



AEWA LESSER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE INTERNATIONAL WORKING GROUP



Date: 23.9.2016

3rd Meeting of the AEWA Lesser White-fronted Goose International Working Group

12-14 April 2016 - Trondheim, Norway

Meeting Report

Opening of the meeting

Opening and welcome

The Head of the Wildlife Section of the Norwegian Environment Agency, Mr. Knut Morten Vangen opened the meeting by welcoming the participants to Trondheim and the Agency premises. Vangen highlighted the strong political support within Norway for improving the status of the Lesser White-fronted Goose, which has led to funds also being available to support activities outside of the country. Vangen thanked all the partners along the flyway for their continued conservation efforts for the species and indicated that Norway will continue to support such activities and that the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat will continue to play a key role in coordinating the international activities and support.

The Chair of the Working Group Mr. Üllar Rammul (Estonia) also welcomed meeting participants, particularly thanking Mr. Øystein Størkersen from the Norwegian Environment Agency for his role in organizing and hosting the meeting. Rammul extended a special welcome to those participants attending a meeting of the International Working Group for the first time. Rammul noted the challenging but interesting meeting agenda and wished everyone a successful meeting.

The Lesser White-fronted Goose Working Group Coordinator Ms. Nina Mikander also welcomed participants on behalf of the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat and joined the Chair in thanking the Norwegian Environment Agency for the generous invitation to host the meeting. Mikander further encouraged everyone to participate actively during the meeting - in particular during the break-out groups scheduled for day two - and to make use of the presence of colleagues and experts to plan future work.

Adoption of the agenda

Sweden requested to have time for a short presentation on the status of their population during the meeting. The Chair confirmed that time would be made for the presentation – if possible at the end of day one. No additional comments to the agenda were made.

Decision: The agenda (Doc. LWfG IWG 3.1) was adopted with the change proposed by Sweden.

Admission of observers

The Chair requested the Working Group to admit the representatives from China and Japan to the meeting as observers, following the invitation of the Working Group to open the meeting to range states from the flyway of the Eastern main population. The Chair also noted that the Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust (WWT) as well as Wetlands International, whose representatives were present at the current meeting, had been confirmed as permanent observer organizations to the Working Group at its first meeting in 2010.

Decision: China and Japan were admitted to the meeting as observers.



The 3rd Meeting of the AEWA Lesser White-fronted Goose International Working Group is being hosted by the Norwegian Environment Agency with additional funding provided by the EU LIFE+ project "Safeguarding the Lesser White-fronted Goose along its European Flyway" [LIFE10 NAT/GR/000638].

Update on the global status of the Fennoscandian, Western and Eastern main populations

Meeting participants were provided with updates on the current status of the Fennoscandian, Western and Eastern main Lesser White-fronted Goose populations, presented by Mr. Ingar Øien (Norway), Mr. Vladimir Morozov (Russia), Mr. Masayuki Kurechi (Japan) and Ms. Cao Lei (China) respectively.

Implementation progress and revision of AEWA LWfG International Single Species Action Plan

Report on the implementation of the AEWA LWfG Action Plan

Mikander (UNEP/AEWA) introduced document LWfG IWG 3.2. A general review on the implementation of International Species Action and Management Plans under AEWA was undertaken in 2015 for the 6th Meeting of the AEWA Parties. The AEWA Lesser White-fronted Goose Action Plan was included in the review, which was based on questionnaires submitted by the range states.

Of the 15 range states that submitted completed questionnaires for the review, no country reported a short-term decreasing trend for the Lesser White-fronted Goose with 50% of responding countries reporting the short-term trend to be either stable or increasing. However, the overall population estimate and trend for the Western main population in particular remains uncertain and the long term species trend is still less positive.

All countries that provided feedback reported having made (at least) some progress with regard to the implementation of Action Plan activities, with an average implementation rate of 43%. Progress has been made on reaching the short term goals of the Plan: i.e. the rate of decline has been halted or reduced and a recovery of at least one of the populations has started. However, serious gaps in the implementation of conservation actions still remain and the actual overall status of the species still remains uncertain.

