



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 6.4

CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE USE OF MIGRATORY WATERBIRDS

Recalling Article III 2b of the Agreement requires that Parties shall “ensure that any use of migratory waterbirds is based on an assessment of the best available knowledge of their ecology and is sustainable for the species as well as for the ecological systems that support them”,

Recalling also that Section 2.1 of the Agreement’s Action Plan provides a regulatory framework to identify those species and populations which should be subject to legal protection as well as those which may be subject to harvest management, and that the triennial *Conservation Status Review* (AEWA/MOP 6.14) is a review process which enables Table 1 of the Action Plan to reflect the most recent information on the population status (Resolution 6.1),

Noting that Target 1.1 of Objective 1 of the AEWA Strategic Plan 2009-2017 is that “Full legal protection is provided to all Column A species”,

Further noting that Objective 2 of the AEWA Strategic Plan 2009-2017 is “To ensure that any use of waterbirds in the Agreement area is sustainable” and the five associated targets relate to the phase out of lead shot in wetlands; the implementation of internationally coordinated harvest data collection; the elimination of illegal taking of waterbirds, including poison baits and non-selective methods of taking; the development and promotion of best practice codes and standards for hunting; and the implementation of adaptive harvest management at international scale,

Aware however, that some Parties have yet to ensure that their national legislation gives full protection to those populations occurring within their territory which are listed in Column A of Table 1 of the Action Plan, in order to ensure their fulfilment of obligations under the Agreement in this regard,

Noting that, under the African Initiative, national lists of Column A populations have been generated for the current African Contracting Parties, and after checking by the Technical Committee, these lists will assist African Contracting Parties to analyse any gaps in their national legislation with regard to the conservation of such high priority species,

Conscious of the social and economic importance of waterbird harvests for local communities in many parts of the Agreement area and of archaeological evidence which extends back to the earliest periods of human history, and that such harvests are a valuable ecosystem service derived from wetlands and other habitats,

Aware that there is little information about the nature and extent of waterbird harvests, and its legal and cultural regulation in Africa, the Middle East, and Central Asia on which assessments of sustainability can be based, and that accordingly the Technical Committee has identified the need for such data and information as being a strategic priority in order to be able to better advise Parties on this issue,

Noting that the need to ensure the sustainability of any use of migratory waterbirds, is a central theme of the Agreement's Action Plan, and has been the focus of much consideration by the Meeting of Parties, *inter alia* in the contexts of ensuring the protection of threatened species under national legalisation; phasing out the use of lead shot; reducing disturbance from hunting as well as other activities; suspending hunting during emergency situations, such as periods of extreme cold; and the need to assess and report on bags and hunting mortality,

Welcoming the continued collaboration with, and active support for AEWA from international organisations concerned with hunting and, through them, with their national partner organisations,

Noting that for quarry species with an unfavourable conservation status, the drivers of population change may be incompletely understood; hunting may or may not be a key driver of population change, or may be one of a number of factors influencing population change,

Aware that biological assessments of sustainability rely on population-scale measures of mortality and productivity, information about which is rarely available, and *further aware* that the need for internationally harmonised programmes to collate relevant data and information has long been a priority on the list of AEWA International Implementation Tasks (document AEWA/MOP6.18 and Resolution 6.13), but has yet to be realised,

Noting from the synthesis of National Reports submitted to MOP6 (document AEWA/MOP 6.13), that, of the 39 Parties submitting reports:

- a total of 29 (74%) confirmed the existence of a scheme to collect harvest data, but that 42 Parties either provided no report (32) or did not indicate the presence of such a national scheme (10),
- a total of 22 reported that lead shot has now been fully (17) or partially (5) phased out, another 12 confirmed that further work is needed to achieve Strategic Plan Target 2.1, but that 44 Parties either provided no report (32) or reported no progress (12) to this end, and
- a total of 37 confirmed that measures are in place to reduce or eliminate illegal taking of waterbirds within their country, however, 34 other Parties either provided no report (32) or reported no such measures (2),

Recalling that the deadline established by the Strategic Plan for the phase out of lead shot for hunting in wetlands by all Contracting Parties is 2017, and *welcoming* the adoption of the *CMS Guidelines to Prevent the Risk of Poisoning to Migratory Birds*, through CMS Resolution 11.15,

Welcoming also the revised AEWA Guidelines on Sustainable Harvest of Migratory Waterbirds, adopted by Resolution 6.5, which provide a major impetus for further development of sustainable use initiatives under AEWA,

Welcoming the Guidance on Measures in National Legislation for Different Populations of the Same Species, Particularly with Respect to Hunting and Trade adopted by Resolution 6.7 and the draft Guidance on Dealing with the Accidental Shooting of Look-Alike Species in the Western Palearctic which is to be further elaborated and extended by the Technical Committee for submission to MOP7 (document AEWA/MOP Inf. 6.1),

Noting the relevance of Resolution 6.12 on avoiding unnecessary additional mortality for migratory waterbirds in respect of measures to eliminate illegal killing,

Further noting the conclusions of the international conference on goose management in Europe that was hosted by the Danish Nature Agency and Aarhus University on 27-29 October 2015 (document AEWA/MOP Inf. 6.14) and *recognising* the need for a coordinated management approach to the Barnacle Goose (*Branta leucopsis*) as well as other goose species in Europe, particularly those with overabundant populations,

Taking into account the conclusions and recommendations of the Update on the Status of Non-native Waterbird Species within the AEWA Area (document AEWA/MOP 6.15),

Concerned that a number of non-native waterbird species appear to have increased substantially in several countries since 2008 and, in particular, those identified as posing high or very high risks still have well-established populations and some continue to increase in numbers and distribution,

Acknowledging that many Contracting Parties have legal and practical frameworks in place to prevent the introduction and spread of invasive alien species.

