



AGREEMENT ON THE CONSERVATION OF  
AFRICAN-EURASIAN MIGRATORY WATERBIRDS

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 5.16

**RENEWABLE ENERGY AND MIGRATORY WATERBIRDS**

*Recognising* the beneficial role of renewable energies in both mitigating and adapting to climate change and the significance of addressing issues arising from climate change for the long-term survival of migratory waterbirds as highlighted in Resolution 4.14 on the Effects of Climate Change on Migratory Waterbirds,

*Further recognising* that, as renewable power generation is estimated by the International Energy Agency to triple globally by 2035 with a similar increase expected in the use of biofuels, there is a need to assess and consequently address possible adverse effects from renewable energy sources on migratory waterbirds,

*Acknowledging* that wind energy installations in particular, can have both direct and indirect impacts on birds under some circumstances, for example, as concluded in the Bern Convention Report “Effects of Wind Farms on Birds”,

*Further acknowledging* that the production and use of biofuels can potentially have negative effects on biodiversity including the degradation of crucial waterbird habitats such as wetlands, depending on factors such as the feedstocks used, the mode and place of production and the agricultural practices used as highlighted in the draft Ramsar Technical Report “*Wetlands and Energy Issues: A Review on the Possible Implications of Policies, Plans and Activities in the Energy Sector for the Wise Use of Wetlands*”,

*Recalling* that, in accordance with Paragraph 4.3 of the AEWA Action Plan, Contracting Parties are required, *inter alia* to assess the impact of proposed projects which are likely to lead to conflicts between populations listed in Table 1 and human interests, to promote high environmental standards in the planning and construction of structures in order to minimise their impact on populations tabled under Table 1, and to consider steps to minimise any impact caused by existing structures,

*Further recalling* Resolutions 7.5 and 10.9 of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species on wind turbines and migratory species and on the conservation of migratory species in the light of climate change, which *inter alia* call for the application of strategic environmental impact assessments, the development of environmental sensitivity and zoning maps and post-construction monitoring of climate change mitigation and adaptation projects, such as bio-energy production, as well as guidelines for the construction of offshore wind farms aimed at minimising the negative impacts on migratory species,

*Recognising* Resolution X.25 of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands regarding wetlands and biofuels, which *inter alia* calls for the assessment of the potential impacts, benefits and risks of biofuel production, affecting wetlands,

*Further acknowledging* that negative impacts of some renewable energy installations on waterbirds can be substantially minimised through careful site selection, by learning from post-construction monitoring and by undertaking activities to mitigate adverse effects as highlighted *inter alia* in the World Bank working paper “*Good and Bad Dams: Environmental Criteria for Site Selection of Hydroelectric Projects*”,

*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.

*The Meeting of the Parties:*

1. *Calls upon* Contracting Parties to develop and strengthen national renewable energy planning and development to include monitoring in order to avoid and minimise adverse effects of renewable energy installations (including for biofuels) on waterbirds, and in particular to:

1.1 carefully evaluate potential sites for the development of new renewable energy installations where there is a likelihood of significant negative impacts on migratory waterbirds, *inter alia* by undertaking strategic environmental assessments and environmental impact assessments (SEA and EIA), developing sensitivity and zoning maps, thereby avoiding existing protected areas, such as Ramsar Sites and Special Protection Areas, or other sites of importance (including Important Bird Areas) where rigorous and complete SEA and EIA show significant negative impacts on migratory waterbirds;

1.2 in addition, where rigorous and complete SEA and EIA show significant negative impacts on migratory waterbirds, avoid sites located within the main migration corridors of migratory waterbirds which have been shown to experience high bird densities, such as wetlands, coastlines, ridges and other topographic features, also taking into consideration possible indirect effects such as disturbance, displacement, loss or deterioration of habitats;

1.3 strengthen, if necessary, national level cross-sectoral land-use planning and ensure that the vital needs of migratory waterbird species are mainstreamed within energy policy;

1.4 ensure that water usage in renewable energy processes does not affect critical waterbird habitats and is economised where this might be the case, and that possible negative impacts of construction of infrastructure related to renewable energy installations, such as the building of roads and power lines, are kept at the minimum level;

1.5 follow existing international environmental guidelines, recommendations and criteria for the project-level environmental impact assessment development and utilisation of renewable energy sources;

1.6 use AEWG Guideline No. 11 on how to avoid, minimise or mitigate the impacts of infrastructural developments and related disturbance affecting waterbirds and widely disseminate this to interested Parties;

1.7 encourage post-development monitoring of renewable energy installations and associated infrastructure in order to identify possible effects on biodiversity and ensure that lessons learned from post-development monitoring feed into the process for planning future developments;

1.8 encourage the mitigation of adverse effects of existing renewable energy installations and associated infrastructure where such effects have been identified;

1.9 share information from post-construction monitoring and mitigation measures in renewable energy installations on observed effects on migratory waterbirds and their habitats, so Parties can

benefit from lessons learned and so that cumulative impacts of renewable energy installations can be assessed at the flyway level;

1.10 consider, where damage cannot be avoided or mitigated, the possibility of compensation for damages to biodiversity resulting from the development of renewable energy installations in accordance with national legislation as well as Ramsar Resolution VII.24 *Compensation for lost wetland habitats and other functions* (1999) and Ramsar Resolution VIII.20 *General guidance for interpreting “urgent national interest” under Article 2.5 of the Convention and considering compensation under Article 4* (2002);

2. *Further calls upon* Contracting Parties to undertake specific measures to reduce the potential negative impact of terrestrial as well as marine wind farms on waterbirds, *inter alia* by:

2.1 encouraging wind farm operators to operate wind farms in ways that minimise bird mortality, for example by introducing short-term shutdowns during peak migration and minimising lighting in wind farms;

2.2 further encouraging the dismantling of wind turbines in existing installations, should waterbird mortality have an effect on the population status of a species and other mitigation measures have proved insufficient;

2.3 focusing research efforts on alleviating the negative effects on waterbirds from wind farms, such as the mapping of the main migration corridors and migration crossings for waterbirds also allowing the optimising of wind farm layouts;

3. *Further calls upon* Contracting Parties to pay particular attention and undertake specific measures to assess, identify and reduce potential negative impacts of biofuel production on waterbirds building on the approaches established in Resolution X.25 of the Ramsar Convention on wetlands and biofuels;

4. *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 renewable energy developments 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;

5. *Requests* the Technical Committee, in liaison with relevant industry bodies and other interested parties, to identify key knowledge gaps and/or deficiencies in guidance related to the impact of renewable energy production and migratory waterbirds, and make proposals as to how these might most effectively be filled.