Main essential recommendations resulting from the review included: revision of the current Action Plan (subject to a decision by the LWfG IWG); development and adoption of an inter-sessional work plan; sourcing more funding for prioritized work as identified in the work plan; strengthening and making better use of available human capacity and technical know-how as well as the LWfG expert network; increasing cooperation and exchange with other relevant international, government and economic sectors as well as experts, in particular with regard to hunting and habitat use/management; and ensuring active Working Group membership of all Principal Range States.

Mikander requested the meeting participants to keep the conclusions and resulting recommendations in mind during the coming discussions – particularly when preparing the Working Group workplan for the next inter-sessional period.

Report on the AEWA LWfG budget

Mikander (UNEP/AEWA) introduced document LWfG IWG 3.3. The Working Group has no established budget as such, instead funding for all Working Group activities (coordinator, meetings, projects etc.) is provided by range states in the form of voluntary contributions as well as through project funds.

The total expenditure for the facilitation of Working Group activities (coordination and meetings) during the previous inter-sessional period between January 2013 – April 2016 was 383.560€. The estimated expenditure for the next four years (May 2016 – December 2019) is 512.000€ (coordination, 4th IWG meeting, costs linked to possible revision of Action Plan, website etc.). The coordination of the Working Group facilitated by the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat is secured until the end of 2017 thanks to a voluntary contribution by Norway. As such the budget gap for the running costs for the next inter-sessional period is estimated at approximately 303.000€.

With regard to international projects and funding, many of the key international conservation actions within the European flyway were implemented and funded within the framework of the EU LIFE+ project, in addition to national activities funded directly through national budgets. Voluntary contributions provided by Norway and Finland during 2013-2015 (approximately 160.000€) were used to fund conservation action, research and monitoring expeditions mainly in Azerbaijan, Iran and Russia. In addition, Mikander highlighted the valuable in-kind contribution provided by many people throughout the network, who had dedicated their time to the various projects and activities.

In order to streamline and increase future fundraising efforts and subsequently also the implementation of activities, Mikander noted the importance of better planning in the form of a work plan outlining not only priority actions but also funding needs. This is also expected to assist in identifying where and when we can possibly link up to bigger projects and initiatives. Mikander also mentioned that new administrative procedures adopted throughout the UN has made the funding of projects even more cumbersome than before.

Mikander inquired whether countries would like to establish a budget for the running costs of facilitating the work of the Group, or whether the costs should continue to be covered on an ad hoc basis with funding from voluntary contributions and/or via various project budgets.

Discussion:

Elchin Sultanov (AOS/BirdLife Azerbaijan) commented that since the Working Group has been convened under AEWA, funding for its work should be made available from the AEWA budget. Dereliev (UNEP/AEWA) noted that the AEWA Working Groups are all explicitly in charge of raising their own funding for their activities and for covering running costs and that the AEWA core budget does not contain any extra funds for implementation activities of any kind and for running Species Working Groups. The strong involvement of the Secretariat in the Lesser White-fronted Goose Working Group is only possible, because of the external funding for the Coordinator position situated at the Secretariat provided by Norway.

Decision: The budget for the activities of the Working Group will continue to be funded through voluntary contributions of range states as well as through projects were applicable. The UNEP/AEWA Secretariat will continue to host the Working Group Coordinator providing that sufficient funding is available. The Working Group funding needs will also be included in the workplan.

Revision of the AEWA LWfG ISSAP

The Chair presented the agenda point and introduced document LWfG IWG 3.4, stressing that the intention was not to go into details or substantive issues but to discuss and agree on a course of action on how to proceed with the revision of the AEWA Action Plan for the species which has been pending for several years now.

