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**3<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of the AEWA White-winged Flufftail International Working Group**  
5–7 November 2019, Dullstroom, South Africa

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**Report of the Meeting**



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## **List of used abbreviations**

AEWA – African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement

BLI – BirdLife International

BLSA – BirdLife South Africa

DEFF – Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries

EFCCC – Environment, Forest and Climate Change Commission

EWCA – Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority

EWNHS – Ethiopian Wildlife and Natural History Society

ISSAP – International Single Species Action Plan

IWG – International Working Group

MTPA – Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency

NGO – Non-governmental Organisation

ZA – South Africa

SANBI – South African National Biodiversity Institute

SSG – Site Support Group

WwF – White-winged Flufftail

## **Report of the Meeting: 05 November 2019**

### **Agenda Item 1. Welcome and Introduction**

Skumsa Ntshanga (Chief Director, DEFF), in her role as Chair of the meeting, welcomed everyone to the meeting, to South Africa and to the beautiful province of Mpumalanga on behalf of the Government of South Africa. A special welcome was extended to colleagues from Ethiopia, the AEWA Secretariat represented by Sergej Dereliev, South African national partners and other stakeholders.

Mr Dereliev in his capacity as representative of the AEWA Secretariat also welcomed and thanked all for their attendance. The Government of South Africa (DEFF) was thanked for hosting, chairing and organising this meeting. Mr Dereliev pointed out that this is one of the very few meetings in Africa where the host country has fully covered the expenses of the event.

The meeting attendees were reminded that small birds have a lot of power as we managed to get nearly 25 people from two countries in one room to discuss the conservation of the White-winged Flufftail. Mr Dereliev also emphasised the importance of the meeting and the commitment of the range states and wished that the discussions at the workshop should lead to an ambitious but feasible plan for the next three years.

### **Agenda Item 2. Introduction of Attendees**

Ms Ntshanga asked for a quick round of introductions to all in attendance and to elaborate on their involvement with the WwF. The attendees introduced themselves and their roles in relation to this meeting. The Chair handed back the floor to Mr Dereliev to take the attendees through the agenda.

### **Agenda Item 3. Adoption of the Agenda**

The provisional agenda *Doc. WWF IWG 3.1* as circulated was presented.

***Decision:*** *The agenda was adopted with no amendments.*

### **Agenda Item 4. Welcome by DEFF**

The Chair expressed that South Africa is honoured by the request from the AEWA Secretariat to host this meeting and that she is pleased to be addressing everyone during the 3<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of the AEWA White-winged Flufftail International Working Group (AEWA WwF IWG3), whose role being to catalyse the implementation of the 10-year Species Action Plan. This meeting could not have come at a more opportune time when the world is still fixated by the outcomes of the Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, which indicated our species and ecosystems are in decline, with 25% of species facing extinction. This has been confirmed by South Africa's own National Biodiversity Assessment report released two months ago. This report has also confirmed the centrality of biodiversity in addressing poverty and unemployment. In South Africa, the report indicates that 430 000 people are employed in biodiversity-related jobs which compares very well to the employment figures in the mining sector. Ntshanga emphasised that we should use this information to make the case for conservation of biodiversity. Wetlands providing critical habitat for the WwF remain the most threatened ecosystem type in ZA. As a country, we will continue to play an important role in the implementation of the AEWA species action plan. This partnership is critical to ensure that the WwF does not become the first African bird to go extinct.

Ms Ntshanga explained that as an effort to implement the WwF Implementation Plan developed in 2015 for the conservation of this species at a national level, ZA through the DEFF established the National WwF Working Group in 2017 with the objectives to coordinate actions for the conservation of this bird and to facilitate the national reporting to the AEWA Secretariat. Ms Ntshanga mentioned some achievements by the South African range state including the discovery of the first breeding record in ZA and the first

confirmation of the call of the species, for which she thanked the BLSA research team. Ms Ntshanga ended by saying that this meeting will reflect the progress that we have all made towards conserving the WwF.

Mr Dereliev presented a token to DEFF for their contributions in conserving this species.

## **Agenda Item 5. Country Update - South Africa**

Summary: By Humbu Mafumo (Deputy Director: Conservation Management, DEFF) on behalf of South Africa

Ms Mafumo provided progress on the implementation of the AEW White-winged Flufftail Implementation Plan for the period during 2015-2018. Ms Mafumo suggested that we should not only look at high altitude wetlands but to start investigating the link with peatlands in the future. She also ran through the history of research of the species which included the threats identified in 2008. Ms Mafumo mentioned that DEFF values the partnership, and as indicated by Ms Ntshanga, the National WwF Working Group was established in 2017 to coordinate actions for the conservation of this species. Stakeholders who have been involved in the national WwF working group include Middelpunt Wetland Trust, BLSA and SANBI, amongst other institutions.

Ms Mafumo thanked MTPA for joining this meeting as DEFF recognises their importance and involvement in the National WwF Working Group.

Ms Mafumo proceeded to highlight the objectives developed in the Implementation Plan and reported on some of the conservation actions ZA has been committed to, including the declaration of protected wetlands e.g. Wakkerstroom (Mabola Protected Environment) and Middelpunt Wetland (Greater Lakenvlei Protected Environment) declared as Protected Environments under stewardship initiatives. BLSA, Middelpunt Wetland and BLSA have developed Best Practice Guidelines related to the WwF and raised funding for a full-time position to implement these guidelines. In relation to preventing mining which has been identified as one of the major threats affecting the habitats, the DEFF has been instrumental in providing guidance in relation to the authorisation of mines. Despite this, however, more and more applications are being submitted for mining at adjacent sites to the Middelpunt wetland, which is of huge concern.

