



5<sup>th</sup> SESSION OF THE MEETING OF THE PARTIES  
14 – 18 May 2012, La Rochelle, France

*“Migratory waterbirds and people - sharing wetlands”*

RESOLUTION 5.24<sup>1</sup>

**CLARIFICATIONS ON THE DEFINITION OF DISTURBANCE, USEFUL FOR  
APPROPRIATE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ACTION PLAN**

*Submitted by the European Union and its Member States*

*Acknowledging* that disturbance by hunting has led to the creation of reserves where hunting is prohibited and special provisions in hunting laws limit disturbance during critical periods (e.g. during severe weather and in the breeding season), while at the same time other human activities can also have adverse effects on populations of birds (for example tourism, leisure, sports and forestry, etc.), and that these reserves should be free of any significant forms of disturbance, as stressed by the AEWA Conservation Guidelines No. 5 (AEWA, Technical Series No. 19)<sup>2</sup>,

*Noting* that recreational activities are increasingly oriented towards nature and can cause disturbances in any season and are likely in many cases to have impact on waterbirds during any of the critical phases of their annual cycle,

*Aware* of recent advances in scientific knowledge of disturbance, more particularly in the fields of eco-ethology and eco-physiology,

*Emphasising* the need to develop standard assessment methodologies for all disruptive activities,

*Considering* that information on disturbance and related management needs to be made available to wetland managers in their own language to ensure this information is accessible,

*Recalling* that the protection of species and the issue of deliberate disturbance are addressed by other relevant Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) such as the Ramsar and the Bern Conventions and there are also legal obligations for some Parties addressed through regional and national measures,

*Recalling* paragraphs 2.1.1 b), 4.3.6 and 5.6 of AEWA's Action Plan requesting the Parties to prohibit deliberate disturbance, insofar that it is shown that disturbance significantly affects conservation of the population concerned, and requesting Parties to carry out studies of disturbance,

*Noting* the recent increase of litigation on the grounds of disturbance in some countries.

<sup>1</sup> Please note that the number of this resolution has changed; it was previously AEWA/MOP5 DR25

<sup>2</sup> Guidelines on sustainable harvest of migratory waterbirds

*The Meeting of the Parties:*

1. *Requests* the Technical Committee to propose to the Meeting of the Parties definitions of the terms "*disturbance*" and the "*significant*" nature of any disturbance that may negatively affect the conservation of waterbirds, at the individual and population levels, in the context of applying the AEWA Action Plan;
2. *Requests* the Technical Committee, funding permitting, to commission a synthesis of scientific knowledge of disturbance, including activities that are significant and widespread sources of disturbance, and dealing both with the effects of disturbance and with the possible mechanisms of adaptation, mitigation and compensation, and where relevant, summarising those studies that have evaluated the short-term effects of disturbance and its long-term impact on bird productivity and survival, both at the individual and population levels, and provide the synthesis to MOP6 for consideration;
3. *Requests* the Technical Committee, funding permitting, in undertaking this task, to produce simple but comprehensive guidance on the management of disturbance in a form that may be widely translated and disseminated to wetland site managers throughout the Agreement area;
4. *Urges* Contracting Parties to support the production, translation and dissemination of this guidance;
5. *Invites* the Contracting Parties to the Agreement to cooperate with hunting organisations to further assess the potential impacts of hunting disturbance on wild birds by encouraging the management and conservation initiatives of hunting stakeholders.