The current international Action Plan for the Lesser White-fronted Goose was adopted by the AEWA Parties in 2008 and a revision was foreseen five years thereafter in 2013. The revision process was started at the 2nd Meeting of the AEWA LWfG Working Group in November 2012 with the goal to submit a draft revised Action Plan for adoption at the 6th Meeting of the AEWA Parties in 2015, but unfortunately, no final agreement on the revised plan could be reached amongst all range states. The AEWA Standing Committee therefore withdrew the draft plan from the MOP6 agenda, but encouraged range states to consider relaunching the process during the next triennium (2016-2018). The Standing Committee further confirmed that the AEWA LWfG Action Plan from 2008 remains valid and in place for implementation until a new revised and agreed Plan is adopted on an interim basis by the Standing Committee. As the body under AEWA charged with the revision of the Action Plan, the LWfG Working Group now needs to reach an agreement on how to proceed.

The Chair outlined the following three possible options for proceeding with the revision of the Action Plan and then opened the floor for comments from the range states.

Option 1) A final one-off attempt (subject to a tight deadline) is made to have all populations of Lesser White-fronted Geese included in the revised Action Plan;

Option 2) The scope of the Action Plan is modified to include only the AEWA-listed populations, which are already targeted and prioritized for conservation action under the current Action Plan (Fennoscandian and Western main populations + the Eastern main population);

Option 3) No revision is undertaken at this time and the 2008 Action Plan remains valid for implementation.

Discussion:

Mr. Øystein Størkersen (Norway) commented that much work and time had already gone into the revision of the International Action Plan. Both from the political and conservation management side, Norway is very much interested in this species and is still positive with regard to remaining one of the lead partners in the international as well as the national work. Norway expects the revision of the Action Plan to serve as a catalyst

for promoting and soliciting more activities in other range states. Norway sees the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat as the natural partner in coordinating these activities along the flyway. Norway also wants to maintain the Fennoscandian population, which breeds in Norway, across its natural flyways using the natural migratory route.

Norway, does not support the inclusion of the Swedish population in the revised Action Plan and noted that there was no mandate under AEWA to support its inclusion. Størkersen also inquired about the mandate for working with the Eastern main population, which should be covered under the Arctic Migratory Bird Initiative (AMBI) and concluded that it is not necessary to include the Eastern main population under the revised Action Plan at this time.

Øien (BirdLife Norway) added that the Swedish population is seen as a threat to the Fennoscandian population. The conservation projects working on behalf of the Fennoscandian population along its migratory routes are worried about the ongoing developments and the increasing actions along the Swedish flyway.

Dereliev (UNEP/AEWA) noted that with regard to the Eastern main population the goal is to assist the relevant range states in developing an Action Plan for their flyway, as was requested and mandated by the Working Group at its last meeting. The formal framework for this Plan could be the East Asia-Australasia Flyway Partnership. But the intention is also to involve the range states in the international framework of the AEWA LWfG International Working Group, allowing all flyways to profit from each other.

Ms. Nela Miauta (Romania) commented that as a Contracting Party to both AEWA and CMS, Romania supports Norway on this issue and prefers option 2.

Mr. David Schönberg-Alm (Sweden) noted that Sweden does not agree with the statements made by Norway concerning the Swedish population. Further noting that the Chair had requested countries not to go into details during this discussion, Schönberg-Alm confirmed that Sweden wishes for the Plan to be revised and for the Swedish population to be included in the revised Plan. So Sweden would prefer option 1 but would consider option 3 as a last resort.

Mr. Petteri Tolvanen (WWF Finland), speaking on behalf of the Finnish Ministry of Environment, noted that Finland shares the position of Norway and supports the second option. Tolvanen also stressed that the situation regarding the revision of the Plan needs to be resolved and that an update is urgently needed. The range states need to be able to move forward with the plan and to advance the conservation work.

Ms. Wilmar Remmelts (Netherlands) noted that the Netherlands is also in favour of moving forward with regard to the revision of the Action Plan and that all range states should move forward together. The Netherlands therefore supported Sweden and option 1, noting that the only way to secure cooperation and control of what is happening in the respective flyways is if all range states are in the plan.

Ms. Eleni Giakoumi (Greece) informed the Working Group that Greece has made significant progress with regard to the ratification of AEWA. The preference of Greece would be either option 2 or 3. Greece has serious concerns regarding the Swedish population and that it will undermine the ongoing conservation efforts for the Fennoscandian population.

