya

New or major ongoing activities on habitat (site) inventory, conservation or restoration and rehabilitation of waterbird habitats.

There were two projects still ongoing for monitoring of waterbirds carried out by the Libyan society for birds focusing on the monitoring of waterbirds during one year to discover the important sites for wintering and breeding. Training had also been carried out in the framework of these projects. A concept note would be delivered to the responsible body for the management of the sites.

New or major ongoing education and information activities on waterbirds, waterbird habitats and the Agreement

A programme of training for university students and scouts for bird identification had been carried out using theoretical and practical sessions. An awareness-raising programme had been carried out (presentations about the importance of waterbirds and their habitats, management of wetlands). Other awareness-raising activities were still ongoing (posters and leaflets).

Morocco

Activities to implement the Single Species Action Plans relevant to the region

- In **Morocco** legal protection for particularly globally threatened and Near Threatened species, such as Northern Bald Ibis (*Geronticus eremita*), Marbled Duck (*Marmaronetta angustirostris*), Osprey (*Pandion haelaetus*) Audouin's Gull (*Larus audouinii*), White-headed Duck (*Oxyura leucocephala*), Ferruginous Duck (*Aythya nyroca*), Black-tailed Godwit (*Limosa limosa*) and Eurasian Spoonbill (*Platalea leucorodia*) and other waterbird species is provided through the annual hunting decree. The legal protection of most of the key sites for Osprey, White-headed Duck, Ferruginous Duck, Eurasian Spoonbill and Black-tailed Godwit was maintained during the reporting period, but weak law enforcement was compromising conservation efforts.
- Specific attention was paid to these species during International Waterbird Census and breeding surveys in Moroccan wetlands resulting in the regular update of the population data available.

Emergency situations

Dead shorebirds continued to be collected along Moroccan coasts especially pelagic and marine birds: shearwaters, Gannets and razorbills. Several dead waterbirds were found in the Smir Lagoon a non-designated wetland (N35°71'63'', 5°34'00''W) for instance, most probably due to the use of insecticides

New or major ongoing activities on habitat (site) inventory, conservation or restoration and rehabilitation of waterbird habitats

- Several on-going conservation projects (some of them funded by the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund - CEPF, MAVA foundation, Conservatoire du Littoral, PPI-OSCAN IUNC, and Junta de Andalucia) carried out in partnership between international and national NGOs and the biodiversity conservation authorities, allowed updating of relevant data on wetlands and key sites (IBAs and Ramsar sites) like Essaouira Mogador, Mar Chica Lagoon, Aguelmam Afmourir Lake, Knifiss National Park, Smir Lagoon, etc.
- GOMAC and GREPOM were strongly lobbying against embankment of two non-designated wetlands which are extremely important for migratory and breeding waterbirds (Fouarat and Dar Bouaza Marshes respectively in Kenitra and Casablanca cities). Mayors of both cities have ordered the clean-up of the two wetlands at first phase from solid waste such plastics and rubbles. Both events were great examples of how effective CSO-authorities' partnerships can contribute to site restoration.
- The programme "Sentinelles des Zones humides au Maghreb" managed by the WWF and carried out by 18 local and National NGOs in Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia continued to provide training to the national partners in order to build more capacity for wetland conservation by grassroots organisations in these countries. The aim being to provide a set of working methods and tools for integrated wetland management, fields like priority setting, local community involvement, communication, etc. were already covered.

New or major ongoing research and monitoring activities on waterbirds and waterbird habitats

- Intensive monitoring of waterbird populations (wintering and breeding) continues at selected key sites n=28 (RAMSAR and IBA).
- Evaluation of sex ratio of Common Pochard.

Relevant Research

- Factors Influencing species-Richness of Breeding Waterbirds in Moroccan IBA and Ramsar Wetlands: A macroecological Approach.
- Importance of the Moroccan Atlantic coastal zones for the wintering of pelagic seabirds.
- Breeding Anatidae in Morocco: Status assessment and conservation.
- Waterbirds increase more rapidly in Ramsar-designated wetlands than in unprotected wetlands.
- Factors influencing the use of Moroccan wetlands by wintering Eurasian Spoonbills: An assessment of the site-occupancy and abundance.
- Preliminary assessment of the scope and scale of illegal and taking of birds in the Mediterranean in bird conservation international.

New or major ongoing education and information activities on waterbirds, waterbird habitats and the Agreement:

- Several partners in Morocco continued to organise awareness-raising events on the occasion of World Migratory Bird Day, World Wetlands Day and World animal Day.
- At the National Centre for Environmental Education SBG, 75% of the modules chosen by schools and visitors is Migration.
- An EE Moroccan Committee has been created since 2014 and involve wildlife authorities and 7 NGOs

Problematic cases threatening waterbirds or their habitats:

- A potential threat to migratory waterbirds is emerging in Morocco with plans to enhance the use of alternative energies such as wind and solar power. Power lines pose serious problems for resident and migratory raptors such as Spanish Imperial Eagle, Golden and Bonelli's eagles. Black points were being identified and several communications notes were produced.
- Several wetlands continued to face serious threats due to urbanisation, tourism transport, overgrazing, climate change and illegal hunting and fishing which were also directly affecting bird populations.
- Urbanisation and tourism in all forms remained a major threat to waterbirds or their habitats in Morocco

Tunisia

Activities to implement the Single Species Action Plans relevant to the region

- In Tunisia legal protection for particularly Globally Threatened and Near Threatened species, such as Marbled Duck (*Marmaronetta angustirostris*), Audouin's Gull (*Larus audouinii*), White-headed Duck (*Oxyura leucocephala*), Ferruginous Duck (*Aythya nyroca*), Black-tailed Godwit (*Limosa limosa*) and Eurasian Spoonbill (*Platalea leucorodia*) and other waterbird species is provided through the annual hunting decree. The legal protection of most of the key sites for White-headed Duck, Ferruginous Duck, Eurasian Spoonbill and Black-tailed Godwit was maintained during the reporting period, but weak law enforcement is compromising conservation efforts.
- Specific attention is paid to these species during the International Waterbird Census and breeding surveys in Tunisian wetlands resulting in the regular update of the population data available.

New or major ongoing activities on habitat (site) inventory, conservation or restoration and rehabilitation of waterbird habitats:

- Several on-going conservation projects (some of them funded by the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund - CEPF) carried out in partnership between international and national NGOs and the biodiversity conservation authorities, allowed updating of relevant data on wetlands and key sites (IBAs and Ramsar sites) like Lake Tunis, Sebkhet Soliman, Maâmoura Lagoon, Korba Lagoon, Sebkhet Soliman, Lake Ichkeul, etc.
- An important action to remove waste deposited illegally in Sebkhet Soliman IBA and Ramsar site was initiated and coordinated by two NGOs (RET & AEDS) in the framework of the AAO-CEPF Ecotourism project in January 2016. A similar action organised by AAO took place at Lake Tunis. Both events were great examples of how effective NGO-authorities partnerships and citizen involvement can contribute to site restoration.
- Two fam-trips were organised by Réseau Enfants de la Terre (RET) and the partners of the AAO-CEPF Ecotourism project bringing tourism professionals, journalists and representatives of hiker organisations

and state institutions to wetlands in Tunis and on the Cape Bon. During these tours, Local Conservation Groups (LCG) promoted birdwatching tourism, waterbird conservation and the local networks of service providers (guides, guest houses, rural women, etc.).

- A study, conducted by IUCN-Med in partnership with Direction Generale des Forêts (DGF) and other national partners, on the value of eco-system services provided by Ichkeul National Park had been ongoing since 2015 and the first results had been presented in Tunis recently. This study indicates that the value of the eco-system services provided by the Ichkeul National Park would justify the release of water from the dams (built on the rivers that previously supplied Ichkeul with freshwater) for ecosystem and biodiversity conservation purposes. The programme “Sentinelles des Zones humides au Maghreb” managed by the WWF and carried out by 18 local and national NGOs in Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia continued to provide training to the national partners in order to build more capacity for wetland conservation by grassroots organisations in these countries. The aim being to provide a set of working methods and tools for integrated wetland management, fields like priority setting, local community involvement, communication, etc. were already covered.

