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OVERVIEW OF THREATS AND THE WAY THE ACTION PLAN COULD TACKLE THESE INCASE SOME WETLANDS BIRDS AND SEABIRD SPECIES WOULD BE INCLUDED IN THE AGREEMENT

INTRODUCTION

In document AEWA/ MOP2.9 drafted by Wetlands International, the author of this document Mr. Derek Scott clarifies on page 11 that there is no precise definition of 'waterbirds*'* given in the Agreement and Action Plan, other then the very broad definition in Article 1, paragraph 2c, which states that *'waterbirds means those species of birds that are ecologically dependent on wetlands for at least a part of their annual cycle'*. In an early development stage of the AEWA, the species under consideration were still generally known as 'waterfowl'. This term was defined in the first and second edition of the *Waterfowl Population Estimates*. Although this term was used in the draft Management Plan for the AEWA in 1994, in the final Agreement text this was replaced by the term 'waterbird'. As well as in the Agreement text as the Action Plan no reference is made to Draft Management Plan, and there is clearly no obligation for the Parties to adhere to a stricter definition of waterbirds given there.

It was noted by Mr Derek Scott that there is an extensive overlap between the term 'waterbirds' and seabirds. Many of the 'waterbirds' currently included in the Agreement might more properly be regarded as 'seabirds' and vice versa.

He also pointed out that many species of 'land birds' are dependent on wetland habitats for a part of their annual cycle, and many of these are migratory.

The 'seabirds' and 'land birds' indicated above could benefit significantly from the measure for the conservation of migratory waterbirds and their habitats provided for in the AEWA. Therefore the Second Meeting of the Parties, which took place from 25-27 September 2002 in Bonn, requested through Resolution 2.1 the AEWA Technical Committee, in close cooperation with the Agreement Secretariat and in close consultation with the relevant bodies of the Convention on Migratory Species, to review further development of the Agreement by including additional species of wetland birds and seabirds, looking in the first instance at the species listed in Table 2 and Table 3 of AEWA/MOP2.9, expanding Table 3 to species from the whole of Africa, and considering, in particular, the extent to which the existing Action Plan is adequate in its scope to address differing conservation problems faced by birds of prey, passerines and other taxonomic groups using wetlands.

Following this request the Agreement Secretariat prepared a list of these wetland birds and seabirds and with regard to what kind of threats they are exposed to and if these threats are addressed by the Action Plan.

PROPOSAL OF THE SECRETARIAT

Most of the problems that seabirds and wetland birds are facing regardless of their taxonomy are related to habitat destruction, human exploitation (trapping), disturbance and invasive species like cats and rats. Apart from that intensive agriculture, pollution, drainage and irrigation schemes as well as over-eutrophication of lakes play a role in habitat degradation and impose further threats on wetland birds.

In the view of the Agreement Secretariat the waterbird species currently listed in Annex II to the AEWA are facing more or less the same threats. The question is if the current Action Plan contains the means to deal with most of these problems. The answer is yes and no. The Action Plan has the means to deal with most of the threats. Under Species Conservation (chapter 2), Habitat Conservation (chapter 3), Management of Human Activities (chapter 4), Research and Monitoring (Chapter 5), habitat destruction, disturbance, taking and possession, tourism and lack of knowledge/ information are directly addressed and by implementation of the Action Plan these threats could be tackled. In other cases like trapping, poisoning, (marine) pollution, euthrophication, irrigation and drainage implementation of the Action Plan could tackle the problem indirectly by e.g. protection of important areas or implementation of wise and sustainable use. In order to address these problems more directly, the Agreement Secretariat proposes to insert amendments to the Action Plan, which clarify the threats to be tackled. For example it is recommended to include rats and cats explicitly, as introduced species into point 2.5.3 of the Action Plan.

Climate change due to human impact on the environment is seen as a major threat for life as it is on our planet. Weather catastrophes, which tend to occur more often nowadays, threaten important areas for waterbirds, either by severe droughts or floods. The impact of climate change as well as unfavourable weather conditions e.g. droughts, severe winters, are not addressed in the current Action Plan. Waterbirds, wetland- and seabirds could all be affected by climate change and unfavourable weather conditions.

The members of the Technical Committee are requested to review the tables attached hereto and to determine if the threats mentioned there are sufficiently covered by the current Action Plan or that amendment of the Action Plan as such is needed.