Mr. Reidar Hindrum (Norway), who serves as the current Chair of the Arctic Council's biodiversity working group CAFF, noted that the aforementioned Arctic Migratory Bird Initiative will indeed complement the work of AEWA and the EAAFP. Hindrum further noted that the populations for which activities are included in the AMBI workplan are the Fennoscandian, Western and Eastern main populations.

Mr. David Bogyo (Hungary) also supported the second option, citing the good work and conservation progress achieved for the Fennoscandian population during the last two large-scale LIFE projects. For Hungary, and especially the Hortobagy National Park, the Lesser White-fronted Goose is a flagship species. If there is even a slight chance that there is a threat to this small population, any option or action that would support that threat should not be chosen.

Mr. Sergey Sklyarenko (ACBK/BirdLife Kazakhstan), speaking on behalf of the Committee for Forestry and Wildlife of the Ministry of Agriculture of Kazakhstan, noted that the very small Swedish population exists and despite its origins it is a population of Lesser White-fronted Geese. Kazakhstan would be able to support option 2, but from a political point of view option 1 might be better.

The Chair summarized the discussion by concluding that there is a clear will to move forward from the 2008 Action Plan, but that positions differed on how this should be done. The Chair requested that the main range states with differing positions meet in a break-out group during lunch to try and reach agreement on how to move forward.

Later in the day, Dereliev (UNEP/AEWA) reported back to the Working Group on the outcomes of the break-out group discussion. The suggestion was to go for option 1 (i.e. another attempt at a revision that includes also the Swedish population), with a strict three-month deadline. Should no agreement be reached, option 2 will be the fall-back option (i.e. only the AEWA-listed populations will be included in the revised Plan).

Decision: Within a month from this meeting, all range states who wish to submit comments to the July 2015 consultation draft of the plan should do so. The Secretariat will compile a full list of conflicting points after one month and will convene a face-to-face meeting in Bonn in the middle of June - providing that the conflicting points are negotiable - to try and reach a consensus and agreement if possible. If a compromise is found, a new draft will be submitted to Working Group for comments in mid-July. If no compromise is found, the fall-back option will be number two as outlined in meeting document LWfG IWG Doc. 3.4.¹

Adjustment of the national reporting format

Mikander (UNEP/AEWA) clarified that the national reporting format adopted by the Working Group in 2010 would have to be modified before the reporting cycle in the run-up to the next meeting, in order to reflect a possible revised Action Plan as well as the 2016-2019 workplan.

Decision: The Secretariat will circulate a proposal for revising the reporting format inter-sessionally for approval by the Working Group.

Possible listing of LWfG under CITES

Mikander (UNEP/AEWA) noted that inquiries had been made inter-sessionally by some Working Group members regarding the possibility to list the Lesser White-fronted Goose under CITES. Mikander invited Mr. Øystein Størkersen (Norway) as the current Chair of the CITES Standing Committee to clarify what such a proposal would require and whether it would be possible.

Størkersen briefly explained the CITES listing procedure including the necessary requirements for the listing of new species under the Convention, noting in particular the need for evidence of any international trade (of eggs, birds, parts of birds etc.) or of intended international trade. The listing process itself is demanding and involves, for example a hearing of the involved range states. The proponent has to be a CITES Party – it could be Norway for instance – and proposals have to be submitted to the CITES Secretariat six months before the COP. It is therefore already too late to prepare a proposal for the next CITES COP taking place in September-October 2016. A proposal could only be submitted to COP18 in 2019 at the earliest.

Discussion:

Mr. Sergey Sklyarenko (ACBK/BirdLife Kazakhstan) commented that unless there is compelling evidence for international trade, it does not make sense to list the species under CITES as this will massively complicate scientific work and research (for example with regard to moving samples between countries). Dereliev (UNEP/AEWA) noted that international trade has not been identified as a threat to the species thus far.