New or major ongoing research and monitoring activities on waterbirds and waterbird habitats

- Intensive monitoring of waterbird populations (wintering and breeding) continued at selected key sites (wetlands of the Cape Bon, Ichkeul National Park, Salines de Thyna and desert wetlands in South Tunisia).
- Site monitoring protocols had been developed by Association “Les Amis des Oiseaux” and Local Conservation Groups for Lake Tunis, Sebkheth Soliman, Maâmoura Lagoon and Korba Lagoon) which are now applied since 2015.
- The Regional Activity Centre for Specially Protected Areas (RAC/SPA) in partnership with Association “Les Amis des Oiseaux” (AAO), MEDMARAVIS, Tour du Valat and Conservatoire du Littoral organised the 2nd Symposium on the Conservation of Marine and Coastal Birds in the Mediterranean in Hammamet (Tunisia) from 20-22 February 2015. The participants of the symposium reviewed the current knowledge of the 25 bird taxa included in the SPA/BD protocol and discussed the most recent results of research and conservation work on these species.

New or major ongoing education and information activities on waterbirds, waterbird habitats and the Agreement

- Several partners in Tunisia continued to organise awareness-raising events on the occasion of World Migratory Bird Day, World Wetlands Day and World Shorebird Day.
- AAO has developed and tested an awareness-raising programme for local NGOs and nature clubs focusing on threats to birds and how citizens could contribute to better conservation of birds and their natural habitats. This programme was planned to be spread to Local Conservation Groups (LCG) through a training programme for volunteer educators in 2016.

Problematic cases threatening waterbirds or their habitats:

- A potential threat to migratory waterbirds was emerging in Tunisia with plans to enhance the use of alternative energies such as wind and solar power. A special attention must be given to capacity development and improvement of the legal and institutional framework allowing effective impact assessment and the application of best practices.
- Lake Ichkeul continued to face serious threats due to siltation, reduced fresh water inflow due to dams, overgrazing and illegal hunting and fishing which are also directly affecting bird populations.
- Sebkheth Sejoumi, the most important remaining wetland in the Tunisian capital with more than 30 000 wintering waterbirds, was subject to a development and management planning process which also included a scenario of complete transformation of the sebkheth into a lake, which would completely change the ecological features. This process was being run by the Ministry of Equipment in a non-inclusive way with the risk of non-involvement of qualified state institutions and NGOs.
- Pollution in all forms remained a major threat to waterbirds or their habitats in Tunisia.

Introduction

- The AEWA Eastern Europe Region includes 10 Range States (European Russia, Belarus, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan) and the European Union.
- Contracting Parties in the Region are: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, Belarus and the European Union.
- The total area of the region: 5, 2 million km²; population: about 200 million.
- Number of Range States that provided feedback to this report: 8.
- Information for this Report was collected through the National Focal Points for AEWA/CMS or other relevant experts/organizations.
- Waterbird conservation issues and problems are very different in the AEWA Range States of Eastern Europe. Therefore, for practical reasons the presented information in this Report is compiled separately for several sub-regions of Eastern Europe.

Belarus

Belarus is distinguished by unique habitats (the largest fens and river floodplains in Europe), critically important for rare and vulnerable species of waterbirds. Bogs and mires cover about 2.3 million hectares of the country, of which 800,000 ha. are open bogs. The country holds a large number of rare and threatened waterbirds species. The Pripyat River Floodplain in southern Belarus is the key stop-over area for waterbirds in this part of Europe, regularly supporting internationally important concentrations of 18 species of waterbirds. The largest restoration scheme of peatbogs and open mires in Eastern Europe, has been implemented in Belarus in 2009-2015, with more than 45,000 ha. of wetlands restored.

Belarus ratified AEWA in 2015 and it will formally join the Agreement on 1 April 2016².

The international team of experts and organisations (from the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat, OMPO and the Lithuanian Government) had considerably contributed to this achievement. Three international meetings enabling the launch/implementation of all procedures targeted at AEWA in Belarus were arranged in Belarus in 2015. Following the ratification of AEWA, the Belarusian Government totally prohibited spring hunting at all sites internationally important for waterbirds.

The main threats to waterbirds and their habitats indicated by the national authorities are of a broad range, such as habitat loss, law enforcement, landscape changes and impacts of the climate change (particularly in the Pripyat River floodplain region). As Belarus is the Member State of the Eurasian Treaty together with Russia, Armenia and Kazakhstan, these countries are also encouraged to join AEWA, following the ratification of the Agreement by Belarus. With the membership of all countries in Eastern Europe, AEWA would cover all the most important breeding and staging sites for waterbirds in this part of Agreement range.

Moldova

Moldova provided its National Report to MOP6. The main problems and threats cover a broad range, such as habitat loss, law enforcement, new infrastructure developments and the lack of funds necessary for implementation of environmental projects, particularly during the present economic crisis.

Ukraine

There is a continuing emergency situation in Ukraine caused by the war in the eastern part of the country and annexation of Crimea by Russia. The Ministry of Ecology and Nature Resources has informed about the largest threats to migratory waterbirds and their habitats in the country since 1999 (when Ukraine joined the AEWA).

Despite continuing military actions in eastern Ukraine and the very difficult economic situation, Ukraine has initiated several major environmental initiatives related to waterbirds and their habitats, particularly the process of harmonisation of its legal system and identification of the key habitats following the EU Birds Directive

² Editor's note: Belarus has been a Party to AEWA since 01 April 2016.

and Natura 2000 network. Four AEWA Guidelines were translated into the Ukrainian language and distributed among relevant authorities/organisations.

Eleven designated Ramsar sites in the Ukraine located in the region of the Black and Azov Sea were currently threatened by the ongoing military actions and drastic political/economic changes. Ukraine has lost the control of several extremely important bird areas. These sites are among the most important areas for breeding and migratory waterbirds in Eastern Europe, annually holding more than 1 million migratory waterbirds and globally endangered breeding/migratory species, such as Red-breasted Goose, Ferruginous Duck, etc.

Several of these Ramsar sites are threatened by the major infrastructural developments, like the construction of the new mega-bridge across the Kerch Strait (dividing the Black and Azov Sea), implemented by Russia without any international environmental impact assessment

Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan

Georgia is the only Contracting Party to the AEWA in the Caucasus region. A National Report was submitted to MOP6. Currently Georgia is negotiating new Association Agreements with the EU, including the converging of the EU Birds Directive and the Habitats Directive into the national legislation. New laws on EIA are already in force in this country, markedly contributing to the conservation of AEWA-listed species.

The main threats to waterbirds and their habitats indicated by the national authorities are new potential major infrastructures (recreation resorts, major energy sector developments, etc.).

Azerbaijan also evaluates the possibility of converging of the EU Birds Directive and the Habitats Directive into the national legislation. Main threats to waterbirds and their habitats indicated by the national authorities and experts are rapidly rising water levels in the Caspian Sea, threatening Important Bird Areas located in coastal areas and pollution of the Caspian Sea by oil leakages.

Armenia: no information was received from authorities though local experts have indicated a significant drop in Lake Sevan's water level because of drawdown for irrigation and the diversion of water to hydroelectric plants as the main threat to waterbirds and their habitats. As a member of the Eurasian Treaty, Armenia now is encouraged to ratify AEWA, following Belarus.

Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania

The comprehensive review of national AEWA implementation activities was provided by these countries for the MOP6 (particularly by Estonia). In these three EU States, the management and conservation of waterbirds and their habitats follows the EU Birds and Habitats Directive, as well as other environmental legislation, such as in the fields of water, impact assessment (EIA, SEA), the Baltic Sea conservation, etc. The main activities related to migratory waterbirds are concentrated in Natura 2000 sites.

