



9th MEETING OF THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE
20 - 23 April 2009, Zagreb, Croatia

**Operative paragraphs of Resolution 4.15 of relevance to the work of the
Scientific Task Force on Avian Influenza and Wild Birds**

Background

The Scientific Task Force on Avian Influenza and Wild Birds, which was established in 2005 and is co-chaired by CMS and FAO; it comprises 11 member organisations (MEAs and international NGOs, including AEWA) and 3 observer IGOs. The Task Force aims to obtain the best scientific advice on the conservation impact of the spread of HPAI H5N1, including assessing the potential role of migratory birds as vectors of the virus. It has issued advice on the root causes of the spread of this disease and has promoted the development of international early-warning systems. The Task Force promotes objective information on the role of wild birds as vectors of HPAI H5N1, and aims to avoid over-reaction by decision/policy makers that could be detrimental to the conservation of waterbird species and their habitats.

In September 2008, the 4th session of the AEWA Meeting of the Parties endorsed resolution 4.15 on responding to the spread of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza H5N1. Similar resolutions were also endorsed by COP10 of the Ramsar Convention (Resolution X.21: *Guidance on responding to the continued spread of highly pathogenic avian influenza*) and CMS COP9 (Resolution 9.08: *Responding to the challenge of emerging and re-emerging diseases in migratory species, including HPAI H5N1*) respectively in October and December 2008.

The current paper was compiled by David Stroud (TC regional representative for North and Southwestern Europe) and Rebecca Lee (The Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust) for the Scientific Task Force on Avian Influenza and Wild Birds and was presented at the 12th Task Force teleconference in February 2008. This paper compiles operative paragraphs of the HPAI resolutions approved in 2008 by AEWA, Ramsar and CMS and suggests the type of actions, which the Task Force can undertake accordingly.

Action requested from the Technical Committee

The Technical Committee is requested to review the part of this paper relevant to AEWA and provide advice on activities, which the Task Force could take in order to contribute to the implementation of AEWA Resolution 4.15.

Operative paragraphs in AEWA, Ramsar and CMS Resolutions (2008) relevant to the work of the Scientific Task Force on Avian Influenza and Wild Birds

THE RESOLUTIONS

- **AEWA Res 4.15:** Responding to the spread of highly pathogenic avian influenza H5N1
[http://www.unep-
aewa.org/meetings/en/mop/mop4_docs/final_res_pdf/res4_15_responding_threat_ai_final.pdf](http://www.unep-
aewa.org/meetings/en/mop/mop4_docs/final_res_pdf/res4_15_responding_threat_ai_final.pdf)
- **Ramsar Res X.21:** Guidance on responding to the continued spread of highly pathogenic avian influenza
http://www.ramsar.org/res/key_res_x_21_e.pdf
- **CMS Res 9.08:** Responding to the challenge of emerging and re-emerging diseases in migratory species, including HPAI H5N1
[http://www.cms.int/bodies/COP/cop9/documents/meeting_docs/Res and
Rec/Post_session_Pre_final/Res_9_08_Wildlife_Disease_E.pdf](http://www.cms.int/bodies/COP/cop9/documents/meeting_docs/Res_and
Rec/Post_session_Pre_final/Res_9_08_Wildlife_Disease_E.pdf)

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OPERATIVE PARAGRAPHS	TASK FORCE ACTIONS
Responses	
<p>12. STRONGLY REAFFIRMS the conclusion of Resolution IX.23 that attempts to eliminate HPAI in wild bird populations through lethal responses such as culling are not feasible and may exacerbate the problem by causing further dispersion of infected birds and that destruction or substantive modification of wetland habitats and waterbird nest sites in order to reduce contact between wild birds and humans and their domestic birds does not amount to wise use as urged by Article 3.1 of the Convention; [Ramsar]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Collate information on examples of such inappropriate responses - Provide advice whenever such responses are considered or undertaken
<p>13. ENCOURAGES all stakeholders to plan and test response strategies at various spatial scales, including national, subnational, and site scales according to level of risk, and where possible to collect and incorporate lessons learned from associated habitat management responses, and to conduct this planning at times of low risk prior to disease outbreak situations; [Ramsar]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Make relevant guidance accessible - Collate lessons learned
Integration across government	
<p>1. CALLS on Contracting Parties and other governments to further strengthen efforts to integrate responses across government departments, ministries and agencies both with regard to HPAI contingency planning and in responding to outbreaks in both domestic and wild birds; [AEWA]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Make relevant guidance accessible, e.g. OEP guidelines
<p>3. FURTHER ENCOURAGES collaboration among those Ministries responsible for agriculture, livestock, environment and health in integrated responses and investigations of outbreaks that include concurrent assessment of the wild bird species present at outbreak sites, sampling of wild birds at outbreak sites, and monitoring for dead wild birds at outbreak sites and in wetlands or other appropriate habitats near outbreak sites; [AEWA]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Make relevant guidance accessible, e.g. sampling, OEP, photography, identification
<p>6. URGES the Contracting Parties to integrate wildlife, livestock, human and ecosystem health issues into a) contingency planning, b) monitoring and surveillance, c) outbreak investigations and responses to morbidity and mortality events; and d) current and future capacity building activities; [CMS]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Make relevant guidance accessible, e.g. sampling, OEP, photography, identification