	Table 1		Threats																	
	Species		*habitat loss*	*hunting*	*introduced predators*	*human exploitation*	*limited to few sites*	*disturbance*	*accidental mortality*	*global warming*	*food shortage*	*pollution*	*lead poisoning*	*poisoning*	*agriculture*	*drainage schemes*	***Threat status***	***SPEC***	**Remarks**
	PHAETONIDAE																			
1	*Phaethon aethereus*	Red-billed Tropicbird		X	X												-	-	Cap Verde: alarming decline
2	*Phaethon rubricauda*	Red-tailed Tropicbird			X	X													not globally threatened
3	*Phaethon lepturus*	White-tailed Tropicbird			X	X													not globally threatened
	SULIDAE																			
4	*Sula (Morus) bassana*	Northern Gannet					X										L	2	susceptible to catastrophies
5	*Sula dactylatra*	Masked Booby			X	X		X											not globally threatened
6	*S. d. melanops*																		rapid decline!
7	*Sula sula*	Red-footed Booby	X		X	X		X											not globally threatened
8	*Sula leucogaster*	Brown Booby			X	X		X											not globally threatened
	PHALACROCORACIDAE																			
9	*Phalacrocorax aristotelis*	European Shag															S	4	decline in some populations
	FREGATIDAE																			
10	*Fregata aquila*	Ascension Frigatebird			X	X	X		X								R		Red List: Vulnerable, D2
11	*Fregata magnificens*	Magnificent Frigatebird	X	X				X											not globally threatened
12	*Fregata minor*	Great Frigatebird	X	X	X			X		X									not globally threatened
13	*Fregata ariel*	Lesser Frigatebird	X	X				X		X									not globally threatened
	STERCORARIIDAE																			
14	*Catharacta antarctica*	Brown (Subantarctic) Skua																	decline in some populations
15	*Catharacta skua*	Great Skua				X			X		X								decline in some populations
16	*Sterocorarius pomarinus*	Pomarine Skua															S(P)	non	no sufficient data
17	*Sterocorarius parasiticus*	Arctic Skua															S(P)	non	
18	*Sterocorarius longicaudus*	Long-tailed Skua															S	non	
	LARIDAE																			
19	*Pagophila eburnea*	Ivory Gull						X				X					E(P)	3	fewer than 500 bp, trend difficult to assess, large decline
20	*Rissa tridactyla*	Black-legged Kittiwake															S	non	populations vary in size
21	*Sterna anaethetus*	Bridled Tern		X				X											not globally threatened

	Table 2		Threats																	
	Species		*habitat loss*	*hunting*	*introduced predators*	*human exploitation*	*limited to few sites*	*disturbance*	*accidental mortality*	*global warming*	*food shortage*	*pollution*	*lead poisoning*	*poisoning*	*agriculture*	*drainage schemes*	***Threat status***	***SPEC***	**Remarks**
22	*Sterna fuscata*	Sooty Tern															-	-	widespread in tropical oceans, rare in Europe
23	*Anous stolidus*	Brown Noddy																	not globally threatened, some populations are vulnerable
24	*A. s. stolidus*				X														Ascension I. Colony threatened by rats + cats
25	*Anous minutus*	Black Noddy																	not globally threatened, some populations are vulnerable
26	*Anous tenuirostris*	Lesser Noddy																	not globally threatened, some populations are vulnerable
27	*Gygis alba*	Common White Tern																	not globally threatened
	ALCIDAE																		
28	*Alle alle*	Little Auk								X ?							S(P)	non	decline of some populations
29	*Uria aalge*	Common Guillemot		X				X			X						S	non	decline of some populations
30	*Uria lomvia*	Brümmich's Guillemot															S	non	decline of some populations
31	*Alca torda*	Razorbill							X			X					S	4	decrease in Norway + Ireland
32	*Cepphus grylle*	Black Guillemot		X	X			X	X			X					D	2	decline of some populations
33	*Fratercula arctica*	Atlantic Puffin			X						X	X					V	2	Large decline
	ACCIPITRIDAE																		
34	*Haliaeetus leucoryphos*	Pallas's Fish Eagle	X					X				X							
35	*Haliaeetus albicilla*	White-tailed Eagle	X	X		X		X				X		X			R	3	
36	*Circus aeruginosus*	Western Marsh Harrier	X										X				S	non	decline of some populations
37	*Circus cyaneus*	Hen Harrier	X	X		X		X							X	X	V	3	severe population decrease in some countries
38	*Aquila clanga*	Greater Spotted Eagle	X	X				X						X		X	E	1	Large decline
	PANDIONIDAE																		
39	*Pandion haliaetus*	Osprey	X	X		X		X			X	X					R	3	Mediterranian populations most threatened
	STRIGIDAE																		
40	*Asio flammeus*	Short-eared Owl	X	X										X	X	X	V(P)	3	Large decline

