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AEWA African Initiative HIGHLIGHTS 2021 & 2022

WELCOME to the African Initiative Highlights 2021 & 2022! The COVID-19 pandemic has meant that we have not been able to meet and exchange in person for some time now. Much has been achieved nonetheless - and will continue to move forward in 2022. The African Initiative team extends warm greetings to all AEWA African Parties and invites you to take a look at some highlights below.

Outlook 2022



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MOP8

After being postponed last year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the 8th Session of the Meeting of the Parties to AEWA (MOP8) is now scheduled to take place from 26–30 September 2022 in Budapest, Hungary. Further information will shortly be provided to Parties.



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African Pre-MOP8

A preparatory meeting for AEWA MOP8 will be organised for the African Parties, thanks to a grant from Switzerland. This pre-MOP8 meeting is scheduled to take place online from 4 - 7 July 2022. More information on the content and logistics of the meeting will soon be provided.



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StC20

The 20th Meeting of the AEWA Standing Committee will take place on 2 March 2022. Due to the current situation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic the meeting is planned to be held in virtual format. A dedicated webpage for StC20 has been set up and can be accessed [here](#).

New EC-funded activities

The UNEP/AEWA Secretariat has secured a European Commission grant which, over the coming two years, will help fund a training of trainers course on flyway conservation for Small Island Developing States in Africa, a training on online national reporting for AEWA African National Respondents and national action on the ground for the conservation of the Slaty Egret and Northern Bald Ibis.

World Migratory Bird Day 2022

This year's **World Migratory Bird Day** (WMBD) campaign focuses on the theme of Light Pollution, highlighting the adverse effects of artificial light on bird species. The two designated peak days for WMBD celebrations are 14 May and 8 October 2022. However, as birds do not all migrate at the same time, all AEWA Parties and other stakeholders are encouraged to commemorate WMBD when the timing is best at their location.



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Satellite Tracking of Lesser Flamingos

A [training workshop](#) on satellite tagging and satellite telemetry monitoring of Lesser Flamingos took place at the Djoudj National Bird Park in Senegal from 2-5 December 2021. The 4-day training, which brought together 15 technical experts from Senegal and four from Mauritania, was jointly organized by the Senegal National Parks Directorate, the Mauritanian Directorate for the Protection and Restoration of Species and the Environment, the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat and the Tour du Valat research institute. The training was made possible thanks to financial support from the Convention on Biological Diversity in the framework of a project funded under the Bio-Bridge Initiative, as well as in-kind contributions from the Governments of Senegal and Mauritania, Tour du Valat and the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat.

Conservation Action for the Madagascar Pond-heron

A project conducted by ASITY Madagascar in spring 2021 helped advance implementation of the AEWA Single Species Action Plan for the conservation of the Endangered Madagascar Pond-heron. Made possible with funding secured by AEWA from the United Kingdom, the project included surveys which confirmed the presence of the Madagascar Pond-heron and other endangered species at River Loza and Lake Tseny, while breeding of the species was confirmed at River Loza. Ongoing threats identified at River Loza during these surveys were addressed at a multi-stakeholder workshop involving local communities and regional and national government institutions. The workshop resulted in confirmed engagement and consensus from stakeholders to enhance community-based management, sustainable use and protection of the River Loza site, as well as promote its international designation as a Ramsar Site.



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Waterbird conservation objectives and Climate Change Adaptation

A 4-day training workshop on the integration of waterbird conservation objectives in Climate Change Adaptation took place online from 13-16 December 2021. The workshop aimed to train technical and policy experts dealing with waterbird conservation and climate change issues in eligible AEWA Parties (Botswana, Egypt, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mauritius, Rwanda, South Africa, Sudan, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania and Zimbabwe). Organized by Wetlands International in collaboration with the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat and other CRF project partners, the training took place as part of the wider African-Eurasian Climate Resilient Flyways (CRF) project, funded by the International Climate Initiative (IKI) of the German government's Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU), and co-funded by the governments of Luxembourg and Switzerland.