The EU has contributed financially to several major *LIFE* projects addressing waterbirds and habitats in the Baltic States. Large-scale programmes on Special Management Plans for Rare Bird Species (including species covered by the AEWA International Single Species Plans) are currently implemented in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

During the last years, these countries have significantly contributed to a reduction of by-catch of wintering/migratory waterbirds in the Baltic Sea (particularly of seaducks). In Lithuania and Latvia the network of offshore and inshore protected marine areas was completed in 2015. Appropriate regulation of intensive fisheries (including the ban of trawling) now is in force in almost all internationally important areas for wintering/migrating waterbirds, located in marine waters of the Baltic States.

There are major ongoing projects related to the reduction of negative effects of power lines/wind-power developments on breeding and migratory waterbirds in all three countries concerned. There are several major ongoing activities on restoration of the key waterbird habitats in all three countries (funded mostly by EU programmes) and several major ongoing research and monitoring activities on waterbird species and their habitats in the Baltic States.

There are special programmes in place on eradication/regulation in numbers of alien mammal species (American mink, racoon dog), negatively affecting waterbird populations in all three countries.

During the last years, substantial progress was made relating to education and information activities on waterbirds and their habitats in all three countries, with numerous information centres and other public education objects established.

Russian Federation

European Russia holds the major part of breeding populations of many species of waterbirds in Europe. The main threats to waterbirds and their habitats are the loss or degradation of breeding habitats (particularly due to recent oil and gas developments in arctic regions), large-scale changes in land use, poorly regulated hunting in certain regions (including hunting open in spring) and impacts of the global climate change.

The problems related to AEWA in Russia were discussed in several international meetings arranged by the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat and appropriate international organisations. The Russian authorities have formally confirmed plans to join AEWA in the near future. As a member State of the Eurasian Treaty, Russia is encouraged to ratify AEWA following the example of Belarus.

Southern Africa - Ms Lizanne Roxburgh

1. Number of Contracting Parties in the region / number of Range States in the region. New accessions since the previous TC meeting. Actions by the regional representative to persuade non-parties to ratify the Agreement

There are five contracting parties and fifteen Range States

No new accessions. Due to the development of the Multi Species Action Plan for the Benguela system, Namibia was approached for accession.

2. Number of Range States (Parties and non-party Range States) that provided feedback for this report

1 (One) – South Africa. Information was collated by South African Government officials from the National Department of Environmental Affairs in collaboration with the National Focal Point and other contacts from organisations such as the Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT) and BirdLife South Africa

3. Activities to implement the Single Species Action Plans relevant to the region (please check for the AEWA SSAP as per Sections 1&2 of attached Annex 2)

Several International Single Species Action Plans developed under the Agreement of the Conservation of Migratory Waterbird Species (AEWA) are applicable to South Africa, namely:

a) International Single Species Action Plan for *Glareola nordmanni* (Black-winged Pratincole)

This plan was developed in 2004. It is recommended that the document be revised as it has been developed more than 10 years ago to include country-specific activities and actions. The focus has shifted since 2004. The species has been included in the Regional Red list for Birds of South Africa, Lesotho and Swaziland. From 2000 to 2014 the species has been categorized as Near Threatened (NT).

b) International Single Species Action Plan for *Gallinago media* (Great Snipe)

This plan was developed in 2004. It is recommended that the document be revised as it has been developed more than 10 years ago to include country specific activities and actions. The focus has shifted since 2004.

c) International Single Species Action Plan for *Oxyura maccoa* (Maccoa Duck)

South Africa participated in the development of the Single Species action plan for Maccoa Duck but did not develop a National Single Species Action Plan for this species

d) International Single Species Action Plan for *Phoeniconaias minor* (Lesser Flamingo)

In 2010 South Africa initiated a process to develop a National Single Species for Lesser Flamingo. The challenge was the availability of key stakeholders in this regard. No national species action plan has been developed.

e) International Single Species Action Plan for *Egretta vinaceigula* (Slaty Egret)

This particular SSAP was recently developed. In 2014 South Africa nominated a representative to the International Single Species Action Plan (ISSAP) Working Group which is coordinated by Birdlife Botswana. South Africa through Birdlife SA is involved in development the status of the species although it is a vagrant to the country. No progress regarding the implementation of this SSAP since the establishment of the ISSAP Working Group.

f) International Single Species Action Plan for *Sarothrura ayresi* (White-winged Flufftail)

South Africa has not developed a National Single Species Action Plan for this species but is implementing some aspects of the ISSAP, namely the research. SA participated in the Working Group for ISSAP for the species in Ethiopia from the 10 - 12 August 2015. Thereafter, a National Working group was established with relevant stakeholders to implement the ISSAP.

The Department of Environmental Affairs has provided partial funding to a research project by Birdlife SA which is ongoing until 2017. The research is addressing the following:

- Habitat preferences for White-winged Flufftails at Middelpunt wetland, including a description of vegetation (sedges, grasses, vegetation structure, hydrology and water depth).
- Determination of a list of species that co-occur that can be used as key indicators for the potential presence of White-winged Flufftail. Densities and abundance of these species would also be determined.
- Estimation of numbers of White-winged Flufftail individuals at Middelpunt wetland. These data will allow a more accurate estimate of the population size in South Africa: current estimates are based on ad hoc sightings only.
- Disease testing and blood parasite counts (ecto- and endo-parasites) within the species, allowing determination of whether the species is susceptible to threatening diseases, which could impact on its natural potential to adapt and survive.
- Management of Middelpunt Wetland:
 - Determine whether the Carex sedges and Pycneus-Fuirena-Leersia sedge-meadows at Middelpunt are expanding, contracting or stable. What environmental factors such as flooding, soil moisture, burning, etc. might be affecting the Carex? What management procedures would be best to ensure that the Carex beds and sedge-meadows are preserved (assuming those are the habitats preferred by the White-winged Flufftail).
 - Analysis of fire history data to determine a suitable burning regime.
 - Determine floristic succession, e.g. are Typha and Phragmites spreading?
 - Impact of cattle grazing on the wetland vegetation. Available literature from North America suggests that cattle grazing can impact significantly on sedge meadows.

g) International Single Species Plan for Grey Crowned-crane

South Africa through the Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT) has led the process to develop the ISSAP for the conservation of the Grey Crowned-crane which has been adopted at 6th Session of the Meeting of the Parties (MOP6) to AWEA in November 2015 in Germany.

A South African Biodiversity Management Plan is currently being drafted for all three of South Africa's cranes (Blue and Wattled Cranes and the Grey Crowned-crane) which will draw on elements of the Single Species Action Plan.

The Endangered Wildlife Trust has two full-time projects, one in the Drakensberg region, straddling the KwaZulu-Natal and Eastern Cape Provinces, and another in the Chrissiesmeer Lakes District in Mpumalanga. These two projects aim to secure key sites for cranes using the Biodiversity Stewardship Programme, conservation servitudes and other processes; improve the ecological integrity of key crane ecosystems; monitor and address key threats to cranes; and empower communities (landowners, farm workers and local communities) for conservation and improve livelihoods that incorporate a green economy and increase the value that communities place on the environment.

h) International Multi Species Plan for the Benguela Upwelling System

South Africa through Birdlife SA has led the process to develop the Multi-species Action Plan for the Benguela Upwelling System which was approved by MOP 6 in Nov 2015 in Germany.

i) National Biodiversity Management Plan for *Spheniscus demersus* (African Penguin)

Although there is no International Single Species Action for the African Penguin, South Africa developed a National Biodiversity Management Plans for the species (BMP-S) in consultation with all relevant stakeholders which is provided for by the National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act (Act 10 of 2004). The BMP is being implemented since its publication in 2013. Through the implementation of this BMP, new colonies of the African Penguins have been re-established at Stony Point and Simon's Town as per the implementation plan of the Biodiversity Management Plan of the species.