OPERATIVE PARAGRAPHS	TASK FORCE ACTIONS
Establishment of OEPs	
<p>2. STRONGLY ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties and other governments, and using the guidance appended to this Resolution, to establish arrangements to involve those with specialist ornithological expertise to advise governments on the gathering, use and interpretation of relevant data and information in developing risk assessments, wild bird surveillance strategies and programmes, appropriate response strategies and the implementation of epidemiological investigations in the event of outbreaks of HPAI in either domestic or wild birds, so that such responses are made on the basis of best available information; and Requests Contracting Parties and others to make further good practice available to the Scientific Task Force on Avian Influenza and wild birds, so that this may be shared more widely; [AEWA]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Make relevant guidance and guide-to-guidance accessible - Paper on the importance of integrated responses? - Disseminate shared good practice <p>Issue: how to identify and gather?</p>
<p>14. STRONGLY ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties and other governments to establish emergency response measures that involve those with relevant scientific expertise including specialist ornithologists and ensure the provision of timely advice to governments on the gathering, use, and interpretation of relevant data and information in developing risk assessments, wild bird surveillance strategies and programmes, appropriate response strategies, and the implementation of epidemiological investigations in the event of outbreaks of HPAI, so that these responses are made on the basis of best available information, and that wild birds are not automatically assumed to be the sources of infection; [Ramsar]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Make relevant guidance accessible, e.g. OEP guidelines - Paper on the importance of integrated responses?
<p>1. REAFFIRMS the provisions of Resolution 8.27 on Migratory Species and Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza, and in particular: (i) the need for fully integrated approaches, at both national and international levels, to address HPAI and other animal-borne diseases by bringing ornithological, wildlife and wetland management expertise together with those traditionally responsible for public health and zoonosis, including veterinary, agricultural, virological, epidemiological, and medical expertise; and [CMS]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Make relevant guidance accessible, e.g. OEP guidelines - Paper on the importance of integrated responses?

OPERATIVE PARAGRAPHS	TASK FORCE ACTIONS
Communication, Education and Public Awareness (CEPA)	
<p>4. ADVOCATES the development of communication programmes aimed at promoting balanced understanding and awareness of actual risks and appropriate responses in a range of stakeholder groups including the keepers of poultry, gamebirds and waterfowl (to reduce risks to human health and increase early disease diagnosis); the public and media to reduce inappropriate responses; and the public to aid in public reporting for surveillance programmes; and wetland site managers to improve contingency planning; [AEWA]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Media pack? - Make relevant guidance accessible, e.g. photography, identification
<p>19. ADVOCATES the development of integrated communication programmes aimed at promoting balanced understanding and awareness of actual risks and appropriate responses in a range of stakeholder groups, including poultry keepers, to reduce risks to human health and increase early disease diagnosis; the public health sector, the public and media, to improve accuracy and availability of messages so as to reduce inappropriate responses; the public, to aid in public reporting for surveillance programmes; and wetland site managers, to improve contingency planning; [Ramsar]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Media pack? - Make relevant guidance accessible, e.g. photography, identification
<p>8. ENDORSES the Scientific Summary of H5N1 Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza: Wildlife and Conservation Considerations prepared by the Scientific Task Force on Avian Influenza and Wild Birds and attached as Appendix 1 of this resolution as similarly endorsed by AEWA Resolution 4.15 and Ramsar Resolution X.21; calls on other relevant bodies including FAO, UNEP and MEAs also to endorse this statement, and requests the Secretariat to ensure maximum circulation, translation and understanding of the statement; [CMS]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Disseminate and keep up-to-date the scientific summary
Development of information tools	
<p>5. STRONGLY URGES the further development of information tools for decision makers who collect and then synthesize relevant data and information on waterbirds and wetlands (such as preparation and use of wetland inventories, information on distribution, abundance and movements of birds), as well as that related to the movements of poultry and poultry products as a critical part of preparing risk assessments at various scales, as well as a part of essential contingency planning; [AEWA]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Disseminate shared good practice <p>Issue: how to identify and gather?</p>