Mr. Tomas Aarvak (NOF/BirdLife Norway) noted that there is evidence of large amounts of feral birds being traded within countries. Dereliev agreed that there is evidence of domestic trade, but noted that this is not something that CITES can help with. Illegal domestic trade has to be regulated through the national legislation of the respective countries and through AEWA. Any taking of Lesser White-fronted Geese is already forbidden under AEWA for AEWA Contracting Parties.

Størkersen concluded that if a proposal is submitted it could be under CITES Appendix I, i.e. a ban on all trade in wild collected birds, or Appendix II, i.e. allowing trade both with captive bred and wild birds. Størkersen

¹ Note: The European Commission has since initiated an EU coordination process amongst the relevant EU Member States regarding the scope of a future revised AEWA LWfG ISSAP, with a face-to-face meeting scheduled for November 2016. Thus the process under the AEWA LWfG IWG has been put on hold in anticipation of the outcome of the EU process.

encouraged everyone to keep in mind the CITES listing option and to report any information that they may come across related to the international trade of the species. Dereliev suggested that a field to collect this information could be added to the revised national reporting format.

Decision: No steps will be taken to pursue the listing of the Lesser White-fronted Goose under CITES at present. Range states and expert organizations are encouraged to pass on any information regarding possible cross-border trade of the species to the Working Group Coordinator. In addition, a question regarding cross-border international trade will be added to the revised reporting template.

Network of critical sites and common monitoring scheme

Report on the network of critical sites

Tomas Aarvak (NOF/BirdLife Norway) presented an update on the network of critical sites, highlighting new information from satellite-tracking as well as monitoring efforts. On the basis of this latest information, Mikander (UNEP/AEWA) introduced a draft list of nine sites/range states (Doc. LWfG IWG 3.5), suggested to be prioritized for urgent conservation action within the next four years. Mr. Szabolcs Nagy (Wetlands International) presented the BirdLife IBA site assessment template on the basis of which selected sites should be assessed to determine threats and next steps in terms of their better management/protection for Lesser White-fronted Geese.

Discussion:

Morozov (Russia) noted that there is new information about a key autumn stop-over site for the species in the Nenets autonomous area in northern Russia which is thought to be used by some 2.000-3.000 individuals for a period of ca. two weeks. The exact migration route of these birds is, however, unclear. Further observations are needed to understand the importance of the site for the species.

Mr. Kees Koffijberg (Netherlands) inquired whether some of the current assumptions regarding the migratory routes of the species should be revisited, noting that recent satellite-tracking data of Bewick's Swans breeding on the Yamal peninsula had shown that at least some birds migrate to the East Asian flyway. It could therefore be possible that Lesser White-fronted Geese breeding in Yamal also go east.

Decision: The list of 9 prioritized sites/range states as proposed in Doc. LWfG IWG 3.5 was adopted. The range states with selected sites will work together with Nagy and the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat to prepare basic site assessments for each site including necessary next steps. Further research will be undertaken to assess the importance of the new stop-over site in Russia. Identified actions for the selected sites will be included into the 2016-2019 workplan.

Report on the LWfG Common Monitoring Scheme

Mr. Petteri Tolvanen (WWF Finland) presented progress made with regard to the common monitoring scheme established at the 2nd Working Group meeting in 2012. Mr. Tomas Aarvak (NOF/BirdLife Norway) presented the common Lesser White-fronted Geese monitoring database (www.piskulka.net) hosted by NOF/BirdLife Norway. Although good progress has been made in establishing and training national monitoring teams (particularly in Europe), gaps still remain with regard to monitoring and reporting observations on the common database. Range states were requested to indicate what kind of support they would need in order to be able to increase their monitoring efforts.

Discussion:

Mr. Hamid Amini (Iran) noted that further awareness-raising amongst hunters and local people with regard to the species is needed as well as promotion of monitoring activities and habitat conservation. Continued assistance from the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat for such activities, in particular with regard to funding, would be needed.

Sklyarenko (ACBK/BirdLife Kazakhstan) commented that the need for additional funding in order to carry out proper surveys is clear. But besides the lack of funding, the lack of experienced observers in Kazakhstan – particularly in autumn – constitutes a major gap. The best way to ensure adequate monitoring is to use additional observers from outside of Kazakhstan.