4. Emergency situations (extreme cold, draught, toxic or oil spills, etc.) that have happened and affected waterbirds and/or their habitats since the last TC meeting and response to them

Infectious Disease: This occurred February/March 2015 (three week period), 200 birds died. Specimens of the dead individuals have been sent to a local state veterinarian for clinical examination. Infield control measures have consisted of the regular removal of dead bodies from the waterbodies and the disposal of carcasses by burying them. Species affected are: Yellow-billed Duck, Cape Shoveller, White-backed Duck, Red-billed Teal, Fulvous Duck, Maccoa Duck, Egyptian Goose, Red-knobbed Coot, White-breasted Cormorant, Common Tern, Grey-headed Gull, Glossy Ibis and African Spoonbill.

Poisoning: Hundreds of blue cranes died in by poisoning. The blue crane (*Anthropoides paradiseus*) is currently listed as vulnerable in the Eskom Red Data Book of South Africa, Lesotho and Swaziland, and the 2010 International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN)'s Red List. In incident took place in the Northern Cape Province of South Africa. Investigations were underway and the outcome will be reported in future TC meeting

5. New or major ongoing waterbird species re-establishment (reintroduction, supplementation) initiatives

New colonies of the African Penguins have been re-established at Stony Point and Simon's Town (South Africa) as per the implementation plan of the Biodiversity Management Plan of the species. See (j) under 3 above. Zimbabwe reported that all conservation was done *in-situ*.

6. Activities on eradication or other type of action regarding alien species

Research has been undertaken by the Agricultural Research Council on the identification and dissemination of biological control agents particularly for the control of aquatic plants such as water hyacinth (*Eichhornia crassipes*), water lettuce (*Pistia stratiotes*) and water fern (*Azolla filiculoides*)

Eastern Wetland Rehabilitation (a non-profit company) has received NRM funding for a three-year period to control alien invasive plant species in the Chrissiesmeer area. Priority is being given to farms important to cranes. This work started in mid-February 2016.

7. New or major ongoing activities on habitat (site) inventory, conservation or restoration and rehabilitation of waterbird habitats.

Two major sites, namely:

a) Hartebeesspruit-Colbyn Valley Wetland ecosystem

The South African Government in collaboration with key stakeholders is in a process to declare the Biodiversity Management Plan for an Ecosystem for the Hartebeesspruit-Colbyn Valley Wetland ecosystem. One of the main aims of the development and subsequent implementation of the Hartebeesspruit-Colbyn Valley Wetland BMP-E is that the BMP-E will serve as a pilot for local government support to mainstreaming biodiversity at the local-government level, particularly in achieving protection of the threatened wetland and associated peatland through collaboration and buy-in between various spheres of government, stakeholders and resource users. The BMP-E will furthermore serve as a pilot to test the robustness of the Norms and Standards for BMP-Es (Government Gazette No 37302 7 February 2014). This emphasises the need for a collaborative effort to conserve Colbyn Valley Wetland as a threatened ecosystem, which plays an integral

role in water quality and flood attenuation as part of the Hartebeesspruit system, which in turn supplies the Roodeplaat Dam, a source of drinking water for Pretoria.

b) Ingula Conservation Area

Ingula is situated 55km from Ladysmith, (20km northeast of Van Reenen) within the Drakensberg range, on the border between the Free State and KwaZulu-Natal. The presence of high altitude wetlands that provides the site for the upper and lower dam and the presence of a peat bed in the wetland. Furthermore, this wetland had, in recent years, been identified as one of only nine known sites in South Africa visited in summer by the White-winged Flufftail (*Sarothrura ayresi*), an enigmatic rail known only to breed in three wetlands in Ethiopia during July and August. The area is in process of being proclaimed as a nature reserve. There are many reasons for this, the most important being the large expanse of grassland, wetland and escarpment forest. The wetlands at Ingula's upper site straddle the continental watershed and serves as a continual supply to the Wilge and Tugela Rivers, with springs flowing throughout the year. The wetland system hosts a large variety of species, and is in need of protection following years of overgrazing and inappropriate burning. The area also fulfils criteria for proclamation as a Ramsar site and is of international significance. The Ingula conservation area hosts four of South Africa's critically endangered species (Red Data List) being White-winged Flufftail, Wattled Crane, Rudd's Lark and Eurasian Bittern.

Zimbabwe reported that the Environmental Management Agency had been carrying out an inventory of wetlands in Zimbabwe – this information was also useful for waterbirds. Seven sites had recently been designated as Ramsar sites, which are also important areas for birds, thus bringing more effort and resources into conserving sites.

8. Progress of the region in phasing out the use of lead shot for hunting in wetlands

Hunting in any form, is a restricted activity in South Africa in terms of legislation and it is regulated through a permit. That is through the National Environment Management: Biodiversity Act, 2004 (Act No. 4 of 2004): Threatened or Protected Species Regulations. Provincial legislation also regulates the use of for hunting at a provincial level. South Africa does not experience a lot of duck hunting in wetlands, hence this is not really considered. The banning of lead shot for hunting in wetlands has not been considered yet as hunting of waterbirds is not a big issue like in Europe. Further engagements with relevant stakeholders is in place and will continue to get a better understanding the impact of leadshot.

9. New or major ongoing research and monitoring activities on waterbirds and waterbird habitats

Ongoing research includes:

- a) African Crane Conservation Programme led by the EWT. Grey Crowned-crane breeding success is being monitored in the Drakensberg and Chrissiesmeer. Together with Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife, the annual aerial surveys of cranes in KZN were conducted for the 21st consecutive year in July 2015. The second annual Chrissiesmeer aerial survey was completed in February 2016.
- b) White-winged Flufftail Research coordinated by Birdlife SA in collaboration with other stakeholders.
- c) South African Bird Atlas Project 2 is the follow-up project to the Southern African Bird Atlas Project (for which the acronym was SABAP, and which is now referred to as SABAP1). This first bird atlas project took place from 1987-1991. The second bird atlas project started on 1 July 2007 and plans to run indefinitely. The current project is a partnership between the Animal Demography Unit at the University of Cape Town, BirdLife South Africa and the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI). The project aims to map the distribution and relative abundance of birds in southern Africa and the atlas area includes South Africa, Lesotho and Swaziland. SABAP2 was launched in Namibia in May 2012.

Zimbabwe reported that Wetlands International had assisted BirdLife Zimbabwe with setting up [Observado](#), a new online data management system for waterbird data.

10. New or major ongoing education and information activities on waterbirds, waterbird habitats and the Agreement

Ongoing education and information activities include:

- World Wetlands Day
- Flufftail Festival
- Save Our Seabirds Campaign
- World Migratory Bird Day
- World Environment Day
- Chrissiesmeer Crane Festival
- Mpumalanga Twin Treasures Event
- Learning exchange workshops with farmers and community members in the Drakensberg and on the Mpumalanga Highveld to empower and increase awareness of wetland and grassland management; alien invasive clearing and alternative energies.

Zimbabwe reported on the production of a Waterbird Field Guide for birds found in Zimbabwe, for educational purposes.

11. Problematic cases threatening waterbirds or their habitats (e.g. infrastructural developments, changes in legislation, etc.)

The extractive energy industry is a key threat to grasslands and wetlands – and includes particularly coal mining and gas extraction.

Zimbabwe reported that:

- One of the most important sites, Lake Chivero on the Manyame river has a problem with invasive plant species, mostly water hyacinth;
- Hunting in wetlands is not an issue in Zimbabwe;
- Agriculture is one of the major challenges as well as urban expansion.

