



8th MEETING OF THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE
03 - 05 March 2008, Bonn, Germany

GUIDANCE ON DEPENDENCE ON A HABITAT TYPE WHICH IS UNDER SEVERE THREAT

(Report by TC Working Group 3)

BACKGROUND

AEWA's third Meeting of Parties called for guidance on the interpretation of criteria used in Table 1 of the AEWA Action Plan as follows:

"Recalling Resolution 2.1 and the call of the MOP upon the Technical Committee to develop guidance for the interpretation of the term "significant long-term decline" in the context of Table 1 of the AEWA Action Plan;

Noting the responsive output presented by the Technical Committee to MOP3, being a succinct guidance (document MOP 3.11);

Further noting that there are more criteria used to classify species in various categories in Table 1 of the AEWA Action Plan for whose application no clear guidance exists;

The Meeting of the Parties:

Calls upon the Technical Committee to develop guidelines for interpretation of other criteria used in Table 1 of the Action Plan, notably:

- the degree of concentration on a small number of specific sites at any stage of annual cycle;
- the dependence on a habitat type which is under severe threat; and
- the extent of fluctuation in population size or trend."

The term we are asked to define occurs in two places in the criteria given in the introduction to the Action Plan's Table of species:

Column A

Category 3: Populations numbering between around 25,000 and around 100,000 individuals and considered to be at risk as a result of:

(b) dependence on a habitat type which is under severe threat;

Column B

Category 2: Populations numbering more than around 100,000 individuals and considered to be in need of special attention as a result of:

(b) dependence on a habitat type which is under severe threat;

ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION BY THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

To address this issue, a working group was convened within the TC, which worked on possible approaches of defining guidance on the application of this criterion early in the triennium. The approach suggested in a paper presented to the 7th TC meeting in 2006 was highly dependent on habitat (wetland) classification, availability of habitat (wetland) inventories and expert opinion in deriving a list of “severely threatened” habitat types. At TC7 a small drafting group was called to rethink the proposal and suggest a more pragmatic approach. A new proposal was presented to the meeting which concerned a definition of the term “severe threat”. It was decided to convene an ad hoc workshop for this working group to advance the development of this guidance.

In mid-March 2007 the working group met at the AEWA Secretariat premises for a one-day ad hoc workshop and examined the new proposal for guidance on application of this criterion. It was adjusted and the working group agreed on the following definition:

**“Severe threats to species’ habitats are those which result in changes to a large proportion of habitat, especially where those changes are irreversible (or where the changes are only reversible over very long time-scales),
and
where such changes will negatively impact species’ populations that are ecologically dependent on those habitats.”**

The following guidance on application of this criterion was suggested:

“The application of this criterion is especially to be considered when species have a specialised ecology and/or behaviour that link them to particular habitats at any stage of their life cycles.”

The workshop participants felt that these criteria would have limited use and just a small number of species were thought to meet the new definition, such as the Sociable Lapwing and the Black-winged Pratincole, which depend on steppe grasslands during breeding, and the Dark-bellied Brent Goose, which depends on *Zostera marina* fields during migration.

ACTIONS REQUESTED FROM THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

The Technical Committee is invited to review this proposal for definition and guidance, make amendments as appropriate, and approve it for submission to MOP4 through the Standing Committee.