Four scientific papers have been published on genetic research. Hanneline Smit-Robinson of BLSA provided a full presentation on this work that has been in collaboration with Prof Antoinette Kotze at SANBI. Ms Mafumo highlighted the confirmation of the call of WwF, which Robin Colyn of BLSA. This was elaborated on in his presentation. DEFF has also partnered with BLSA in relation to the annual Flufftail Festival and has been able to support it financially to raise awareness for water, wetlands and waterbird conservation. Ms Mafumo added that this could not be possible without all the national stakeholders and donors working together.

### *Comments:*

Mr Dereliev: you mentioned there was a National Action Plan for the species. When was the plan adopted and which institution was in charge of the implementation of that plan? Ms Mafumo replied that after the 2015 meeting the National Working Group was established to implement the International Action Plan in ZA.

Kumara Wakjira: is the species trend increasing or decreasing nationally? Ms Mafumo replied that globally we can see it is decreasing. Ms Smit-Robinson added that it is difficult to state with certainty whether the numbers are increasing or decreasing, however, we know that in both Ethiopia and South Africa the species occurs in very low numbers and therefore when applying the IUCN criteria the species qualifies as Critically Endangered.

Kishaylin Chetty: in terms of sites that you listed that are not formally protected, have these sites been designated as areas that the country needs to conserve? Ms Ntshanga added that going forward DEFF will prioritise these areas for protection formally in terms of the National Protected Area Expansion Strategy. Ms Ntshanga further mentioned that unfortunately mining is allowed under certain conditions in Protected

Environments and that there are concerns around areas where mining is out-competing other land uses such as agriculture.

Mr Chetty: I cannot emphasise enough the importance of engaging with Department of Water and Sanitation in terms of listing those sites as Strategic Water Use Areas. Ms Smit-Robinson highlighted that Middelpunt wetland is the only site in ZA where this species has been found frequently and that there are possible mining developments that is proposed to take place in the area. Ms Ntshanga suggested that we might want to co-opt some of the mining companies in order to raise awareness. It might be of strategic importance to have the companies that might pose a risk to the WwF to be part of a team that is geared towards the conservation of species.

## **Agenda Item 6. Country Update - Ethiopia**

Summary: By Mihret Mulualem Ewnetu (Wildlife Expert, EWCA)

Mihret Ewnetu on behalf of Ethiopia went through the implementation plan as a way of a discussion to highlight what has been achieved since the 2015 meeting. He explained that EFCCC, supported by EWCA and EWNHS, is in the process of designating qualifying sites as Ramsar sites and added that the regulation has been developed and about to be brought to the panel. There are still steps that need to be taken to designate the sites as Ramsar sites. Ewnetu further explained that there have been some difficulties with developing the scoping documents for the formalisation of the community-based conservation programme in Berga which they have been working on for the past two years and added that the document has not yet been developed.

Mr Ewnetu added that lack of funding and institutional structure changes has prevented further progress.

### *Comments:*

Mr Dereliev: With respect to Ramsar designations, what are the steps you mentioned that needed to be taken? He further requested who will take a lead in implementing these steps?

Mengistu Wondafrash: to supplement the information provided in the presentation by Mr Ewnetu, Mr Wondafrash explained that the role of EWNHS is limited in terms of the implementation of the WwF Action Plan as there have been ongoing challenges indirectly affecting the implementation of the Action Plan in Ethiopia. Mr Wondafrash mentioned what has been achieved despite these challenges including an on-going wetland project being implemented by EWCA and EWNHS which has contributed to a published Wetland Directory book, which mentions the contribution of the Berga wetland in conserving the WwF. A restoration programme that looks into the rehabilitation of degraded land, to strengthen the capacity of the Site Support Group has been achieved and they are currently trying to get the two parties from the government to work together. EWNHS is playing an active role in creating awareness through the creation of a Wetland Directory book launched in previous weeks, providing logistical support to researchers.

Mr Wondafrash suggested improved coordination between ZA and Ethiopia, as both countries are working on the same Implementation Plan. Mr Dereliev: in order to overcome challenges in the implementation of the Action Plan he suggested Ethiopia establish a national WwF Working Group, as per the ZA example. Mr Dereliev further suggested that annual national reports should be made public amongst the IWG members. Ms Smit-Robinson added that Ethiopia has already sent the full national report for 2019 and that the national report for ZA has been completed but needs to be signed off by DEFF. Mr Dereliev suggested that the IWG develops a process where the annual report could be circulated amongst the IWG members and the benchmark report after three years can be made public on the website.

***Decision:*** exchange of the annual national report within the IWG, publishing the triennial reports on the IWG website; establish a WwF National Working Group in Ethiopia.

## **Agenda Item 7. Report on the latest research findings**

### **Presentation by Bruktawit Abdu (expert Kotebe Metropolitan University and Edge Fellow)**

Ms Abdu presented the research findings from the 2018/2019 surveys conducted in Berga, Bilacha and Weserbi sites in Ethiopia. She gave an overview and presented the survey results including the threats to these sites and the involvement of the community and the ongoing education programmes as part of this project. She also mentioned the need to rehabilitate the wetland habitats.

#### *Comments:*

Melissa Howes-Whitecross mentioned that there was a shift between 2018 and 2019 and asked what changed in the vegetation cover? Ms Abdu replied that there was a change in the grass cover.

Ms Smit-Robinson congratulated Ms Abdu on the work completed and asked whether she was planning to continue with annual surveys. Ms Abdu replied that the fellowship ends in a few weeks' time and that it is unlikely to continue with the surveys without the fellowship funding. Ms Smit-Robinson suggested a further discussion on a plan to implement the involvement of the youth (school children) in the future.

### **Presentation by Robin Colyn/Hanneline Smit-Robinson (BLSA)**

Mr Colyn presented on the research that he has been conducting over the past four and a half years, which include camera trapping and acoustics using the tested triangulated method (dubbed the BirdLife South Africa Rallid Survey Method) which increased the likelihood of species detection. This led to the recording of the first breeding record for South Africa and the first confirmation of the WwF call.