12. Extent of use of the AEWA Conservation Guidelines by the Parties (please check for the AEWA Conservation Guidelines as per Section 3 of Annex 2)

The EWT's Wildlife and Energy Programme (WEP) which is run in partnership with ESKOM, is ongoing and its primary focus is to prevent mortalities of birds (and wildlife in general) on electrical infrastructure through the mitigation of existing infrastructure, use of bird-friendly structures and avoiding high risk areas when building new infrastructure. The AEWA guidelines were developed in collaboration with EWT, amongst others, and their use and implementation are ongoing.

13. Any other information

A severe regional drought (the worst in living memory) is impacting levels of water in rivers, wetlands and other waterbodies. The drought may be linked to both the El Niño Southern Oscillation and to climate change. The effect of the drought on waterbirds has not been assessed yet, but may severely impact on breeding success and survival of many freshwater-dependent species.

Czech Republic

1. Activities to implement the Single Species Action Plans relevant to the region (please check for the AEWA SSAP at the AEWA website)

Only Corncrake actions are running, using agro-environmental measures and producing quite good results.

2. Emergency situations (extreme cold, draught, toxic or oil spills, etc.) that have happened and affected waterbirds and/or their habitats since the last TC meeting and response to them.

No actions.

3. New or major ongoing waterbird species re-establishment (reintroduction, supplementation) initiatives

No actions.

4. Activities on eradication or other type of action regarding alien species

Nothing much is being undertaken, but the discussions concerning possible reduction of Caspian Gull (*Larus cachinnans*) are ongoing. This species negatively influenced a few other waterbird species, mainly Common tern (key species) at SPA (and part of Ramsar site) Vestonicka nadrz. The present view is the same as that of the Beatles: *Let it be*.

5. New or major ongoing activities on habitat (site) inventory, conservation or restoration and rehabilitation of waterbird habitats

Ongoing project concerning Czech wetlands (including also their new inventory, present situation and biodiversity) is running within the framework of a grant from Norway: Conservation, research and sustainable use of wetlands in the Czech Republic.

6. Progress of the region in phasing out the use of lead shot for hunting in wetlands

Nothing new since the last National report for AEWA

7. New or major ongoing research and monitoring activities on waterbirds and waterbird habitats

A new ducks and geese breeding survey is running under the Czech University of Life Science (coordination: Petr Musil), IWC is running under the same school (Zuzana Musilova as coordinator) on a very large scale (more than 600 localities are checked regularly)

8. New or major ongoing education and information activities on waterbirds, waterbird habitats and the Agreement

More different CEPA activities are included under Norway grant (see point 5.)

9. Problematic cases threatening waterbirds or their habitats (e.g. infrastructural developments, changes in legislation, etc.)

Ongoing support of important persons (e.g. President of the Czech Republic!) for the idea of Danube-Odra-Labe channel. This is the reason why three Czech Ramsar site are listed in Montreaux record.

10. Extent of use of the AEWA Conservation Guidelines by the parties (please check for the AEWA Conservation Guidelines; <http://www.unep-awa.org/en/meeting/6th-meeting-parties-awa>)

Nothing more since the last AEWA National Report.

11. Any other information

An intersectorial working group to solve illegal killing/poisoning of wild animals including birds has been established. The first meeting of the Working Group will be organised in April 12-13. The Working Group will work under the Ministry of Environment and will use Resolutions and Directives of CMS and AEW. The Working Group consists of 13 members, representatives of Ministry of the Environment, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Interior, State Veterinary institute, Czech Inspection of Environment, Nature Conservation Agency, Czech Society of Ornithology, Czech-Moravian hunting society, and a Scientific Councillor of CMS. The goal is to find a united strategy and solution for illegal killing of wild animals in the Czech Republic.

Croatia

1. Activities to implement the Single Species Action Plans relevant to the region (please check for the AEW SSAP at the AEW website)

Eurasian Spoonbill ISSAP - Attendance at the VIII International Spoonbill Workshop/AEW Eurasian Spoonbill International Expert Group meeting; presenting monitoring data and migration strategies, planning further activities for C & SE European population based on SSAP.

Ferruginous Duck ISSAP - Monitoring of passage populations was implemented on six carp-fishponds, known as the most important migratory sites for the species.

2. Emergency situations (extreme cold, draught, toxic or oil spills, etc.) that have happened and affected waterbirds and/or their habitats since the last TC meeting and response to them.

There were no emergency situations in the reporting period.

3. New or major ongoing waterbird species re-establishment (reintroduction, supplementation) initiatives

No waterbird reintroduction or repopulation projects.

4. Activities on eradication or other type of action regarding alien species

No alien waterbird species has been identified in Croatia, apart from incidental observations of single individuals. Review of alien bird species (including waterbirds) was prepared under ESENIAS project (Nikolov et al 2015).

5. New or major ongoing activities on habitat (site) inventory, conservation or restoration and rehabilitation of waterbird habitats

Payment for Corncrake (*Crex crex*) friendly management of hay meadows (within framework of the Rural Development Programme of the Republic of Croatia for the Period 2014- 2020) was introduced in 2015 for the first time in Croatia.

6. Progress of the region in phasing out the use of lead shot for hunting in wetlands

Hunting with lead shot in wetlands is forbidden under provisions of the Hunting Act.

7. New or major ongoing research and monitoring activities on waterbirds and waterbird habitats

Ongoing monitoring of: colonial waterbirds (Spoonbills, herons, egrets, White Stork, terns), corncrake, white-tailed eagle and black stork in Croatia. Colour-ringing projects for six species.

8. New or major ongoing education and information activities on waterbirds, waterbird habitats and the Agreement

No actions

9. Problematic cases threatening waterbirds or their habitats (e.g. infrastructural developments, changes in legislation, etc.)

There were no problematic infrastructural developments during the reporting period. Croatia has in place procedures of SEA, EIA as well as appropriate assessment procedure (AA) according to Article 6 of the Habitats Directive.

10. Extent of use of the AEWA Conservation Guidelines by the parties (please check for the AEWA Conservation Guidelines; <http://www.unep-awea.org/en/meeting/6th-meeting-parties-awea>)

AEWA Guidelines are consulted, when needed.

Italy

1. Activities to implement the Single Species Action Plans relevant to the region

Eurasian Spoonbill SSAP - Attendance at VIII International Spoonbill Workshop/AEWA Eurasian Spoonbill International Expert Group meeting; presenting monitoring data and migration strategies

2. Emergency situations (extreme cold, draught, toxic or oil spills, etc.) that have happened and affected waterbirds and/or their habitats since the last TC meeting and response to them

Nothing to report.

3. New or major ongoing waterbird species re-establishment (reintroduction, supplementation) initiatives

ISPRA has two feasibility plans in preparation: White-headed Duck *Oxyura leucocephala* (re-introduction) and Marbled Teal *Marmaronetta angustirostris* (supplementation). Both programmes foresee a cooperation with Spanish partners.

4. Activities on eradication or other type of action regarding alien species

A change in the national law was approved in 2015, with no effect on waterbird species.

5. New or major ongoing activities on habitat (site) inventory, conservation or restoration and rehabilitation of waterbird habitats

Nothing to report.

6. Progress of the region in phasing out the use of lead shot for hunting in wetlands

An inter-ministerial working group on lead ammunition has been established to facilitate phasing out of lead shot. The proposal to extend the ban to all wetlands is under discussion.

7. New or major ongoing research and monitoring activities on waterbirds and waterbird habitats

Several projects based on GPS-GSM or GPS-UHF technology are ongoing. Target waterbird species are: Flamingo (*Phoenicopter ruber*), Spoonbill (*Platalea leucorodia*), Teal (*Anas crecca*), Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*), Mediterranean Gull (*Larus melanocephalus*), Yellow-legged Gull (*Larus michahellis*), Eurasian Stone Curlew (*Burhinus oedicnemus*), and European Woodcock (*Scolopax rusticola*).