Sultanov (AOS/BirdLife Azerbaijan) noted that having smaller amounts of funding over a longer period of time would be the best approach to guarantee monitoring. Local people don't necessarily have vehicles to travel or proper equipment to find the birds.

Mr. Julius Morkunas (BirdLife Lithuania) noted that there are a quite a good number of observers in Lithuania, but that sometimes it would be good to have some more support for example in terms of equipment or some small activities to keep the monitoring network going.

Bogyo (Hungary) encouraged everyone to follow the example of Hungary and to insert all (also older) observations of Lesser White-fronted Geese into the piskulka database. This action does not require additional funds, only staff time. For Hungary additional support in the form of a computer for the assessment of data would be useful.

Mikander (UNEP/AEWA) inquired about possible needs related to monitoring in Turkmenistan. Mr. Eldar Rustamov (Turkmenistan) commented that arranging for any international support in the country would be difficult due to bureaucratic formalities.

Lei (China) inquired about the possibility of accessing Russian data on the species. Morozov (Russia) replied that this would be discussed within the break-out group on the Eastern population on day two.

Decision: Range states and national experts are to increase their efforts to insert observations and monitoring data to the common observation database on www.piskulka.net. The reporting template developed under the EU LIFE+ project will be made available on the www.piskulka.net website.

Range states are to include possible needs related to strengthening of their monitoring activities in the draft workplan for the next inter-sessional period.

Identification and monitoring tool

Tolvanen (WWF Finland) also presented the identification and monitoring tool - in the form of a PPT presentation - which has been developed for the international identification and monitoring training workshops carried out under the current EU LIFE+ project. This will be made available to all Working Group members to assist them in their national awareness-raising and capacity building work with regard to the correct identification and monitoring of the species. Tolvanen stressed that all photographers featured had given their consent for the use of their pictures in the tool. Pictures should, however, not be used by any partners for other purposes without seeking explicit consent from the photographers.

Decision: PPT presentation will be made available to all interested Working Group members via the Working Group Coordinator.

Swedish population update

Mr. Niklas Liljebäck from the Swedish Hunters Association provided an update on the Swedish Lesser White-fronted Goose project.

Conservation action: ongoing and new activities and projects, fundraising etc.

Ongoing/new activities and projects

On day two the Working Group was provided with updates on ongoing as well as new proposed projects related to the conservation of the species:

Ms. Manolia Vougioukalou (HOS/BirdLife Greece) presented the main activities and outcomes of the ongoing EU LIFE+ project "Safeguarding LWfG along their European flyways" and Mr. David Bogyó (Hungary) presented possible ideas for a new LIFE project application. Elchin Sultanov (AOS/BirdLife Azerbaijan), Mr. Hamid Amini (Iran) and Petri Lampila (Finnish LWfG Working Group) presented recent expeditions to continue locating the wintering sites of the Western main LWfG population in Azerbaijan and Iran. Mr. Geoff Hilton (WWT) outlined possibilities for reliably estimating the population size of the Western main Lesser White-fronted Goose population as the main goal for a large-scale autumn field expedition foreseen to be carried out in Kazakhstan in September/October 2016.

In addition, Mikander (UNEP/AEWA) and Mr. Szabolcs Nagy (Wetlands International) provided the Working Group with updates on further international initiatives that could possibly benefit conservation efforts for the species such as the Arctic Migratory Bird Initiative (AMBI), the CMS Family Champions Programme, the Caspian Sea Region initiative as well as the illegal killing theme of the 2016 World Migratory Bird Day, for which the East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership Secretariat has produced a modified poster featuring the Lesser White-fronted Goose. Actions in relation to all these initiatives will

Draft workplan and fundraising strategy for the LWfG IWG 2016-2019

Mikander (UNEP/AEWA) presented meeting document LWfG IWG 3.6, which included a first draft workplan to be adopted by the Working Group for the period 2016-2019. Mikander emphasized the need for better and more coordinated planning of the key international conservation actions for the species - including the need for a more stringent prioritization of activities. Mikander also highlighted the need for better planning in particular with relation to fundraising.

