



AGREEMENT ON THE CONSERVATION OF
AFRICAN-EURASIAN MIGRATORY WATERBIRDS



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

“Migratory waterbirds and people - sharing wetlands”

RESOLUTION 5.11

POWER LINES AND MIGRATORY WATERBIRDS

Recalling Article III 2(e) of the Agreement which requires Parties to “investigate problems that are posed or are likely to be posed by human activities and endeavour to implement remedial measures...”,

Further recalling Resolution 7.4 of the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) on the electrocution of migratory birds, which encourages Parties to take appropriate measures to reduce and avoid the electrocution of migratory birds from medium voltage transmission lines by implementing a number of mitigation measures as well as the “Suggested Practices for Bird Protection on Power Lines” (UNEP/CMS/Inf.7.21),

Referring to CMS Resolution 10.11 on power lines and migratory birds to which this AEWA Resolution is closely related,

Noting with satisfaction Recommendation No.110, which was adopted in 2004 by the Standing Committee of the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention) on minimising the adverse effects of above-ground electricity transmission facilities (power lines) on birds,

Welcoming the Report by the Governments on the implementation of Recommendation No. 110/2004 (T-PVS/Files (2010) 11), as presented to the 30th Meeting of the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention and describing valuable measures taken by Parties to reduce the adverse effects of power lines,

Further welcoming the “Position Statement on Birds and Power Lines: On the risks to birds from electricity transmission facilities and how to minimise any such adverse effects”, adopted in 2007 by the BirdLife International Birds and Habitats Directives Task Force, calling for appropriate technical measures to reduce the adverse effects of power lines,

Highlighting the need to collect data on bird distribution, population size and movements as an essential part of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), prior to and/or during the planning phase of a power line, and the need to regularly monitor the mortality caused by electrocution and collision with existing power lines,

Welcoming the “Budapest Declaration on bird protection and power lines”, as adopted on 13 April 2011 by the Conference on “Power lines and bird mortality in Europe” which calls for, *inter alia*, an international programme consisting of groups of national experts on bird safety and power lines, wider dissemination of knowledge, and improved planning of power lines in relation to bird distribution data,

Recalling the AEWA Guidelines on how to avoid, minimise or mitigate impact of infrastructural developments and related disturbance affecting waterbirds (Conservation Guidelines No. 11), which contain a number of relevant recommendations,

Recognising the importance for society of maintaining a stable energy supply and that electrocutions, in particular, sometimes cause outages or disruption and that appropriate location of power lines and

mitigation measures applied to power lines provide a win-win situation for birds and stability of power provision,

Noting the “Review of the Conflict between Migratory Birds and Electricity Power Grids in the African-Eurasian region” (document AEWA/MOP 5.38), and *concerned* that within the African-Eurasian region tens of millions of migratory birds are killed annually as a result of electrocution and collision, including storks, cranes, many other waterbird species, birds of prey, bustards and grouse,

Noting that many of the birds killed by electrocution and/or collision are internationally protected, including under AEWA, CMS and other CMS instruments,

Concerned that further research and monitoring on birds and power lines are urgently required, that only few studies are currently available which are sufficiently well-designed to assist in guiding policy, and that there is a serious geographical bias in research that needs to be addressed,

Recognising the conclusions and recommendations concerning birds and power lines presented in document AEWA/MOP 5.38 which, *inter alia*, highlight that the number of birds killed can be substantially reduced if mitigation measures are applied during the planning and construction of power lines,

Welcoming the “Guidelines on How to Avoid or Mitigate the Impact of Electricity Power Grids on Migratory Birds in the African-Eurasian Region” (document AEWA/MOP 5.37), which provide extensive practical guidance on, *inter alia*, mitigation measures, bird surveys and monitoring as well as the technical design of power lines,

Acknowledging that a number of Range States are already applying mitigation measures, for example, during planning of the location and route of new power lines,