Many birders took part in the monitoring survey during the International Waterbird Census in January. Common Pochard (*Aythya ferina*) sex ratio launched by Kane Brides for the Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust (WWT). Colonial waterbirds are regularly monitored at main breeding sites in the Po Delta.

8. New or major ongoing education and information activities on waterbirds, waterbird habitats and the Agreement

Guidelines for the management of the breeding population of the Yellow-legged Gull (*Larus michahellis*) in the saltpans and coastal wetlands of the Mediterranean will be delivered by ISPRA and partners by the end of

the year as a product of the LIFE10NATIT000256 “*Environmental Management and Conservation in Mediterranean salt works and coastal lagoons*”.

9. Problematic cases threatening waterbirds or their habitats (e.g. infrastructural developments, changes in legislation, etc.)

Nothing new.

10. Extent of use of the AEWA Conservation Guidelines by the parties

Difficult to establish or quantify. Conservation Guidelines are used by professionals and technicians when needed, probably on a routine basis.

11. Any other information

An action plan on illegal killing of birds in Italy is in preparation. Two technical workshops on this subject will be jointly organized by the Ministry for the Environment and ISPRA by end of June.

Slovakia

1. Activities to implement the Single Species Action Plans relevant to the region:

Measures for implementation of waterbird action/management plans are included in updated national Programme of Wetland Management in Slovakia 2015-2021 and its Action Plan for wetlands 2015-2018, adopted by the Slovak Government on 3 June 2015 (Decision No. 304/2015). A new nature Conservation Policy has been under development since 2015 (planned to be finished by half of 2016), activities to implement SSAPs will be included. Conservation and management activities are included in the annual work plan of the national nature conservation agency the State Nature Conservancy of the Slovak Republic.

2. Emergency situations (extreme cold, draught, toxic or oil spills, etc.) that have happened and affected waterbirds and/or their habitats since the last TC meeting and response to them:

N/A

3. New or major ongoing waterbird species re-establishment (reintroduction, supplementation) initiatives:

The State Nature Conservancy of the Slovak Republic was supported from the Environmental Fund to purchase new artificial nesting platforms (60) for white storks in urban areas and to restore some wetlands as a food source.

4. Activities on eradication or other type of action regarding alien species:

Inventory and monitoring of alien invasive species and cooperation with stakeholders is included in the annual work plan of the governmental agency, the State Nature Conservancy of the Slovak Republic (SNC); no occurrence of the alien species of waterbirds has been reported in the given period. The SNC work plan for 2016 includes update of national Strategy on Invasive Species in line with implementation of EU legislation and development of Action Plan for selected species.

5. New or major ongoing activities on habitat (site) inventory, conservation or restoration and rehabilitation of waterbird habitats:

LIFE projects implemented in this period include protection and restoration of Natura 2000 sites in trans-border area of the Bratislava region; conservation of *Botaurus stellaris* and *Aythya nyroca* in SPA Medzibodrozie and restoration of their habitats; Integrated management of river ecosystems in southern Slovakia; Restoration and management of floodplain habitats of the Danube River; Swiss funded project supporting restoration of about 40 smaller wetland sites; another project supported sustainable land management with a positive effect on biodiversity in some SPAs. Draft measures of sustainable land use, with the emphasis on SPAs, including Procedures of good practice of bird habitats / area management were

published; within ERDF project Management models for maintenance were published, conservation and management of wetland habitats and several management plans were developed for protected areas (especially Ramsar sites, Natura 2000 sites). Work has been done on designation of new protected areas (including wetlands) of national and international (Natura 2000) networks.

6. Progress of the region in phasing out the use of lead shot for hunting in wetlands:

Use of lead shot in wetlands was phased out as of 1 January 2015 in Slovakia.

7. New or major ongoing research and monitoring activities on waterbirds and waterbird habitats:

Project of the State Nature Conservancy of the Slovak Republic (Operational Programme Environment) on developing data for establishment of favourable conservation status of selected bird species and their habitats was finalised by 30 June 2015. Inventory and banding of waterbirds was included, favourable conservation status was defined, and some publications were produced. Support for continuation of the monitoring programme in the new programming period and the project is under development. Project on monitoring and management of Great Cormorant was finished on 31 January 2016. SOS/BirdLife Slovakia coordinates winter counts of waterbirds, monitoring of common species and counts of breeding birds, monitoring of white storks.

8. New or major ongoing education and information activities on waterbirds, waterbird habitats and the Agreement

The World Migratory Bird Day celebration and activities of administrations of protected areas; Welcoming cranes; Spring Bird Festival; courses on bird voices; ornithological camps etc.

9. Problematic cases threatening waterbirds or their habitats (e.g. infrastructural developments, changes in legislation, etc.):

N/A

10. Extent of use of the AEWA Conservation Guidelines by the parties (please check for the AEWA Conservation Guidelines):

Translation of relevant guidelines is included in the Action Plan for wetlands 2015-2018.

11. Any other information:

N/A

Eastern Africa - Mr Samuel Muchane Muchai

1. Number of Contracting Parties in the region

The Eastern Africa region consists of eight Contracting Parties and Réunion and Moyotte (France) and three non-Party Range States. Feedback was provided by 30% of the countries belonging to this region.

2. Implementation of Single Species Action Plans (ISSAPs)

In general, implementation of AEWA International Single Species Action Plans was not widespread.

- **ISSAP Madagascar Pond-heron (*Ardeola idae*)**
Not much has happened since the surveys in Kenya by Henry Ndithia
 - Population modeling;
 - Creation of artificial breeding;
 - Performed coordinated censuses in all countries;
 - Yet, pressures on its wetland habitats continue.

- **ISSAP White-winged Flufftail** (*Sarothrura ayresi*)
 - Very little work done in Ethiopia so far;
 - Critically endangered, yet undergoing rapid population decline due to degradation and loss of its preferred seasonal marshland habitat.

- **ISSAP Lesser Flamingo** (*Phoeniconaias minor*)
 - Breeding & feeding sites designated as protected areas, Ramsar sites, IBAs, World Heritage Sites;
 - Tanzania: National Wetlands Working Group & WCST & TAWIRI agreed on a new National Single Species Action Plan for the Lesser Flamingo for Tanzania. Based on the AEWA SSAP;
 - Kenya: Biggest concern is that despite the existence of a draft national action plan for Kenya, the Kenya Wildlife Service had never launched it.

- **ISSAP Maccoa Duck** (*Oxyura maccoa*)
 - Gladys Kungu at National Museums Kenya conducted a national survey of the species in Kenya. This led to improved population estimates and distribution;
 - Sport hunting (abolished in Kenya and banned in South Sudan);
 - Gill net issues;
 - Legislation (national and local) and education;
 - Stopping habitat loss and disturbance in key Maccoa Duck areas.

- **ISSAP Shoebill** (*Balaeniceps rex*)
 - Reduce factors affecting productivity;
 - Reduce habitat fragmentation and deterioration;
 - Study key knowledge;
 - Minimize illegal trade;
 - There are still concerns that the species is being illegally traded in some parts of Tanzania.

- **ISSAP Grey Crowned-crane** (*Balearica regulorum*)
 - Uganda: Development of National Action Plan for Grey Crowned-crane has been completed and is now awaiting approval (Kerryn Morrison);
 - Facing quite some threats in East Africa, e.g. at Lake Olborosat and egg collection and disturbance of nesting sites.

Conservation status of waterbirds:

- Population decline;
- Net increase in threats;
- Deterioration in the state of IBAs;
- Agricultural intensification;
- Drought;
- Habitat modification.

3. Emergency situations

Impacts of drought in Eastern Africa:

- Decreases in rainfall in the whole of Eastern Africa;
- Dams and irrigation schemes;
- Climate change causing reductions in rainfall;
- Unexpectedly large drops in river flows.