*Comments:* Julian Sturgeon asked to hear the recording of the WwF call. Mr Colyn played the WwF call for everyone in the meeting. Mr Chetty: do you know what triggers the Red-chested Flufftail to move when WwF arrives? Mr Colyn replied that Red-chested Flufftail seems to respond to WwF movements, whereas the WwF is responding to the changes in habitat i.e. changing water levels.

#### *Comments:*

Seoka Lekota: can the WwF be translocated? Mr Colyn mentioned that it is a difficult question to answer and in reality, that it would prove difficult to translocate the species.

Tebogo Mashua: would captive breeding be possible for the species? Ms Smit-Robinson replied that it would be risky to establish a captive facility at this stage given the many unknown aspects of the species' life history and biology and added that it is more important to conserve the species *in situ*.

Ms Mafumo: are we not disturbing the habitat when flushing? Mr Colyn agreed and stated that there are published studies that show an increased access to predators or the risk of stepping on the nests through flushing and therefore BLSA advocates for non-invasive camera trapping techniques opposed to flushing.

Mr Colyn continued his presentation, including a focus on the draft Ecological Niche Model that has been developed through remote sensing techniques indicating the remaining habitat available for WwF in Ethiopia and South Africa, as well as connecting areas in-between these two countries.

### **Presentation by Hanneline Smit-Robinson**

Ms Smit-Robinson gave a presentation on the research conducted on genetic sequencing to unravel the mysteries and aid the conservation of the Critically Endangered WwF. The goal was to determine whether the WwF population in ZA was genetically divergent from the WwF populations in Ethiopia. At the time of the study, all were unaware that the birds were also breeding in ZA. The results of this study showed a 0% sequence divergence between the two populations, with only three interspecific variations between WwF in Ethiopia and South Africa. These results, though based on a small sample size (Ethiopia: n = 10; South Africa: n = 3), indicate that there are gene flows between the Ethiopian and South African populations and that the data do not support subspecies or two separate species. The sequencing of toll-like receptor genes indicated a compromised immune response in WwF compared to the more common Red-chested Flufftail, typical of a species that has undergone a bottleneck.

Ms Smit-Robinson introduced the White-winged Flufftail Best Practice Habitat Management Guidelines that has been completed by the BLSA team, authored by Ms Howes-Whitecross, Mr Colyn and herself.

*Comments:*

Ms Smit-Robinson and Ms Kotze pointed out that the team will be looking at sequencing long-distance migration genes in the future. Mr Colyn further pointed out that we are probably dealing with a blending population, the evidence we have for breeding was that the bird that was found in ZA was not more than 12 weeks old which means it breeds in ZA. Ms Kotze confirmed that these populations could be from one common population in between South Africa and Ethiopia which might have split over time.

Mr Wakjira: there has to be some historical site(s) in between the two countries as it is not possible for the WwF to be breeding in Ethiopia six weeks before they start breeding in ZA.

Mr Ewnetu: is it possible to track the WwF? Ms Smit-Robinson explained that it does not seem that a device can work as yet because the PPT/GPS tracking devices that are light enough in weight have solar-charged batteries and the WwF is a bird that spends most of its time moving in the undergrowth in wetlands. Similarly, the length of antennae in the undergrowth could be problematic. We certainly hope that this tracking technology will be available soon.

**Agenda Item 8. Revision of the Implementation Plan: defining priority measures, activities, responsibilities and time frames**

Mr Dereliev gave a brief introduction to the revision of the Implementation Plan session. The Implementation Plan revision was wrapped up the following day and added that we should keep in mind that document 3.4 was based on the Action Framework of the International Single Species Action Plan that was developed in 2008. However, 11 years later we have learnt more about the species, but with possibly even more unanswered questions than in 2008. Mr Dereliev congratulated all that have been involved thus far. Mr Dereliev encouraged all that the aim is to leave this working group meeting with a finalised revised Implementation Plan and added that the Implementation Plan should be ambitious and realistic in terms of what are planned to be achieved in the next three years.

Mr Dereliev led the revision of the Implementation Plan with inputs and contribution from various parties involved. The Implementation Plan was finalised in the afternoon of the following day. Ms Smit-Robinson captured the revisions to the Plan during this session. The revised Implementation Plan is attached in Annex 2 to this report.

**Report of the Meeting: 06 November 2019**

**Agenda Item 9. Introduction to Day 2**

Ms Ntshanga (Chair) welcomed everyone and noted the previous day's discussions were very productive and handed the agenda for the day over to Mr Dereliev.

(The morning and early afternoon were dedicated to further elaboration and finalisation of the Implementation Plan for 2020-2022).

**Agenda Item 10. Further elaboration of the Berga community-based conservation-linked project (Activity 1.2 of the Implementation Plan 2015-2018)**

**Presentation by Julian Sturgeon (private consultant to BLSA)**

Julian Sturgeon gave a brief summary on the site visit to Ethiopia with Malcolm Drummond in September 2019 and added that it was a wonderful experience. There has been an increased human population growth in Ethiopia over the last 30-40 years which also meant that the population around Berga wetland has increased; overgrazing is a huge concern for the habitat of the WwF. What is encouraging is that there is a community that recognises the importance of this bird and wants to conserve it. It was impressive that during the

meetings with the community, the WwF was seen as an asset with also the young generation recognising this bird as valuable in the area. There has to be engagement with all the four Kebelles (lowest government structures) surrounding the site. He listed the various needs of the community which this project aims to assist that include repairing the wooden bridge across Berga wetland and added that the community depend heavily on this structure. Another important need for the community was the establishment of a school library at the local Berga school as suggested by the Headmaster. Addressing these issues will build a better relationship with the community and will encourage the conservation of the critical habitat for the WwF.

Comments:

Ms Mafumo: is this project only specific to Berga or can it be replicated as well? Mr Dereliev stated that this project is based on the specific needs of the community around Berga wetland, but it would still be useful for ZA to observe and learn from the process.