	Table 3		Threats																
	Species		*habitat loss*	*hunting*	*introduced predators*	*human exploitation*	*limited to few sites*	*disturbance*	*accidental mortality*	*global warming*	*food shortage*	*pollution*	*lead poisoning*	*poisoning*	*agriculture*	*drainage schemes*	***Threat status***	***SPEC***	**Remarks**
	ALCEDINIDAE																		
41	*Alcedo atthis*	Common Kingfisher	X								X	X			X	X	D	3	threatened by hard winters
	HIRUNDIDAE																		
42	*Riparia riparia*	Sand Martin						X		X					X		D	3	high annual mortality
	MOTACILLIDAE																		
43	*Anthus cervinus*	Red-throated Pipit															S(P)	3	no clear reason for decrease in some populations
44	*Anthus petrosus*	Rock Pipit															S	4	decline in some populations
45	*Anthus spinoletta*	Water Pipit															S	non	no discernible negative effect
46	*Motacilla flava*	Yellow Wagtail	X							X		X			X	X	S	non	
47	*Motacilla citreola*	Citrine Wagtail															S(P)	non	?
48	*Motacilla cinerea*	Grey Wagtail															S(P)	non	rare, but increasing
	CINCLIDAE																		
49	*Cinclus cinclus*	White-throated Dipper										X			X		S(P)	non	
	TURDIDAE																		
50	*Luscinia svecica*	Bluethroat	X												X	X	S	non	nearly stable populations
	SYLVIIDAE																		
51	*Cettia cetti*	Cetti's Warbler															S	non	long cold winters
52	*Locustella naevia*	Grasshopper Warbler	X							X							S	4	well distributed
53	*Locustella fluviatilis*	River Warbler															S	4	Stable population, increasing trend
54	*Locustella luscinioides*	Savi's Warbler		X						X							S(P)	4	decline in some populations
55	*Acrocephalus melanopogon*	Moustached Warbler															S(P)	non	decline in some populations
56	*Acrocephalus paludicola*	Aquatic Warbler	X					X				X			X	X	E	1	strict habitat requirements make immediate protection measures essential
57	*Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*	Sedge Warbler								X							S(P)	4	decline in some populations
58	*Acrocephalus dumetorum*	Blyth's Reed Warbler															S(P)	non	
59	*Acrocephalus palustris*	Marsh Warbler													X		S	4	decline in some populations
60	*Acrocephalus scirpaceus*	European Reed Warbler	X														S	4	decline in some populations

	Table 4		Threats																
	Species		*habitat loss*	*hunting*	*introduced predators*	*human exploitation*	*limited to few sites*	*disturbance*	*accidental mortality*	*global warming*	*food shortage*	*pollution*	*lead poisoning*	*poisoning*	*agriculture*	*drainage schemes*	***Threat status***	***SPEC***	**Remarks**
61	*Acrocephalus stentoreus*	Clamorous Reed Warbler																	no information
62	*Acrocephalus arundinaceus*	Great Reed Warbler	X												X	X	S(P)	non	population decline in C Europe
63	*Acrocephalus griseldis*	Basra Reed Warbler	X					X				X							annual ringing total has declined continiously over past three decades
	PANURIDAE																		
64	*Panurus biarmicus*	Bearded Reedling	X														S(P)	non	decline in some populations
	REMIZIDAE																		
65	*Remiz pendulinus*	Eurasian Penduline Tit															S(P)	non	
	PASSERIDAE																		
66	*Passer moabiticus*	Dead Sea Sparrow																	no information
	EMBERIZIDAE																		
67	*Emberiza schoeniclus*	Reed Bunting	X														S	non	overall not endangered

Threat List Annex

List of threats and references to (sub) paragraphs of the Action plan (2003 – 2005), which deal with these problems.

Threat	Action Plan
habitat destruction / habitat loss	3.2, 3.3, 4.3.5, 4.3.6
hunting / persecution	4.1
lead poisoning	4.1.4
poisoning	
human exploitation	2.1.1 (a)/(c), 2.1.2 (a) – (d)
disturbance / tourism / leisure activities	2.1.1 (b), 4.2, 4.3.5, 4.3.6, 6.3, 6.4
food shortage (for example due to overfishing)	
introduced predators	
accidental mortality (fishing nets, hooks,…)	
pollution (oil, chemicals,…)	3.2.3 (a)/(b)
agriculture	3.2.3 (a)
drainage schemes	
concentration on few sites	
global warming / unfavorable weather conditions	
lack of information	5

Threat status: **INS** - insufficiently known; **S** - secure; **L** - localised; **D** - declining; **R** - rare; **V** - vulnerable; **E** – endangered

Species of European Conservation Concern (SPECs):

Category 1: Species of global conservation concern because they are classified as Globally Threatened, Conservation Dependent or Data Deficient *in Birds to watch 2: The World List of Threatened Birds* (Colar et al. 1994)

Category 2: Species whose global populations are concentrated in Europe (i.e. more than 50% of their global population or range in Europe) and which have an Unfavourable Conservation Status in Europe.

Category 3: Species whose global populations are not concentrated in Europe, but which have an Unfavourable Conservation Status in Europe.

Category 4: Species whose global populations are concentrated in Europe (i.e. species with more than 50% of their global population or range in Europe) but which have a Favourable Conservation Status in Europe.

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