



AGREEMENT ON THE CONSERVATION OF
AFRICAN-EURASIAN MIGRATORY WATERBIRDS



6th SESSION OF THE MEETING OF THE PARTIES

9-14 November 2015, Bonn, Germany

“Making flyway conservation happen”

RESOLUTION 6.3

STRENGTHENING MONITORING OF MIGRATORY WATERBIRDS

Recalling Resolution 5.2 “Addressing gaps in knowledge of and conservation action for waterbird populations and sites important for them”, and further recalling Resolution 5.22 “Establishing a long-term basic structural funding regime for the International Waterbird Census in the African-Eurasian region”,

Taking note of the Report on the *Development of Waterbird Monitoring along the African-Eurasian Flyways* and the progress made towards achieving Targets 3.1. of the AEWA Strategic Plan 2009-2017 with respect to waterbird monitoring data gathering and *being aware* that sustainable funding is yet to be secured (document AEWA/MOP 6.24),

Gratefully acknowledging the contributions to the objectives of AEWA made by Contracting Parties, international donors, national and international non-governmental organisations, particularly through the AEWA African Initiative, the Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative, the *Conserving Migratory Waterbirds in West Africa* project, the *Mediterranean Waterbird Monitoring* project, the *Strengthening Waterbird Monitoring in the African-Eurasian Flyway* project, the *Adriatic Flyway Initiative*, the *Migratory Soaring Birds* project, and the *From the Arctic to Africa* project as examples of strategic regional initiatives for the conservation of waterbirds and their habitats,

Taking full account of document AEWA/MOP 6.14 “*Report on the Conservation Status of Migratory Waterbirds in the Agreement Area - 6th edition*” (aka CSR6),

Noting that the preliminary “*Report on the Site Network for Waterbirds in the Agreement Area - 1st edition*” (document AEWA/MOP 5.15) was not revised and finalised during the last triennium due to lack of funding,

Further noting that also due to lack of funding, the Technical Committee could not provide advice at MOP6 on the monitoring of seabirds and colonial breeding waterbirds, identify priorities for the systematic development of waterbird monitoring in order to reach the targets of the Strategic Plan 2009-2017, or revise the AEWA Conservation Guidelines on Waterbird Monitoring (document AEWA/MOP 6.7 *Report of the Technical Committee*),

Aware that only modest improvement of the knowledge of population sizes, with regard to quantity and quality, has been achieved since the 4th edition of the CSR (CSR4), with 2% of populations still lacking size estimates, only 12% of size estimates based on census data, and the remaining being either “best guess” (26%) or expert opinion (60%),

Further aware that the assessment of population trends shows that 28% of populations still lack any trend estimates, with most of the available estimates being poor (38%), only 28% reasonable and just 6% of good quality,

Concerned that a high proportion (36%) of populations with known trends continue to show declines compared to the 25% of populations which are increasing,

Noting that the International Waterbird Census (IWC) and the related schemes could provide a good basis for estimating population size and trends for 32% and 52% of the waterbird populations in the Agreement area respectively, provided that the coverage of these schemes is improved,

Further noting that the population size and trends estimates could be based on colonial breeding bird schemes in the Agreement area in the case of 32% and 27% of the populations, provided a comprehensive scheme covering the region existed,

Noting that the species with the least exhaustive or non-existent population size and trend estimates are usually those which cannot be covered by generic monitoring schemes, such as the IWC,

Further noting that the West and Central Asian regions, alongside the Afrotropical region, have the least exhaustive population size estimates, population trend estimates and highest proportion of declining populations,

Acknowledging that in CSR6, the increase of populations whose status is assessed on the basis of regular monitoring data has increased from 102 to 180, i.e. by 75% compared to CSR4, and thus exceeds the Strategic Plan target of 50%, but still represents only 32% of the populations listed in Table 1 of the AEWA Action Plan,