Toxic chemicals and oil spill

- South Sudan: Toxic chemicals used in the drilling of petroleum (waterbirds coming into contact with waste water are severely affected);
- South Sudan: Oil spills had been a problem in the past. Consequently, the soil, water and ground water polluted at various levels;
- New Oil Producing Countries – Uganda, Kenya?

4. Significant Conservation Initiatives for Waterbirds

Regional activities:

- Science base for decision-making;
- Capacity building and training (Flyway Training Kit);
- Critical Sites Network Tool (CSN Tool).

Activities in the field:

- Tanzania: Demonstration projects – Best Practice in Wetlands Management and Waterbirds Conservation

Implementation of conservation initiatives is slow due to funding constraints.

5. Ongoing waterbird species re-establishment initiatives

Currently nothing tangible to report.

6. Inventory, conservation, restoration, rehabilitation of waterbird habitats

- Kenya: Replanting of Papyrus fringe along Lake Naivasha (Edward Morrisson);
- Demarcations of Riparian land at Lake Naivasha by IMARISHA project;
- Draft National Wetland Conservation and Management Policy (2013-Kenya);
- BirdLife just completed a project in the Lake Victoria Basin that was focusing on Yala and Dunga (Kenya), Lutembe Bay and Mabamba Bay (Uganda), and Akanyaru Wetland (Rwanda) which had been developing and implementing community action plans for conserving these sites;
- Uganda: Restoration for the flamingo habitats in Western Uganda;
- Promotion of birding tourism to generate revenue for communities and the Government in Uganda;
- Strengthening legislation - Wildlife Act is under review and Uganda Wildlife Policy 2014 was approved by Cabinet and is ready for implementation.

7. Assessment of the state of Uganda's birds

- Uganda Wildlife Policy 2014 was approved and published by the Government of Uganda. There is an increased need for the conservation of migratory species;
- The Uganda Wildlife Bill 2015 was submitted to Cabinet; Once adopted, this will strengthen the penalties against illegal wildlife trade and provide adequate protection of migratory waterbirds.

8. Phasing out of the use of lead shot for hunting in wetlands

- Ethiopia: 30 December 2011;
- South Sudan: Ban imposed on hunting for 10 years until 2021;
- Kenya: The newly enacted Wildlife Conservation and Management Act (2013) bans any form of hunting and exercises tough penalties to any person who engages in any such activity.

9. Research and monitoring activities on waterbirds and waterbird habitats

There is a lack of data and a general decline in waterbird counts in the region.

- Kenya: January and July annual waterfowl census (not carried out in July 2015 and 2016);
- Ongoing surveys of Maccoa Duck in Kenya;
- Ethiopia: January waterfowl census in 31 major wetlands;
- Uganda: Annual waterfowl census;
- Tanzania: Annual waterfowl census. Funding constraints.

10. Education and information on waterbirds, habitats and the Agreement

- The WOW Flyway Training Kit;
- BirdLife Africa Partnership Secretariat – funding limited;

- Celebrations of WMBD in all countries;
- WMBD 2016, 10 May 2016 – awareness-raising campaigns for migratory waterbirds;
- Wildlife Trust – education and awareness on the poisoning of birds within the irrigation schemes;
- Lake Naivasha Sustainable Project, National Museums Kenya, NatureKenya, CBO Education and Advocacy;
- Supports undergraduate, Master's and PhD students in field surveys.

11. Major threats to waterbirds

Some major threats:

- Oil and gas explorations (Albertine Rift Lakes, e.g. methane exploration in Lake Kivu, Lake Tanganyika and Lake Turkana);
- Geothermal explorations in Hell's Gate and Bogoria will affect waterbirds (?);
- Habitat loss (wetland conservation) due to agriculture;
- Wetland degradation and Wetland encroachment;
- Development;
- Human wildlife conflict, e.g. egg collection of Grey Crowned-crane at Lake Olborosat;
- Poor waste management and disposal;
- Water pollution from flower farms;
- Water regulation and irrigation activities;
- Recent rise in water levels within the Great Rift Valley Lakes (effects of regional tectonics influenced by the movements of global earth's plate tectonics) causing a decline in Flamingo population;
- Waterbird hunting;
- Electrocution;
- Wind farms and expanding power line grids (Turkana, Kenya);
- Agricultural intensification:
 - Avian influenza is causing drastic decline in shorebird numbers in a large part of Eastern Africa;
 - Production of bio-fuels (Jatropha) in the Tana River Delta floodplain wetlands and mangroves on the north Kenyan coast;
 - Commercial farms in wetlands in Ethiopia, which use agrochemicals like fertilizers, herbicides and insecticides are now expanding.
- Problematic cases threatening waterbirds and habitats:
 - Soda ash extraction – Lake Magadi, Kenya;
 - Lake Natron, Tanzania – breeding site for Lesser Flamingos;
 - Late 2014, construction of a facility at Engaruka, near Lake Natron;
 - Geothermal & wind power developments;
 - Pesticide hunting with FURADAN (a carbo furan), Marshal and Strychnine (Bunnyala Rice Irrigation Scheme);
 - Drainage of the wetland for settlement and farms;
 - Hydro-electric dams;
 - Salt manufacture and mining;
 - Piping for domestic water;
 - Uncontrolled agricultural schemes;
 - Development projects (Sudan).

12. Activities on eradication of alien species

- Invasive and other problematic species, e.g. Water Hyacinth and Water Salvinia (manual and mechanical removal – Lake Victoria, Naivasha);
- Invasive Indian House – continues to be a major problem for both waterbirds and terrestrial species in coastal eastern Africa (targeted humane removal).

13. Other conservation issues in Eastern Africa

- Poverty;
- Population growth;

- Rising demand for goods and services;
- Poor governance and management;
- Inadequate technology, knowledge and incentives for alternative livelihoods;
- Limited coordination and landscape focus;
- Unsustainable use of wetland resources;
- Wetland policy (institutional and legal frameworks);
- Development of wetland monitoring tools.

14. Extent of use of the AEWA Conservation Guidelines by Parties

Of the Parties, which had provided feedback, over 50% reported that they regularly made use of AEWA guidelines.

ANNEX II - The Definition of Species Populations under AEWA

The definition of species populations under AEWA

(Drafted and approved by the AEWA Technical Committee at its 13th Meeting, 14-17 March 2016)

Introduction

Annex 2 of the Agreement lists the species the agreement applies to. It has also been established that only migratory populations of species should be listed in Table 1 of the AEWA Action Plan.

Document MOP3.12 reviews the practice and principles of defining waterbird populations and concludes:

"A waterbird biogeographical population is a population of a species or a sub-species that is either geographically discrete from other populations at all times of the year, or at some times of the year only, or is a specified part of a continuous distribution so defined for the purposes of conservation management".

Key elements of this definition are that biogeographical populations are to be defined based on taxonomy (i.e. species, subspecies) and dispersion patterns (discrete throughout the year, some time of the year, or it is a specified part of a continuous distribution).

However, the guidelines do not address how to treat populations of AEWA species:

- 1) isolated as a consequence of population decline (i.e. a formerly continuous distribution becoming fragmented leading to discrete populations);
- 2) translocated completely within the native range;
- 3) newly established or for which migration routes have been modified, including the creation of new breeding and/or non-breeding/wintering ranges as a result of translocation;
- 4) newly established as a result of range expansion or colonisation;
- 5) newly established as a result of unintended introductions (e.g. due to escaped birds);
- 6) where two formerly separate/fragmented populations have merged into a continuous population.

Proposed treatment

Regarding populations under point 1) above, the definition outlined in document MOP3.12 can be applied to fragmented populations as appropriate.

Regarding populations under point 2), the original - or in the absence of a former AEWA listing, the historical - population definition would apply.

Regarding populations falling under point 3), it follows from AEWA's conservation objectives that these populations should be listed on Table 1 if their reintroduction was carried out according to the principles of the AEWA translocation guidelines. Further, it follows from the definition of biogeographic populations in document MOP3.12, that populations which are discrete throughout the year or part of the year should be treated as separate populations.