Mr Wondafrash thanked Mr Sturgeon and Malcolm Drummond for generating this information in a short period of time. If the objective is to conserve WwF then the livelihood of that community is also protected. He added that there was nothing much about conservation incentives in the presentation as all the proposed activities are providing support to the community with no direct benefit to habitat conservation. Wondafrash also enquired about support to the SSG. Mr Sturgeon summarised that they participated in identifying the community's needs and added that through engagement and the process of training they aim to improve awareness of WwF and its conservation needs.

Mr Drummond reported that it was a very productive trip. Middelpunt Wetland Trust has supported the Berga community for many years with donations in the region of ZAR160 000 and also provided support to the SSG and the leaders of the community. Mr Drummond suggested that going forward there is need to extend visible support to the other four villages to encourage them. He also suggested that the members of the SSG should increase to about 100 to strengthen the group. It is necessary to help improve the community's standard of living as a way to build a better relationship with the communities and hence raise awareness for the conservation of the WwF. Ms Abdu added that it is good to incorporate conservation initiatives in the project but the fact that the people are willing to conserve this bird is because of the community work that has been done for the last 15 years. The work that is being done for the community in the area is important as people want to know what will happen next for them. Mr Wondafrash suggested that both the conservation objectives and community needs should be addressed in the project provided it is done carefully and sensitively. Mr Sturgeon added that addressing the community needs impacts land use in the areas and in turn benefits the critically endangered WwF.

The participants lead by Mr Dereliev developed the Berga wetland map using Google Earth by overlaying some initial spatial information such as site boundaries, the borders of the state farm, private grazing, mixed private and communal grazing land respectively.

Mr Dereliev also facilitated a conservation problem analysis for upper Berga wetland, which was defined as the priority part of the site for intervention. This analysis will be used in the follow-up process to finalise the community-based conservation programme.

### **Agenda Item 11. Funding and fundraising for IWG operations and activities**

Mr Dereliev suggested that for the funding and fundraising for IWG operations discussion, the participants work through the Implementation Plan (resources column) and identify areas that require financial resources. Mr Dereliev further suggested to identify who is going to engage in fundraising for that particular goal.

Mr Dereliev mentioned that resources are also needed for ongoing work of the IWG and added that it is very fortunate to have BLSA (Ms Smit-Robinson) offering her time to assist with this task. It is hoped that this arrangement will continue in the future. All are grateful to the generous contribution that DEFF has made. Mr Dereliev encouraged the continuous review activities in need of additional funding and to explore how the two individual governments (South Africa and Ethiopia) can fund those resource requirements themselves.

Ms Kotze suggested putting a proposal together for the National Research Foundation funding. Ms Smit-Robinson agreed that this is a great idea and asked Ms Kotze if she would be happy to co-write this proposal and added that it could be advantageous to have a government institution involved. Ms Smit-Robinson mentioned that Darwin funding could also be looked into which requires a strong community aspect. Ms Kotze also pointed out that if there is a problem with invasive plant species in the wetlands that SANBI could provide the required funding. Mr Colyn replied that Ntsikeni Nature Reserve as well as the Dullstroom area could benefit from invasive species eradication in areas adjacent to the wetlands.

Mr Dereliev suggested maintaining these funding updates and outcomes on the workspace section of the AEWA website where everyone can post on new funding opportunities and successes. Ms Smit-Robinson then demonstrated the IWG website and added that this is work in progress. At the moment, the WwF work that was available as on the BLSA website is uploaded. This is not meant to be biased as BLSA is looking forward to receiving contributions from everyone to be able to add to the website.

### **Agenda Item 12. Future steps, next Working Group meeting**

Mr Dereliev explained that the immediate steps after this meeting are to circulate the draft minutes and Implementation Plan draft for review. Mr Dereliev suggested that the IWG members should try by mid-January to sign off on the circulated minutes. Mr Colyn has been working on producing a map of Berga in the meeting. He will put together a version of the map that will also be circulated for comments and that can be part of the discussion at the next meeting to identify what to do in the southern part of Berga wetland.

Mr Dereliev mentioned that in terms of the national reports, the Ethiopian report can be circulated in the meantime, whilst the ZA report will be circulated once it has been signed off.

### **Agenda Item 13. Election of a new chair country**

The next meeting is anticipated to be held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The agreement on the establishment of this IWG was that the chairmanship will be rotational. Based on this agreement, it should rotate back to Ethiopia for the 4<sup>th</sup> IWG meeting to take place end of 2022 or mid-2023. Ethiopia (Wakjira) agreed that EWCA will host the next meeting.

**Decision:** *Ethiopia (EWCA) was elected as the IWG chair for the period until the next meeting and accepted to host the 4<sup>th</sup> IWG meeting in Ethiopia at the end of 2022/mid-2023.*

### **Agenda Item 14. Summary and conclusion, closure of the meeting**

Mr Dereliev concluded that it was an intense and productive meeting and great to see an increase in the number of attendees with 24 participants who actively participated. He further stated that it is anticipated that future national reports will reflect improved implementation and increased knowledge on the species. There is a need to secure Berga wetland, which is an important target as well as other sites. The map that was produced for Berga wetland during the meeting will be useful. It was noticed that participants took the lead in terms of fundraising initiatives and are aimed at raising more funds compared to the last few years. DEFF (Mafumo and Mashua) were thanked for the organisation of the excellent meeting, with special thanks to Ms Smit-Robinson for coordinating these meetings and to Elelwani Makhuvha for taking the minutes as well as to everyone who contributed to the discussions. Mr Dereliev thanked the Ethiopian delegates for travelling far and the staff of Verlorenkloof for their excellent hospitality. He also thanked his assistant Jeannine Dicken for preparing the logistics of the meeting.

Mr Drummond thanked Mr Dereliev for the work he has been doing for the past 12 years on this AEWA IWG and for taking this group to where it is now. He added that without Mr Dereliev's commitment and drive we would have never arrived at where we are today. Ms Mafumo thanked her team (especially Tebo go

Mashua and Morongoa Pheebe) for the meeting arrangements, the AEWA Secretariat and the Ethiopian government who travelled far to participate in this meeting.