Extremely concerned that none of the eight status-related targets of the Strategic Plan were reached so far and in the case of five of the eight targets, the situation has worsened,

Acknowledging the usefulness of the Critical Site Network Tool for a number of international and national processes under the Agreement *but noting* that the Tool is gradually becoming outdated both technologically and data-wise,

Recognising that other MEAs, particularly the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands and the Convention on Migratory Species, as well as the EU Birds Directive, require regular waterbird monitoring data for their operations, such as Ramsar criteria 5 and 6 for the designation of wetlands of international importance whose applicability is linked to the Waterbird Population Estimates which is largely derived from IWC data,

Taking into account the conclusions and recommendations of the Standing Committee report to MOP6 on the *Progress of implementation of the AEWA Strategic Plan 2009-2017* (document AEWA/MOP 6.12),

Being aware that the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat is represented in the African-Eurasian Waterbird Monitoring Partnership¹.

The Meeting of the Parties:

1. *Urges* the Contracting Parties to ensure that the objectives of AEWA are incorporated into National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) and other strategic planning processes;
2. *Welcomes* the progress made by the Waterbird Monitoring Partnership and *encourages* the Partnership to continue its work;
3. *Invites* the organisations participating in the African-Eurasian Waterbird Monitoring Partnership to jointly establish a Fund to resource waterbird monitoring activities and *urges* Parties to regularly contribute to it;
4. *Invites* the Strategic Working Group of the Waterbird Monitoring Partnership to decide priorities for using the resources of the Fund in consultation with the AEWA Technical Committee;

¹ <http://www.wetlands.org/AfricanEurasianWaterbirdCensus/WaterbirdMonitoringPartnership/tabid/2789/Default.aspx>

5. *Invites* the Waterbird Monitoring Partnership to inform the MOP at each of its sessions on amounts raised, the use of the resources and remaining gaps as part of broader reporting on the development of waterbird monitoring;
6. *Invites* Contracting Parties, non-governmental organisations and other organisations to use the World Migratory Bird Day events as fundraising opportunities and to contribute to the Fund;
7. *Urges* Contracting Parties and requests other stakeholders to incorporate waterbird monitoring into the twinning schemes they were encouraged to establish under Resolution 5.20 or other flyway-related collaborative programmes;
8. *Requests* the Waterbird Monitoring Partnership to identify funding needs for waterbird monitoring development and through the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat inform Contracting Parties and other stakeholders about gaps to be filled on an annual basis;
9. *Encourages* Contracting Parties to prioritise and allocate funding for waterbird monitoring at the national level;
10. *Urges* Contracting Parties and organisations to provide financial support for the development of advice to MOP7 on the monitoring of seabirds and colonial breeding waterbirds, the revision of the AEWA Conservation Guidelines on waterbird monitoring, and the identification priorities for the systematic development of waterbird monitoring;
11. *Further urges* Contracting Parties and organisations to provide financial support for the further development of the draft “*Report on the Site Network for Waterbirds in the Agreement area – 1st edition*”, including the development of a site reporting module in the national report format to facilitate work on the Report, so as to allow its submission to MOP7;
12. *Requests* the Wings Over Wetlands Partnership to undertake a process of revamping the Critical Site Network Tool and to establish a procedure for its regular technological maintenance and data update;
13. *Urges* Contracting Parties, the Standing and Technical Committees, and the Secretariat to provide for the implementation of the recommendations of the Standing Committee report to MOP6 on the *Progress of implementation of the AEWA Strategic Plan 2009-2017* (document AEWA/MOP 6.12), as necessary;
14. *Invites* the Technical Committee and the Secretariat to work with the Ramsar Scientific and Technical Review Panel and the Ramsar Convention Secretariat to identify possible synergies with respect to waterbird monitoring, taking into account the Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016-2021, Targets 11 and 13, and the possible development of further indicators for Target 5 related to coverage of wetland-dependent bird populations by designated Ramsar Sites.