The Meeting of the Parties:

1. *Urges* Parties as a matter of high priority and urgency to ensure that their legislative lists of protected species are fully in conformity with the requirements of section 2.1 of the Agreement's Action Plan, such that where populations listed in Column A of Table 1 regularly occur within their territories they are subject to full legal protection or, when applicable, that harvesting is undertaken only in conformity with the recommendations of the respective International Species Action Plans established in application of paragraphs 2.1.1 and 2.2.2 of the AEWA Action Plan for Column A Category 2 and 3 populations marked with an asterisk and Column A Category 4 populations;
2. *Requests* the Technical Committee and Secretariat, resources permitting, to develop national lists of Column A populations for all Parties in the Middle East, Europe and Central Asia and communicate these with the respective countries to assist any necessary process of national legislative revision for the species concerned, while recognising that the Critical Site Network Tool¹ can provide the Parties with the possibility of generating such national lists by themselves if such a functionality is built in and datasets are regularly updated;
3. *Requests* Parties to provide the Technical Committee with further national examples of policies and other means of reducing the risk of accidental shooting of look-alike species such that fully elaborated guidance can be brought to MOP7, pursuant to Resolution 6.7;
4. *Calls* on Parties to ensure that the revised AEWA Guidelines on Sustainable Harvest of Migratory Waterbirds (Resolution 6.5 and document AEWA/MOP 6.36) are fully employed in the implementation of the Agreement, and that further sustainable use and adaptive harvest management initiatives are developed to support AEWA's goal that all use of migratory waterbirds is sustainable and based on relevant, available data;
5. *Welcomes* the action of Switzerland to ban the use of lead shot for waterbird hunting and *urges* those Parties that have not done so yet to similarly publish timetables for the phasing out of lead shot use for hunting in wetlands, in accordance with paragraph 4.1.4 of the AEWA Action Plan, and to inform the Secretariat to that end;
6. *Recognises* that for undertaking adaptive management of harvest, the minimum data required are population size and trends and amount of harvest, and *urges* the Parties and other Range States to strengthen their waterbird monitoring schemes and to establish or step up harvest data collection, ideally through a coordinated international approach, as well as to reduce to a minimum the time lag between data recording and reporting;
7. *Requests* Parties, through the provision of data and information, to assist the Technical Committee in the review of nature and extent of waterbird harvests, and its legal and cultural regulation especially in, but not restricted to, Africa, the Middle East, and Central Asia, in particular with information about waterbird harvests as a wetland ecosystem service;
8. *Requests* the Technical Committee, subject to the availability of financial resources, to seek information from Parties and stakeholders as to which further tools and guidance would be helpful to them in

¹ <http://wow.wetlands.org/INFORMATIONFLYWAY/CRITICALSITENETWORKTOOL/tabid/1349/language/en-US/Default.aspx>

the context of ensuring that hunting is sustainable, together with seeking a better understanding as to which audiences these tools should be targeted at and the most appropriate means by which this could be undertaken, and to build this information into future planning of the Committee's own work;

9. *Requests* the Secretariat to facilitate, subject to the availability of financial resources, the establishment of a European multispecies goose management platform and process to address sustainable use of goose populations and to provide for the resolution of human-goose conflicts, targeting as a matter of priority, Barnacle (*Branta leucopsis*) and Greylag (*Anser anser*) Geese populations for which management plans are yet to be developed as well as the Svalbard population of the Pink-footed Goose (*Anser brachyrhynchus*) and the Taiga Bean Goose (*Anser fabalis fabalis*) for which plans are already in place, and *invites* interested Parties, Range States and other stakeholders to engage pro-actively in this initiative, including by providing appropriate resources for the maintenance and the functioning of the platform and report progress to MOP7;

10. *Urges* the Range States of the high and very high risk non-native waterbird species populations to increase and coordinate their efforts to contain, control and as much as possible eradicate these populations, in particular the Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*) in Southern Africa, the Greater Canada Goose (*Branta canadensis*), the Egyptian Goose (*Alopochen aegyptiaca*) and the Black Swan (*Cygnus atratus*) in a number of European countries the Cackling Goose (*Branta hutchinsii*) in Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands, the Ruddy Duck (*Oxyura jamaicensis*) throughout Europe, and the Sacred Ibis (*Threskiornis aethiopicus*) mostly in south-central Europe;

11. *Encourages* Contracting Parties to align species lists established under their regional or national frameworks for the prevention of the introduction and spread of invasive alien species within the context of AEWA priorities in order to provide effective means of coordinated action within the AEWA area;

12. *Encourages* Contracting Parties to align action plans to address priority pathways for the prevention of the introduction and spread of invasive alien species with the AEWA Action Plan, the AEWA International and National Single Species Action Plans and other relevant national, regional and international plans, as necessary;

13. *Urges* Contracting Parties to support research on risks posed by non-native waterbirds and further detailed analysis of the population status of the non-native waterbird species identified within the AEWA area, including the adverse impacts they have on AEWA native species and their habitats;

14. *Requests* the Technical Committee to contribute to the development of internationally-agreed standards and guidance for risk assessment with respect to non-native waterbirds in order to facilitate the implementation of the Agreement and related legal instruments.