With that, the Chair declared the meeting closed.

## Annex I - List of Participants<sup>1</sup>

### ETHIOPIA

Mr Kumara WAKJIRA (NGR)  
Director General  
Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority  
P.O. Box 386  
Addis Ababa  
Ethiopia

Tel.: +251 091 031 4351  
E-mail: [matikume@yahoo.com](mailto:matikume@yahoo.com)

Mr Mengistu WONDAFRASH (NE)  
CEO  
Ethiopian Wildlife and Natural History Society  
P.O. Box 13303  
Addis Ababa  
Ethiopia

Tel.: +251 911 242 369  
E-mail: [wondafrash.mj61@gmail.com](mailto:wondafrash.mj61@gmail.com)

Mr Mihret MULUALEM (NE)  
Senior Wildlife Research Officer  
Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority  
P.O. Box 386  
Addis Ababa  
Ethiopia

Tel.: +251 115 514 389  
E-mail: [ewnetumuluaalem@gmail.com](mailto:ewnetumuluaalem@gmail.com)

### SOUTH AFRICA

Ms Skumsa NCHANGA (NGR)  
Chief Director  
Department of Environmental Affairs  
473 Steve Biko Road  
0083 Pretoria  
South Africa

Tel.: +27 123 999 519  
E-mail: [sntshanga@environment.gov.za](mailto:sntshanga@environment.gov.za)

Mr Seoka LEKOTA (NGR)  
Control Biodiversity Officer  
Department of Environmental Affairs  
473 Steve Biko Road  
0083 Pretoria  
South Africa

Tel.: +27 123 999 573  
E-mail: [slekota@environment.gov.za](mailto:slekota@environment.gov.za)

Ms Humbulani MAFUMO (NGR)  
Deputy Director Conservation Management  
Department of Environmental Affairs  
473 Steve Biko Road  
0083 Pretoria  
South Africa

Tel.: +27 123 999 586  
E-mail: [hmafumo@environment.gov.za](mailto:hmafumo@environment.gov.za)

Ms Tebogo MASHUA (NGR)  
Control Biodiversity Officer  
Department of Environmental Affairs  
473 Steve Biko Road  
0083 Pretoria  
South Africa

Tel.: +27 828 381 082  
E-mail: [tmashua@environment.gov.za](mailto:tmashua@environment.gov.za)

<sup>1</sup> NGR – National Government Representative / NE – National Expert

Mr Azwinaki MUIINGI (NGR)  
Biodiversity Officer  
Department of Environmental Affairs  
473 Steve Biko Road  
0083 Pretoria  
South Africa

Tel.: +27 824 725 591  
E-mail: [amuingi@environment.gov.za](mailto:amuingi@environment.gov.za)

Ms Morongoa PHEEBA (NGR)  
Conservation Management Intern  
Department of Environmental Affairs  
473 Steve Biko Road  
0083 Pretoria  
South Africa

Tel.: +27 78 716 8649  
E-mail: [mpheeba@environment.gov.za](mailto:mpheeba@environment.gov.za)

Mr Asivhanzhi MALAHALE (NGR)  
Control Biodiversity Officer  
Department of Environmental Affairs  
473 Steve Biko Road  
0083 Pretoria  
South Africa

Tel.: +27 12 599 8724  
E-mail: [amalahale@environment.gov.za](mailto:amalahale@environment.gov.za)

### ***OBSERVER ORGANISATIONS***

#### **BIRDLIFE SOUTH AFRICA**

Mr Robin COLYN  
Terrestrial Bird Conservation Programme  
BirdLife South Africa  
17 Hume Road  
2196 Johannesburg  
South Africa

Tel.: +27 117 891 122  
E-mail: [robin.colyn@birdlife.org.za](mailto:robin.colyn@birdlife.org.za)

Dr Melissa HOWES-WHITECROSS  
Acting Programme Manager  
Terrestrial Bird Conservation Programme  
BirdLife South Africa  
17 Hume Road  
2196 Johannesburg  
South Africa

Tel.: +27 824 526 021  
E-mail: [melissa.whitecross@birdlife.org.za](mailto:melissa.whitecross@birdlife.org.za)

#### **MIDDELPUNT WETLAND TRUST**

Mr Malcolm DRUMMOND  
Trustee  
Middelpunt Wetland Trust  
P.O. Box 1833  
9880 Harrismith  
South Africa

Tel.: +27 82 551 2919  
E-mail: [malcolm.drummond46@gmail.com](mailto:malcolm.drummond46@gmail.com)

## INVITED EXPERTS

Prof Antoinette KOTZE  
Director Biodiversity Research  
South African National Biodiversity Institute  
P.O. Box 754  
0001 Pretoria  
South Africa

Tel.: +27 12 339 2795  
E-mail: [a.kotze@sanbi.org.za](mailto:a.kotze@sanbi.org.za)

Dr Bruktawit ABDU MAHAMUED  
EDGE of Existence Fellowship Programme  
of the Zoological Society of London  
7198 Addis Ababa  
Ethiopia

Tel.: +25 191 386 5266  
E-mail: [brukabdu.m@gmail.com](mailto:brukabdu.m@gmail.com)

Mr Julian STURGEON  
Consultant  
83 4th Street Linden  
2195 Johannesburg  
South Africa

Tel.: +27 824 538 823  
E-mail: [julian.sturgeon@gmail.com](mailto:julian.sturgeon@gmail.com)

## OTHER

Mr Kishaylin CHETTY  
Environmental Management  
Eskom Holdings SOC Ltd.  
P.O. Box 393  
2153 Johannesburg  
South Africa

Tel.: +27 825 161 046  
E-mail: [chettykc@eskom.co.za](mailto:chettykc@eskom.co.za)

