



12th MEETING OF THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE
3 - 6 March 2015, Bonn, Germany

**COMMUNICATION FROM THE AEWA TECHNICAL COMMITTEE TO THE CMS
SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL INTERSESSIONAL WORKING GROUP ON
BIRD TAXONOMY AND NOMENCLATURE**

(Drafted by Technical Committee Working Group 3)

13 September 2011

WG3. Task d) – Drafted 13 September 2011**COMMUNICATION FROM THE AEWA TECHNICAL COMMITTEE TO
THE CMS SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL INTERSESSIONAL WORKING GROUP
ON BIRD TAXONOMY AND NOMENCLATURE**

The Contracting Parties through Resolution 4.11 instructed the AEWA Technical Committee to review taxonomic classifications of birds and suggest the most appropriate classification for the purposes of the Agreement. In relation to this task, the Technical Committee discussed the possible implications of the document '*Conclusions of the CMS Intersessional Working Group on Taxonomy*' produced by the CMS Scientific Council Intersessional Working Group on Bird Taxonomy and Nomenclature at its 10th Meeting held at Naivasha, Kenya, 12-16 September 2011.

Although the Technical Committee has taken note of the benefits of a harmonised taxonomy within the CMS family and beyond, it identified the following issues of concern in relation to the work of the Agreement:

- Application of the IUCN Red List status in relation to Category 1b of Column A;
- Assessment of conservation status of AEWA populations and their subsequent classification in Table 1 of the AEWA Action Plan and the reporting requirements established by Technical Committee for the Conservation Status Report pursuant to Art. 7.4a) of the AEWA Action Plan;
- The requirements related to the designation of internationally important areas pursuant to Art. 3.2.2 of the AEWA Action Plan and the relations in this respect to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands;
- The future operations of the Critical Site Network Tool which was developed to support the AEWA Contracting Parties and Secretariat in implementing the Agreement.

The taxonomy used by AEWA in Annex 2 and in Table 1 of the Action Plan has been closely aligned with the one used by Wetlands International and through that with the one of BirdLife International. These organisations regularly produce reports for the Agreement such as the Conservation Status Report and maintain an information portal, the Critical Site Network Tool, which supports the implementation of the Agreement. The existing alignment of the taxonomy of AEWA, Wetlands International and BirdLife International presents information management benefits for the Agreement by allowing the linking of various data sources for integrated analyses. A potential change to another taxonomy may undermine these benefits.

Considering these facts, the Technical Committee has compared the consequences of using the taxonomy of Dickinson and of BirdLife International. It presented the summary of its findings in the attached table.

In conclusion and in relation to the pragmatic and financial reasons outlined in the table below, the Technical Committee see a number of disadvantages of the use of the Dickinson taxonomy for the purposes of the Agreement in comparison to the BirdLife one. Therefore, the Technical Committee request the Intersessional Working Group of the CMS Scientific Council to consider these implications in the course of formulating its final recommendations to the Scientific Council.

AEWA's needs	Dickinson taxonomy	BirdLife taxonomy	Implications of not meeting the AEWa need
Correspondence of the AEWa taxonomy with the IUCN Red List taxonomy for the purpose of classification of populations under Column A1b	Potential divergence in time	It is the basis of the IUCN Red List assessment	Species not recognised by AEWa might be IUCN Red Listed, but will not be recognised in Column A1b
Taxonomy of Table 1 corresponds with the information sources of the Conservation Status Report	Because the taxonomy of sources underpinning the CSR are different from Dickinson, it will be complicated to link the AEWa Table 1 to data sources underpinning the CSR and Table 1 revisions for those taxa that do not correspond.	<p>WI has already adopted the BirdLife taxonomy in the Waterbird Population Estimates process (cf. joint workplan of Ramsar and AEWa)</p> <p>Analyses in the CSR are using the information stored in the BirdLife WBDB</p>	<p>Production of the Conservation Status Report will be much more time consuming and, therefore, expensive.</p> <p>It will be not possible to produce threat and habitat related analyses using the WBDB.</p>
According to Art. 3.2.2 of the AEWa Action Plan Contracting Parties Parties shall endeavour to give special protection to those wetlands which meet internationally accepted criteria of international importance. <i>Inter alia</i> , this refers to Criteria 2 and 6 of the Ramsar Convention. The former concerns endangered species (c.f. IUCN Red List), while the latter concerns sites holding more than 1% of a biogeographic population.	If taxonomy diverges, it will be complicated to use the Waterbird Population Estimates for applying the 1% threshold and the IUCN Red List for those taxa which do not correspond.	The 1% thresholds published in the Waterbird Population Estimates (using the BirdLife taxonomy) are recognised as the official basis for selecting sites of international importance under Ramsar Convention, the IBA and the SPA designation processes	

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The Critical Site Network Tool supports the implementation of AEWA in relation to site designation), site report and therefore the taxonomy used in the CSN need to correspond to Table 1 of AEWA	There will be no direct link between AEWA Table 1 and the information held in the CSN Tool for those taxa which do not correspond.	The CSN Tool is using the information stored in the BirdLife World Bird Database and layers are linked through the BirdLife taxonomy	It will require more time to convert the information held in the underlying datasets, which will result in higher maintenance costs