OPERATIVE PARAGRAPHS	TASK FORCE ACTIONS
Surveillance	
<p>6. CALLS on Contracting Parties and other governments to develop strategic approaches to enhance their national capacity to detect and respond to emergent and re-emergent waterbird diseases, involving both relevant specialists, institutions and non-governmental organisations, and using, inter alia, experience gained in responding to the spread of HPAI H5N1; [AEWA]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Paper on best-practice surveillance? - Make relevant guidance accessible, e.g. sampling, field-techniques
<p>12. ...STRESSES that surveillance should be undertaken within the context of normal legal regulations regarding wildlife and should have minimal impact on threatened and other populations concerned; [Ramsar]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide advice whenever inappropriate surveillance is considered / undertaken
<p>16. STRESSES the need for surveillance programmes in poultry to follow international scientific guidance as described in the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) Terrestrial Animal Health Code, and in wild birds as described by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and also using initiatives such as the Global Avian Influenza Network for Wild Bird Surveillance (GAINS) to ensure that high quality data can inform successful epidemiological investigations; [Ramsar]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Make relevant guidance accessible
<p>7. WELCOMES the broad consensus on approaches and responses developed between UN agencies, international conventions and other international organisations; Accordingly strongly encourages the continuing work of the Scientific Task Force on Avian Influenza and Wild Birds to keep this developing situation under review especially as regards waterbirds, and Instructs the Secretariat to continue to contribute to the Task Force, engaging with relevant expertise within AEWA's Technical Committee and Contracting Parties; [AEWA]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Seek funds for continued work of the TF
<p>1. REAFFIRMS the provisions of Resolution 8.27 on Migratory Species and Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza, and in particular: (ii) the need for governments to support coordinated, well-structured and long-term monitoring and surveillance programmes for migratory birds to assess, inter alia, current and new disease risks, making best use of, and building on existing schemes, including those developed since 2005; [CMS]</p>	

OPERATIVE PARAGRAPHS	TASK FORCE ACTIONS
Guidance	
<p>8. URGES Contracting Parties, other governments and organisations to use the guidance appended to this Resolution and to further disseminate it to other interested parties (including its translation into local languages); and Further requests the Secretariat and Technical Committee to work, with the Scientific Task Force on Avian Influenza and Wild Birds and others, to continue to collate guidance that will assist countries effectively to respond to the continued spread and re-emergence of HPAI H5N1, making this available via the Task Force website (www.aiweb.info), and to report progress to the Standing Committee and the 5th Session of the Meeting of the Parties; [AEWA]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Make relevant guidance and guide-to-guidance accessible - AEWA to continue to assist TF - Report to AEWA MOP5 and Standing Committee - Seek funds for translation
<p>22. ADOPTS the guidance annexed to this Resolution on responding to the issues raised by the spread of HPAI H5N1; URGES Contracting Parties and other governments to implement this guidance and further disseminate it to other interested parties (including its translation into local languages); and FURTHER REQUESTS the Secretariat and STRP to assist, with relevant international agencies and the Scientific Task Force on Avian Influenza and Wild Birds, in continuing to develop guidance that will assist countries effectively to respond to the spread and re-emergence of HPAI H5N1, and to report progress to the Standing Committee and COP11. [Ramsar]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Make relevant guidance and guide-to-guidance accessible - Ramsar STRP to continue to assist TF - Report to Ramsar COP11 and Standing Committee - Seek funds for translation
<p>8 bis. ENCOURAGES the Contracting Parties to utilise, as appropriate, in relation to issues for migratory species the guidance available in Ramsar Resolution X.21: guidance on responding to the continued spread of highly pathogenic avian influenza H5N1; [CMS]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Make relevant guidance and guide-to-guidance accessible
Capacity development	
<p>9. FURTHER URGES Contracting Parties to focus future capacity-building activities on developing and enhancing monitoring programmes to include establishing linkages with agricultural and livestock ministries and ensuring that training on HPAI and other disease-sampling techniques are incorporated, as well as encouraging the participation of agricultural ministries in these capacity-building activities. [AEWA]</p>	
<p>18. EMPHASISES the need for improving capacity for surveillance and response strategies where such capacity is not adequate, understanding that structures and capability for effective avian influenza control may aid control of future disease issues that affect wetland biodiversity, viability and livelihoods; [Ramsar]</p>	