Noting that the scale and significance of waterbird mortality as a result of collisions or electrocution with power lines and associated structures varies significantly between (and within) Contracting Parties, and accordingly, response measures need to be proportionate to risk,

Noting with satisfaction also the UNDP/GEF 'Migratory Soaring Birds Project', which is being implemented by BirdLife International, and which aims to ensure that the conservation needs of migratory soaring birds are addressed by industry, including the energy sector, along the Red Sea/Rift Valley Flyway, and the potential this project has to promote the implementation of this resolution and the above-mentioned guidelines at national and local levels,

Acknowledging with thanks the generous financial support provided by RWE Rhein-Ruhr Netzservice GmbH towards the development and production of the above-mentioned review (document AEWA/MOP 5.38) and conservation guidelines (document AEWA/MOP 5.37).

The Meeting of the Parties:

1. *Calls upon* the Parties and *encourages* the non-Contracting Parties to implement, as appropriate, the Guidelines on how to avoid or mitigate the impact of electricity power grids on migratory birds in the African-Eurasian region, adopted by Resolution 5.10, and to:

- 1.1 *apply* as far as possible the AEWA Conservation Guidelines No. 11 on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) procedures regarding the development of power lines;
- 1.2 *consult* regularly relevant stakeholders, including government agencies, scientific bodies, non-governmental organisations and the energy sector, in order to monitor jointly the impacts of power lines on waterbirds and to agree on a common policy of action;
- 1.3 *establish* a baseline of waterbird distribution, population sizes, migrations and movements, including those between breeding, resting and feeding areas, as early as possible in the

planning of any power line project, over a period of at least five years, and with particular emphasis on those species known to be vulnerable to electrocution or collision and if such studies identify any risks, to make every effort to ensure these are avoided;

- 1.4 *design* the location, route and direction of power lines on the basis of national zoning maps and avoid, wherever possible, construction along major migration flyways and in habitats of conservation importance¹, where there is a likelihood of significant effects on waterbirds;
- 1.5 *promote the* use of bird-safe designs in the construction of new power infrastructure, including the measures designed to reduce electrocution and collisions outlined in the Guidelines in document AEW/MOP 5.37;
- 1.6 *identify* those sections of existing power lines that are causing relatively high levels of waterbird injury and/or mortality due to electrocution and/or collision, and modify these as a matter of priority by applying the techniques recommended by the Guidelines in document AEW/MOP 5.37; and
- 1.7 *regularly* monitor and evaluate the impact of power lines on waterbird populations at the national scale, as well as the effectiveness of mitigation measures put in place to minimise the impact of power lines on waterbird populations;

2. *Urges* Parties and *invites* non-Contracting Parties, inter-governmental organisations and other relevant institutions, as appropriate, to include the measures contained in this Resolution in their National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans and relevant legislation, if applicable, in order to ensure that the impact of power lines on waterbird populations is minimised, and *calls on* Parties to report progress in implementing this Resolution to each Meeting of the Parties as part of their National Reports;

3. *Encourages* electricity companies to disseminate the Guidelines widely within their networks;

4. *Requests* the Technical Committee, resources permitting, to monitor the implementation of this Resolution in consultation with the CMS Scientific Council which is in charge of monitoring the CMS Resolution 10.11 and to provide further guidance when relevant new developments on reducing the impact of power lines on birds become available, such as improved mitigation techniques;

5. *Instructs* the Secretariat, in close cooperation with the CMS Secretariat, to consult the Secretariat of the Bern Convention in order to regularly update the examples of possible mitigation measures adopted as an appendix to Recommendation No. 110 of 2004, as appropriate, and to disseminate these to their respective Parties;

6. *Urges* Parties and *invites* UNEP and other relevant international organisations, as well as the energy sector, to financially support the implementation of this Resolution.

¹ such as Special Protection Areas under the EU Birds Directive, Important Bird Areas, protected areas, Ramsar sites, the West/Central Asian Site Network for Siberian Crane and other waterbirds and other critical sites as identified by the Critical Site Network (CSN) Tool for the African-Eurasian region.