As mentioned during previous agenda points, all urgent activities to be implemented during the next years should be included in the workplan. A revised version will be circulated to the Working Group members after the meeting for comments and subsequent approval.

Meeting participants then split into four break-out groups to plan upcoming activities in more detail: development of a new EU LIFE+ project led by the Hortobagy National Park Directorate; planning of the autumn 2016 monitoring mission to Kazakhstan; next steps in the wintering sites of the Western main population; action-planning for the Eastern main population.

Decision: All group leads to send notes from the break-out groups to the Secretariat by the 22. April. The Coordinator will send the revised draft workplan to the Working Group for further comments and approval after the meeting.

Election of Chair country

Finland proposed that Estonia continue to Chair the Working Group during the next inter-sessional period. No other proposals were made.

Decision: Estonia was re-elected as Chair country.

Next Meeting of the Working Group

The Chair introduced the agenda item. It had been previously proposed by the Coordinator to hold the 4th meeting of the Working Group in 2019, following the 7th Meeting of the AEWA Parties in 2018. In 2019, the Working Group would also be nearing the end of the implementation of the 2016-2019 workplan.

Discussion:

Norway suggested that the next Working Group meeting could possibly be organized in Iran, which was supported in principal by the representative from Iran subject to further inquiries by the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat whether it would be possible.

Decision: The next meeting of the Working Group will take place in 2019, provided that sufficient funding is available. The Coordinator will explore the possibility of organizing the meeting in Iran.

Any other business

No points for any other business were raised.

Summary and closing remarks

The Chair closed the meeting by thanking everyone for their participation and hard work. The Chair expressed particular thanks to Mr. Øystein Størkersen and the Norwegian Environment Agency for their great hospitality in hosting the meeting.

Størkersen also thanked the meeting participants for the fruitful meeting and welcomed everyone to join the excursion to the Trondheimsfjord the next day. Mikander (UNEP/AEWA) also thanked the participants, the Norwegian Environment Agency and the Chair in particular.

Following the official closure of the meeting a documentary on the illegal killing of birds in Greece produced by HOS/BirdLife Greece within the framework of the EU LIFE+ project was screened.

Annex I. Action Points from the meeting

Agenda item	Action point	Lead	Deadline
LWfG IWG budget	Continue fundraising for IWG activities (next meeting etc.)	AEWA Secretariat	ongoing
Revision of the AEWA LWfG ISSAP ²	Submit comments on July 2015 consultation draft	Range states	16.5.2016
	Compile and distribute overview of possible conflicting points	AEWA Secretariat	23.5.2016
	Possible face-to-face meeting to discuss remaining open points	AEWA Secretariat + relevant range states	13. or 14.6.2016
	Formal range state consultation of draft revised LWfG ISSAP	AEWA Secretariat + range states	July-October 2016
	Submission of draft revised LWfG ISSAP to the 12 th Meeting of the AEWA Standing Committee for preliminary approval	AEWA Secretariat	November 2016
Revision of the national reporting format	A revised reporting format will be submitted to the Working Group for approval during the inter-sessional period	AEWA Secretariat	2017
Network of critical sites	All range states from which sites were selected complete site assessment sheets and submit them to the Secretariat	Relevant range states	22.4.2016
Monitoring network	Range states and national experts to increase their efforts regarding observations and monitoring of LWfG, including the insertion of observations into the common database on piskulka.net	All	ongoing
2016-2019 workplan	All break-out group leads to finalize and send their notes to the Secretariat	Break-out group leads	22.4.2016
	Revised draft workplan to be sent to range states for comments and completion	AEWA Secretariat	September 2016
	Adoption of final workplan	IWG members	September 2016

² Note: The European Commission has since initiated an EU coordination process amongst the relevant EU Member States regarding the scope of a future revised AEWA LWfG ISSAP, with a face-to-face meeting scheduled for November 2016. Thus the process under the AEWA LWfG IWG has been put on hold in anticipation of the outcome of the EU process.