For populations under point 4) the issue to be considered is whether the new population is an extension of an existing population - in which case it should be considered as part of the original population - or whether it is a distinct one - in which case it could be considered as a separate population following the definition outlined in document MOP3.12.

Regarding populations under point 5) - without prejudice to those falling under point 3) - and following from the provisions of Article III.g)³ of the Agreement Text, non-native species are not subject to the conservation regime of AEWA.

For populations under point 6), these previously separate populations can be considered as one population, applying the definition outlined in document MOP3.12.

³ Article III.g) requires that Parties shall *"prohibit the deliberate introduction of non-native waterbird species into the environment and take all appropriate measures to prevent the unintentional release of such species if this introduction or release would prejudice the conservation status of wild flora and fauna; when non-native waterbird species have already been introduced, the Parties shall take all appropriate measures to prevent these species from becoming a potential threat to indigenous species"*.

ANNEX III - AEWA Technical Committee Recommendation Regarding the Delineation of Biographic Populations of Lesser White-fronted Geese (*Anser erythropus*)

AEWA Technical Committee recommendation regarding the delineation of biogeographic populations of Lesser White-fronted Geese (*Anser erythropus*) under AEWA

(Drafted and approved by the AEWA Technical Committee at its 13th Meeting – 14.-17. March 2016)

Application of the principles of delineation of species populations under AEWA to the Lesser White-fronted Geese breeding in the Nordic countries

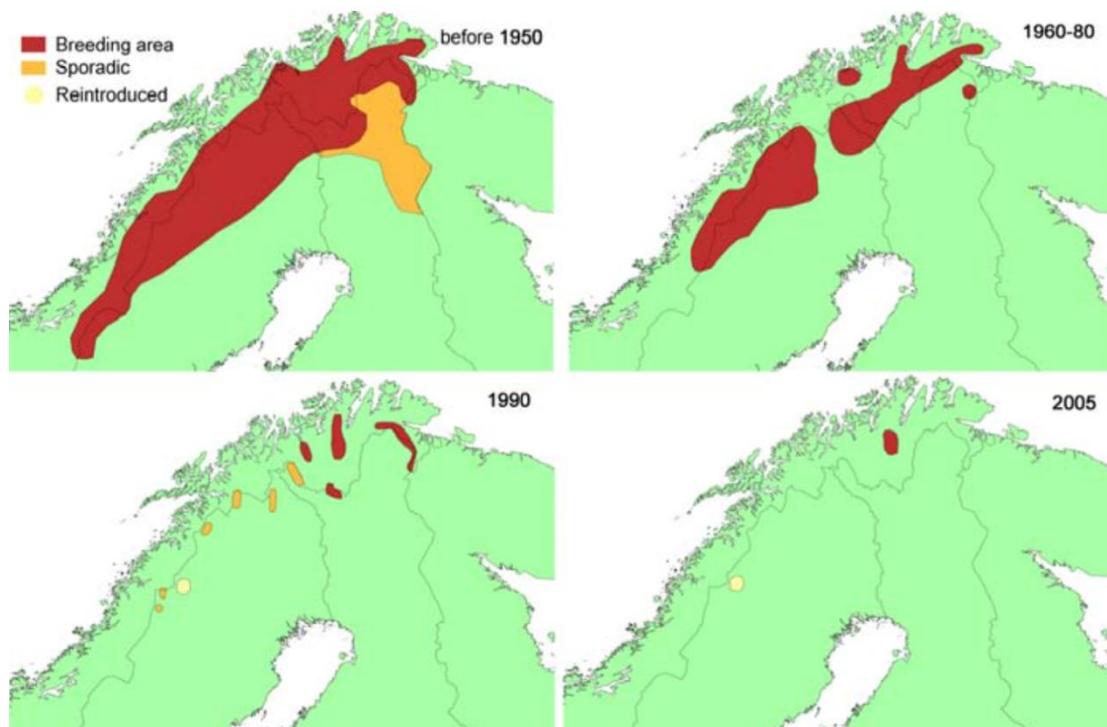


Figure 1. Historical and recent breeding distribution of the Lesser White-fronted Goose in Fennoscandia (Source: AEWA Single Species Action Plan for the Lesser White-fronted Goose, 2008).

As Figure 1. shows, over the last century the distribution of Lesser White-fronted Geese in Fennoscandia became increasingly fragmented resulting in two separate breeding areas.

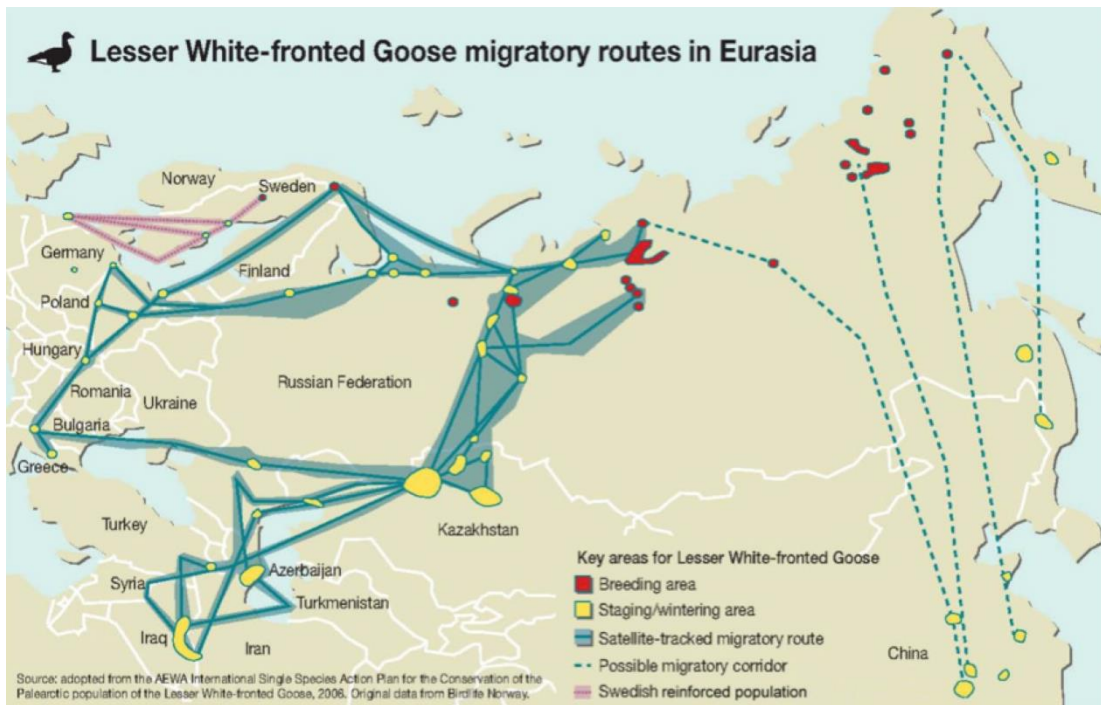


Figure 1. Global distribution of the Lesser White-fronted Goose populations. Dashed lines show the linkages between breeding and wintering areas for the Eastern main population, but the precise migration routes followed are unknown. (Source: draft revised AEWA Single Species Action Plan for the Lesser White-fronted Goose, version 2015)

As the result of a human-induced flyway modification, birds breeding in Sweden now winter in the Netherlands - thus birds breeding in Sweden and Norway also have separate wintering grounds.

Conclusion

Based on their current dispersion patterns - with the Lesser White-fronted Geese breeding in Sweden wintering in the Netherlands and the birds breeding in Norway wintering in Greece - the AEWA Technical Committee considers that the current AEWA International Single Species Action Plan for the conservation of the species adopted in 2008, treats the two populations correctly as separate biogeographic populations.

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