Mr Hannes MARAIS  
Wetland Scientist  
Mpumalanga Tourism & Parks Agency  
Private Bag X20097  
Lydenburg  
1120

Tel.: +27 827743303  
E-mail: [hanneswetlands@gmail.com](mailto:hanneswetlands@gmail.com)

Mrs Shirley SIBIYA  
Reserve Manager  
Mpumalanga Tourism & Parks Agency  
P.O. Box 98  
Dullstroom  
South Africa

Tel.: +27 76 2796 315  
E-mail: [velaphis@yahoo.com](mailto:velaphis@yahoo.com)

Mr Frans KRIGE  
Lua Scientist  
Mpumalanga Tourism & Parks Agency  
P.O. Box 98  
Dullstroom  
South Africa

Tel.: +27 15 2540 279  
E-mail: [Frans.Krige@mtpa.co.za](mailto:Frans.Krige@mtpa.co.za)

## WwF IWG COORDINATION

Dr Hanneline SMIT-ROBINSON  
Head of Conservation  
BirdLife South Africa  
17 Hume Road  
2196 Johannesburg  
South Africa

Tel.: +27 824 534 714  
E-mail: [hanneline.smit-robinson@birdlife.org.za](mailto:hanneline.smit-robinson@birdlife.org.za)

Ms Elelwani MAKHUVHA  
BirdLife South Africa  
17 Hume Road  
2196 Johannesburg  
South Africa

Tel.: +27 11 789 1122  
E-mail: [elelwani.makhuvha@birdlife.org.za](mailto:elelwani.makhuvha@birdlife.org.za)

Mr Sergey DERELIEV  
Head of Science, Implementation and Compliance Unit  
UNEP/AEWA Secretariat  
Platz der Vereinten Nationen 1  
53113 Bonn  
Germany

Tel.: +49 228 815 2415

E-mail: [sergey.dereliev@unep-awa.org](mailto:sergey.dereliev@unep-awa.org)

## **Annex II - Implementation Plan for 2020-2022<sup>2</sup>**

### **List of used abbreviations**

AAU – Addis Ababa University

AEWA – African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement

BLSA – BirdLife South Africa

CCA – Community Conservation Area

CBCP – Community-based Conservation Programme

DEFF – Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries

DMR – Department of Mineral Resources

DWS – Department of Water and Sanitation

EBI – Ethiopia Biodiversity Institute

EFCCC – Environment, Forest and Climate Change Commission

ESKOM – Electricity Supply Commission

ET – Ethiopia

EKZNW – Ezemvelo KwaZulu-Natal Wildlife

EWCA – Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority

EWNHS – Ethiopian Wildlife and Natural History Society

FSDESBDTEA – Free State Department: Economic, Small Business Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs

ISSAP – International Single Species Action Plan

IWG – International Working Group

KMU – Kotebe Metropolitan University

MTPA – Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency

MWT – Middelpunt Wetland Trust

NGO – Non-governmental Organisation

OEFCCA – Oromia Environment, Forest and Climate Change Authority

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<sup>2</sup> This implementation plan was developed during the 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the AEWA White-winged Flufftail IWG meeting on 5 – 7 November 2019 on the basis of the CMS/AEWA International Single Species Action Plan for the Conservation of the White-winged Flufftail (December 2008) and was endorsed by the IWG member by correspondence on 14 April 2020.

OFWE – Oromia Forest and Wildlife Enterprise

ORLAEPB – Oromia Rural Land Administration and Environmental Protection Bureau

SANBI – South African National Biodiversity Institute

SSG – Site Support Group

ZA – South Africa

Objective	ISSAP activity	Country	Means of implementation (actions)	Responsible for implementation (others to be involved)	Funding needs / source	Priority	Timeline / deadline
<b>1. To limit and reverse habitat destruction and degradation at all sites</b>	<b>1.1 Designate all qualifying sites as Ramsar sites</b>	<b>ET</b>	Encourage the EFCCC to advance and conclude the accession of Ethiopia to the Ramsar Convention, with Berga wetland as one of the Ramsar sites to be designated upon accession.	EFCCC with support from EWCA and EWNHS	NA	High	Workshop to be convened and financed by EWNHS in 2020 to develop Ramsar Convention Accession Concept Paper; remains a rolling activity up to completion.
		<b>ZA</b>	Designate the Bedford wetland within Ingula Nature Reserve as a Ramsar site.	DEFF, FSDESDTEA and ESKOM	NA	High	End 2021
		<b>ZA</b>	Designate the Middelpunt wetland (and potentially the upper catchment) and Wakkerstroom as Ramsar sites.	DEFF and MTPA (BLSA and MWT to support with preparation of documentation)	NA	High	End 2021
	<b>1.2 Engage local communities in seeking local solutions to habitat destruction through community-based habitat conservation</b>	<b>ET</b>	Finalise the development of the community-based conservation programme for Berga (Implementation process will be defined within the document).	BLSA with EWCA and EWNHS	tbd (Secretariat/ Coordinator/ [EWCA/EWNHS to look for sources in ET])	Critical	End 2020

Objective	ISSAP activity	Country	Means of implementation (actions)	Responsible for implementation (others to be involved)	Funding needs / source	Priority	Timeline / deadline
	<b>initiatives</b>	<b>ET</b>	Formalise the community-based programme at Berga under the umbrella of Oromia local government (to be approved by OEFCCA).	EWCA brings/submits to OEFCCA with support of EWNHS.	NA	Critical	Mid 2021
	<b>1.3 Designate all sites under national protected area legislation</b>	<b>ZA</b>	Declare Middelpunt as private nature reserve.	MTPA with support from DEFF	NA	Critical	End 2021
		<b>ET</b>	Declare Berga as a protected area.	OEFCCA with support from EWCA	Initial funding secured by the Secretariat. Process initiated. Additional cost tbd by EWCA/ Secretariat/ Coordinator	Critical	End 2022
	<b>1.4 Facilitate enforcement of legislation to stop cultivation inside the breeding wetlands</b>	<b>ET</b>	EWCA to alert regional offices of OEFCCA to enforce legislation to prevent cultivation at the breeding wetlands.	EWCA to alert OEFCCA	NA	Critical	End 2019
		<b>ET</b>	EWCA to request regular feedback from OEFCCA on the enforcement of the legislation.	EWCA	NA	Critical	Twice per annum; rolling implementation/ monitoring process
	<b>1.5 Design and implement site</b>	<b>ZA</b>	Examine process required to incorporate White-winged Flufftail	DEFF (national consultation) with support from BLSA	NA	High	Mid 2020