OPERATIVE PARAGRAPHS	TASK FORCE ACTIONS
Wider disease issues	
<p>21. REQUESTS the STRP to determine whether lessons learned from responses to HPAI H5N1 have implications for Ramsar guidance relating to wetlands and their wise use, and to suggest that any such resulting modifications to guidance be submitted to the Standing Committee for consideration at COP11; and FURTHER REQUESTS the STRP in collaboration with other relevant organizations to consider how best to develop practical guidance on the prevention and control of other diseases of either domestic or wild animals in wetlands, especially those diseases that have implications for human health, and how such guidance can be best incorporated into management plans at Ramsar sites and other wetlands; [Ramsar]</p>	<p>- Task for Wildlife Disease Task Force</p>
International co-operation	
<p>17. URGES Contracting Parties and other governments and relevant international organizations to cooperate internationally in research programmes, surveillance, risk assessments, training in the epidemiology of wildlife diseases, exchange and sharing of relevant data and information, and collection of samples from surveillance programmes especially at times of heightened risk; [Ramsar]</p>	
<p>15. URGES relevant national and international organizations to work with Contracting Parties to further develop and exchange information for decision makers, since the collection and synthesis of data and information on waterbirds and wetlands (such as the preparation and use of wetland inventories; information on the distribution, abundance and movements of birds; and the movements of poultry and poultry products) is a critical part of preparing risk assessments at various scales, as well as a part of essential contingency planning; [Ramsar]</p>	<p>- Collate such information and make accessible</p>

OPERATIVE PARAGRAPHS	TASK FORCE ACTIONS
Scientific task forces	
<p>20. WELCOMES the broad consensus on approaches and responses developed between UN agencies, international conventions, and other international organizations; accordingly STRONGLY ENCOURAGES the continuing work, resources permitting, of the Scientific Task Force on Avian Influenza and Wild Birds to keep this developing situation under review especially as regards wetlands; identify issues for which relevant guidance is lacking (such as for example, appropriate management responses when infection is confirmed on wetlands); and particularly, to collate and synthesise further ‘lessons learned’ from past and current outbreaks with regard inter alia, to contingency planning and response strategies; and REQUESTS the continued participation in the work of the Task Force by the Convention working through the STRP and the Secretariat; [Ramsar]</p>	<p>- Seek funds for continued work of the TF</p>
<p>2. CALLS on the CMS Secretariat and the FAO Animal Health Service to co-convene a new task force, the Scientific Task Force on Wildlife Disease; and the Convention requests this task force, once convened, to work with the Scientific and Technical Review Panel of Ramsar in its work to develop guidance on responding to wildlife diseases of importance to people, domestic animals and wildlife that are dependent on wetlands; [CMS]</p>	<p>- Task for Wildlife Disease Task Force</p>
<p>3. ALSO CALLS on the CMS Working Group on Migratory Species as Vectors of Diseases to become part of the broader focused Scientific Task Force on Wildlife Disease and to provide guidance related to past accomplishments and future needs; [CMS]</p>	<p>- Task for Wildlife Disease Task Force</p>
<p>4. REQUESTS FAO to a) identify diseases that have an impact on both domestic and wildlife species, and that are of greatest concern in regards to food security, economics and sustainable livelihoods; and b) integrate into their “One World One Health” approach, disease and management issues that can be brought to the attention of the Scientific Task Force on Wildlife Disease for consideration and action; [CMS]</p>	<p>- Task for Wildlife Disease Task Force</p>
<p>5. ALSO REQUESTS the CMS Secretariat and the FAO Animal Health Service to identify the relevant members and observers that would comprise the Scientific Task Force on Wildlife Disease, and to determine the relationship between the existing Scientific Task Force on Avian Influenza and Wild Birds and the proposed Scientific Task Force on Wildlife Disease; [CMS]</p>	<p>- Task for Wildlife Disease Task Force</p>

OPERATIVE PARAGRAPHS	TASK FORCE ACTIONS
<p>7. CONGRATULATES AND THANKS the members of the Scientific Task Force on Avian Influenza and Wild Birds for their unstinting efforts and output during the period 2005 – 2008 which have made a significant contribution to improving understanding and awareness of the causes of, and responses to, the spread of HPAI H5N1; and requests that the CMS Secretariat and FAO continue to act as co-convenors of the Scientific Task Force on Avian Influenza and Wild Birds with the engagement of the CMS Scientific Council, building on international activities already undertaken, and responding to new developments related to the spread of HPAI H5N1 and other subtypes as they occur; [CMS]</p>	
<p>9. AGREES to provide appropriate funding in the CMS budget 2009 - 2011 for the work of CMS in relation to the Scientific Task Force on Avian Influenza and Wild Birds and related aspects of work on avian influenza including awareness-raising and capacity building activities; urges other organisational members of the Scientific Task Force on Avian Influenza and Wild Birds to continue to contribute to its work, through financial or in-kind support; and consents to provide appropriate funding in the CMS budget 2009 – 2011 for the development of the Scientific Task Force on Wildlife Disease; [CMS]</p>	
Reporting	
<p>10. REQUESTS CMS Secretariat to report progress and developments to COP 10. [CMS]</p>	<p>- Report to CMS COP10</p>