1st Meeting of the AEWA Benguela Coastal Seabirds International Working Group



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The 1st Meeting of the AEWA Benguela Coastal Seabirds International Working Group took place online from 3-4 March 2021. The meeting was organized by the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat in collaboration with BirdLife South Africa with funding provided by the Government of the United Kingdom. The primary aim of the meeting was to establish international coordination for the implementation of the International Multi-species Action Plan for the Conservation of Benguela Current Upwelling System Coastal Seabirds and to agree on critical conservation activities to be implemented as a matter of priority including discussions on options for funding such activities.

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RESSOURCE project in sub-Saharan Africa

Throughout 2021, the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat continued to provide technical support to the FAO-coordinated project on “Strengthening expertise in sub-Saharan Africa on birds and their rational use for communities and their environment” (RESSOURCE) for an Integrated Management of Migratory Waterbirds and Wetlands in Africa”. Co-funded by the French Global Environment Facility and the European Union, the project was implemented from 2017-2021 in cooperation with the relevant government authorities in Chad, Egypt, Mali, Senegal and Sudan and several key technical partners. Please see the most recent RESSOURCE [newsletter #7](#) for more information. An assessment of the level of transposition of AEWA and Ramsar mandates into domestic legislation for two participating countries, [Mali](#) and [Senegal](#), is available in the Legal hub of the Sustainable Wildlife Management project.

White-winged Flufftail conservation action in Ethiopia

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The Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority and BirdLife South Africa continued efforts on the ground for the conservation of the Critically Endangered White-winged Flufftail, with funding secured by AEWA from the European Commission's GPGC Programme and co-funding from the UK. The project aimed to promote engagement of local communities in the sustainable use and management of the Berga Wetland - the only known breeding site for the species in Ethiopia and the most important globally. A draft Community-Based Conservation Programme document will be presented a multi-stakeholder review, consolidation and approval process in 2022. It also constituted the basis

for the traditional by-laws validated by the local communities and law enforcement offices at a meeting in Inchini Town in July 2021, as immediate guidance for the sustainable use of the wetland. Two stakeholder consultation meetings held in Ambo Town and Holeta Town resulted in consensus for the designation of the Upper Berga floodplain as a Protected Area under regional administration. This was followed by the participative demarcation and delineation of the Protected Area boundaries and its mapping by an assigned multi-stakeholder committee in July 2021.

New Study: Most African Wetlands Used by Migratory Birds to be Degraded by Climate Change

As much as 87% of the Critical Sites in Africa are predicted to become less suitable for waterbirds by 2050 because of the impact of climate change. These are the findings of a new study by a group of international experts published in *Global Change Biology*. The research – coordinated by Wetlands International – was supported by AEWA and funded by the International Climate Initiative (IKI) of Germany. According to the study that analysed 2,601 Critical Sites, more than half (55) of the 100 most vulnerable sites along the entire African-Eurasian flyway are in Africa. These sites harbour significant parts of the populations of already threatened waterbird species and it is of high concern that they will be heavily affected. Click [here](#) for more information.

Study Predicts Climate Change Impact on African-Eurasian Waterbirds

A study carried out by an international team of experts suggests that migratory waterbirds which use the African-Eurasian Flyways are particularly exposed to the effects of climate change in Africa and at their breeding areas in the High Arctic. The research paper published in the journal *Bird Conservation International* (BCI) is based on modelling of climatic and hydrological conditions under current and future climate scenarios (in 2050) and compares the impact of climate change on the distribution of 197 of the 255 waterbird species listed under the African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement (AEWA). Click [here](#) for more information.

New AEWA National Focal Points

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Since early 2021, new AEWA National Focal Points have been designated by Burundi, Madagascar, Mauritania, Sudan, Uganda and Zimbabwe. An up-to-date list of all AEWA National Focal Points is available on the [AEWA website](#). The *Manual for National Focal Points for the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) and its Instruments* (including AEWA) is available [here](#). We look forward to successful cooperation!

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With best wishes from the AEWA African Initiative team!