Objective	ISSAP activity	Country	Means of implementation (actions)	Responsible for implementation (others to be involved)	Funding needs / source	Priority	Timeline / deadline
	<b>management plan(s)</b>		Habitat Best Practice Guidelines (Howes-Whitecross et al.) into each existing Site Management Plan (Nature Reserves and sites under stewardship).				
		<b>ZA</b>	Incorporate Best Practice Guidelines into the existing Site Management Plans.	DEFF (with provincial conservation authorities)	NA	High	Mid 2021
		<b>ZA</b>	Identify unprotected sites and activities that could benefit from action of DEFF Working for Programmes.	BLSA to provide information to DEFF	NA	Medium	End 2020
		<b>ZA</b>	Action secured through Working for Programmes at prioritised unprotected sites.	DEFF	NA	Medium	End 2022
		<b>ET</b>	Amend the existing customary wetland usage agreement to be included in the formalising of the community-based habitat conservation initiatives (under activity 1.2 above).	EWCA supported by EWNHS	Included under 1.2 above	Critical	As 1.2

Objective	ISSAP activity	Country	Means of implementation (actions)	Responsible for implementation (others to be involved)	Funding needs / source	Priority	Timeline / deadline
	<b>1.6 Prevent any change to the species' habitat arising from dam building</b>		NA				
	<b>1.7 Stop pollution of wetlands caused by humans and agriculture</b>	<b>ZA</b>	ZA – refer to 1.8				
	<b>1.8 Prevent mining which will affect the species' habitat</b>	<b>ZA</b>	When necessary, intervene at developments, use the AEWa - IRP and Ramsar Advisory Mission processes, as appropriate	DEFF, BLSA, MWT	tbd on case by case basis	Critical	Ongoing
		<b>ZA</b>	Secure Wakkerstroom and Steenkampsberg to ensure that mining is excluded either through DMR legislation (Section 49) or NEMA legislation.	DEFF with DMR	NA	High	End 2022
	<b>1.9 Prevent development that will affect the species' habitat</b>	<b>ET/ZA</b>	Undertake pro-active monitoring for potential development proposals. NGOs to establish a comprehensive and routine system to track development proposals, take possible and	EWCA and EWNHS/ DEFF, BLSA and MWT	NA	Critical	Ongoing

Objective	ISSAP activity	Country	Means of implementation (actions)	Responsible for implementation (others to be involved)	Funding needs / source	Priority	Timeline / deadline
			a adequate measures as well as notify EWCA and DEFF.				
		ET/ZA	Act immediately to proposals to prevent negative impacts from development which will affect the species' habitat.	EWCA and EWNHS/ DEFF, BLSA and MWT	NA	Critical	On-going
	<b>1.10 Develop and implement schemes for managing grazing pressure at all sites</b>	ET/ZA	Refer to activity 1.2 (ET) and 1.5 (ZA)				
	<b>1.11 Develop and implement suitable burning regimes at relevant sites</b>	ZA	Refer to activity 1.5 (ZA)				
	<b>1.12 Secure reserves in the western parts of Greater Harare, Zimbabwe</b>		On hold				
<b>2. To reduce and manage human disturbance at all sites</b>	<b>2.1 Maintain non-issuance of snipe-hunting permits at breeding sites</b>	ET	Maintain non-issuance of snipe-hunting permits (illegal hunting of snipe to be monitored and reported by the SSG and the activity to be included in the CBCP under activity 1.5).	EWCA, OFWE & EWNHS	NA	Critical	Ongoing

Objective	ISSAP activity	Country	Means of implementation (actions)	Responsible for implementation (others to be involved)	Funding needs / source	Priority	Timeline / deadline
	<b>2.2 Develop and implement site visitation protocol for birdwatchers at the species' sites</b>	ET/ZA	To be included in activity 1.5 above (include in site management plans [ZA] and best practice guidance). No bird watching should be permitted within Berga or Middelpunt during the breeding season.	EWCA supported by EWNHS/MTPA, EKZN and FSDESDTEA with support from BLSA and MWT	NA	Critical	Rolling (ET), Mid 2021 (ZA)
	<b>2.3 Implement community-run prevention of access to sites during the breeding season by resource users</b>	ET/ZA	Refer to activity 1.2 (ET), initiate a discussion with regards to community involvement at Ntsikeni and Ingula (ZA)	Refer to 1.2 (ET), DEFF (ZA)	Refer to 1.2 (ET), NA (ZA)	Critical (ET), Medium (ZA)	Refer to 1.2 (ET), End 2020 (ZA)
<b>3. To prevent nest destruction caused by unnatural factors</b>		ET/ZA	Refer to activities 1.2 (ET), 1.5 (ZA), 1.10 (ET & ZA) and 2.3 (ET & ZA)				
<b>4. To maintain favourable hydrological conditions at all sites</b>	<b>4.1 Facilitate the enforcement of legislation to prevent the afforestation inside the breeding wetlands</b>	ET	EWCA to alert regional offices of OEFCCA to enforce legislation to prevent the afforestation at the breeding wetlands.	EWCA to alert OEFCCA	NA	Critical	End 2019

Objective	ISSAP activity	Country	Means of implementation (actions)	Responsible for implementation (others to be involved)	Funding needs / source	Priority	Timeline / deadline
		ET	EWCA to request regular feedback from OEFCCA on the enforcement of the legislation.	EWCA	NA	Critical	Twice per annum; rolling implementation / monitoring process
	4.2 Contribute to the regulation of afforestation and other activities that may affect the wetlands and watersheds of the species' sites	ET	Encourage responsible institutions (OFWE and OEFCCA) to develop legislation to manage afforestation	EWCA	NA	Medium	End 2020
			Also include above in activities 1.2	EWCA supported by EWNHS			
5. To determine if there are multiple populations of the species	5.1 Undertake genetic and isotopic investigations to determine if there are multiple populations of the species	ET ZA	To evaluate the genetic fitness of different populations.	SANBI, BLSA, AAU, EBI	10 000 € (BLSA – for fieldwork) (SANBI in kind lab work)	Medium	End 2021
		ZA ET	Finalise the protocol (describing sampling methodology and standardisation of collecting methods) for sampling of live and injured birds as well as samples collected from dead birds. Preservation of specimens and all materials will also be covered in this protocol.	SANBI to take lead in development, EWCA (ET), Scientific Authority of South Africa (ZA) to approve sampling protocol.	NA	Medium	Mid 2020

Objective	ISSAP activity	Country	Means of implementation (actions)	Responsible for implementation (others to be involved)	Funding needs / source	Priority	Timeline / deadline
<b>6. To identify migration routes and stop-over sites of the species</b>	<b>6.1 Design and implement a scientific study to identify migration routes and stop-over sites of the species</b>	<b>ZA ET</b>	Explore suitable technology to apply. Expand current survey methods (camera-acoustics) to mid- and low-altitude historical sites (ZA), as well as potential stop-over and breeding sites between South Africa and Ethiopia.	BLSA, EWCA, KMU	tbd (ZA-BLSA, ET-EWNHS, additional sites – BLSA/ Secretariat)	High	End 2022
		<b>ZA ET</b>	Continue with the camera-acoustic and transect surveys at priority sites as identified by the ecological niche model across Africa.	BLSA (ZA), EWNHS (ET), KMU (ET)	tbd (ZA-BLSA, ET-EWNHS)	High	End 2022
<b>7. To determine the habitat requirements and preferences</b>	<b>7.1 Design and implement a scientific study to undertake a thorough assessment of habitat requirements, including the understanding of the hydrological functioning of the plateau floodplains.</b>	<b>ZA ET</b>	Expand distribution and corridor modelling across historic sites to evaluate the mid- to low-elevation potential distribution [ZA] and across sub-Saharan Africa. Refer to 6.1	BLSA and MTPA	NA	High	End 2020

Objective	ISSAP activity	Country	Means of implementation (actions)	Responsible for implementation (others to be involved)	Funding needs / source	Priority	Timeline / deadline
8. To establish the extent of the species' range and distribution	8.1 Identify and explore potential sites in South Africa and Ethiopia		Refer to 6.1				
	8.2 Confirm suspected localities in Zimbabwe, Zambia and Rwanda		On hold				
	8.3 Undertake comprehensive assessment of the state of the dambo ecosystems in the western parts of greater Harare, Zimbabwe		On hold				
9. To determine the population sizes and trends	9.1 Develop a suitable census technique to determine population sizes and trends	ET	Develop and test effective breeding season survey technique and protocol using acoustic techniques for population census.	BLSA, MWT, EWNHS, KMU	tbd (ZA-BLSA, ET-EWNHS)	High	Ongoing until end of 2022
	9.2 Perform coordinated censuses at all sites		On hold				
10. To determine the species' breeding	10.1 Design and implement a scientific study to determine the species' breeding		On hold				

Objective	ISSAP activity	Country	Means of implementation (actions)	Responsible for implementation (others to be involved)	Funding needs / source	Priority	Timeline / deadline
biology	biology						
11. To understand key ecological determinants influencing the species' population dynamics	11.1 Design and implement a scientific study to identify the population determinants		On hold				
	11.2 Undertake population modelling		On hold				
12. To establish the potential effects of climate change on the species	12.1 Conduct modelling exercise		On hold				
13. To increase awareness at all levels	13.1 Compile and disseminate species information	ET	Age appropriate communication packages produced to reach local communities at breeding wetlands providing detailed information on the species and its importance to increase recorded sightings linked to implementation of a awareness programme as part of 1.2	EWNHS, KMU (supported by MWT)	MWT (cover printing), tbd	High	Mid 2020

Objective	ISSAP activity	Country	Means of implementation (actions)	Responsible for implementation (others to be involved)	Funding needs / source	Priority	Timeline / deadline
		ET	Sensitise decision makers on the threats and the needs of the White-winged Flufftail conservation at zonal woreda level	EWCA	NA	High	Rolling
	<b>13.2 Support and expand SSGs and their activities</b>	ET	Refer to activity 1.2 above				

### Enabling Activities (EA)

Activity	Country	Means of implementation (actions)	Responsible for implementation (others to be involved)	Funding needs / source	Priority	Timeline / deadline
<b>EA1. Convene and maintain inclusive national working groups (NWG)</b>	ET ZA	Extend the membership of NWG to include all other relevant stakeholders (e.g., mining companies) and decision-makers (DMR, DWS) (ZA)  Launch a NWG that includes relevant federal and regional stakeholders and decision-makers (ET)	DEFF, EWCA	NA	Critical	March 2020
<b>EA2. Launch, maintain and contribute to the IWG website</b>		Finalise and launch the website	Coordinator and Secretariat	NA	High	March 2020
		Contribute to the public part and exchange information through	All members and observers	NA	High	Rolling activity

		password-protected section of the website				
<b>EA3. Undertake regular monitoring of the implementation of the 2020 – 2022 Implementation Plan</b>		Develop reporting template	Coordinator and Secretariat	NA	High	Mid 2020
	<b>ET ZA</b>	Submit comprehensive annual national implementation reports in due time (Dec)	EWCA, DEFF	NA	High	Rolling activity