

8th SESSION OF THE MEETING OF THE PARTIES
26 – 30 September 2022, Budapest, Hungary

DRAFT RESOLUTION 8.7

**IMPROVING THE BASE OF KNOWLEDGE FOR EFFECTIVE WATERBIRD
CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT**

Recalling the emphasis given to the importance of scientific knowledge by the Agreement, including the need for Parties to “ensure that any use of migratory waterbirds is based on an assessment of the best available knowledge of their ecology ...”; the requirement to “initiate or support research into the biology and ecology of migratory waterbirds ...”; and to “exchange information and results from research, monitoring, conservation and education programmes”,

Aware that both of AEW A’s Fundamental Principles established in Article II, namely the need to maintain waterbird species in a favourable conservation status or restore them to such a status, and to take account of the precautionary principle, fundamentally require regularly collected data and information to be effectively delivered,

Recalling also the stress given to the importance of information and knowledge by the Agreement’s Strategic Plan 2019-2027, and the Plan of Action for Africa 2019-2027 as key requirements for science-based conservation and management of migratory waterbirds and their habitats,

Aware of the importance of evaluations of conservation interventions published by <https://www.conservationevidence.com> in helping to collate collective knowledge on the efficacy of management practices for waterbird species and their habitats, and its value as an aid to the implementation of the Agreement,

Acknowledging the importance of traditional knowledge as means of understanding waterbirds but recognising that AEW A currently has no means of gathering and responding to such knowledge,

Recognising with appreciation the work of pioneer, internationalist, waterbird biologists organised especially through the activities of the International Waterbird and Wetlands Research Bureau who established the foundations of modern waterbird conservation science so putting into place the preconditions for the Agreement,

Appreciating the continuing need for information to underpin science-based waterbird management not just to understand better the changing dynamics of populations, but especially in the context of climate change which creates dynamic contexts, and to that end, requires that knowledge of population boundaries needs to remain contemporary,

Recognising that addressing the many gaps in information and knowledge are most effectively (and cost-effectively) filled through collaborations with other organisations and international processes with shared agenda,

Recalls the assessment of priority needs for the conservation of AEWA-listed seabirds tabled at MOP6 (document AEWA/MOP 6.40: *Review of the status, threats and conservation action priorities for the seabird populations covered by the Agreement*) and summarised by Resolution 6.9, *inter alia* to:

- strengthen cooperation in providing reliable and quantified reporting of seabird harvest data, including egg harvesting in order to assess the annual legal harvest of seabird populations and provide estimates of illegal catch statistics;
- strengthen efforts to quantify gillnet fishing effort within the Agreement area, and to work towards quantifying the scale and impacts of bycatch in both small and large scale fisheries;
- in the context of AEWA priorities for International Single Species Action Plans, develop or update plans for priority seabirds, incorporating detailed information and mapping of where threats are occurring, to facilitate coherent regional management of species-specific threats;
- ensure that national coastal and marine spatial planning initiatives prioritise the collection, collation and integration of seabird data, including marine Important Bird Areas, Marine Protected Areas, temporal/spatial usage and species sensitivity mapping outputs, during the planning process and that human impacts on AEWA listed seabirds is minimised;
- strengthen national fisheries management processes, and provide adequate capacity for enforcing compliance to regulations, monitoring of catch and surveillance of vessels in relation to protected areas for AEWA listed seabirds;
- ensure that the collection of seabird bycatch data is integrated into existing bycatch observer programmes on vessels;
- develop and implement National Plans of Action for seabird bycatch;
- promote work to understand the long-term impacts of marine debris on seabird species;
- support and contribute to filling knowledge gaps on AEWA-listed seabird species, including by sharing information and facilitating research on relevant threats and priority areas in relation to such species;
- encourage continued monitoring programmes for assessing and updating the conservation status of AEWA-listed seabird species,

Understanding the value of complete national reporting to MOPs as the basis from which international contexts and priorities can be developed,

Acknowledging the role of AEWA's species action planning processes as a structured means of collating data and information for most threatened species,

Noting the value of horizon scanning processes in providing information on new and emerging issues of relevance to the implementation of the Agreement,

Aware of recent international assessments undertaken by the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) on land degradation and restoration (2018), and on biodiversity and ecosystem services (2018), which provide information of considerable relevance to the implementation of the Agreement,

Recalling Resolution 5.19 which urges joint and synergistic implementation of AEWA with the Ramsar Convention, and in that context *noting also* current relevant knowledge gathering activity under other international frameworks, *inter alia* the Conventions on wetlands, on Migratory Species, and on Biodiversity, the European Union, and IPBES, all of which materially contribute implementation of AEWA at multiple scales.

The Meeting of the Parties:

1. *Adopts* document AEWA/MOP 8.30 as an assessment of priority needs for information to underpin the implementation of the Agreement, including especially its Strategic Plan and the Plan of Action for Africa;
2. *Noting* the conclusions of document AEWA/MOP 8.30 that current priority knowledge and information needs to support AEWA implementation, especially in the context of strategically supporting the conservation of multiple threatened species or their habitats are:
 - a. information to progress multiple aspects of seabird conservation summarised in Resolution 6.9;
 - b. the value of strategic prioritisation of activities to eradicate introduced mammalian predators from seabird breeding islands;
 - c. the need to establish mechanisms for regular reporting on harvest levels as a prerequisite to assessing the sustainability of hunting activity nationally and at population scale;
 - d. the establishment of strategic guidance related to the potential for wetland restoration, in particular in relation to locations and wetland types, noting the shared benefits of such restorative activity for waterbirds, people and in the context of climate change mitigation;
 - e. the international collation of data and information held nationally on protected areas and their significance for AEWA-listed populations, and the need to complete current work aiming to address this need;
3. *Encourages* Parties and other relevant stakeholder organisations, to work with local communities to undertake research on traditional sources of knowledge, synthesise and publish this information, and, as appropriate, use it for the management of waterbirds and their habitats;
4. *Strongly urges* Parties and stakeholders to publish and so make more widely available, the results of conservation interventions, whether successful or unsuccessful, so as to inform future conservation and management actions, and routinely report such information in their national reports to the MOP so as to share it with other Parties further to Article III(k) of the Agreement;
5. *Requests* the Secretariat and Technical Committee, resources permitting, to consider how information in national reports concerning conservation interventions may best be synthesised so as to build over time, a simple searchable register of shared experience which will support actions by Parties and others;
6. *Strongly urges* all Parties to fully complete and submit a national report to MOP9;
7. *Encourages* relevant waterbird Specialist Groups to use contemporary data and information, including that derived from ringing atlases and tracking studies, to review the contemporary delineation of populations listed under AEWA, and to publish such studies;
8. *Encourages* the Secretariat, resources permitting, to synthesise a high-level summary of the multiple sources of information, guidance, and decisions adopted by the Meetings of Parties as a means to better make available information relevant to the implementation of the Agreement;

9. *Requests* the Technical Committee, resources permitting, to periodically undertake horizon scanning exercises working with others as appropriate, and report their findings to the Meeting of Parties as appropriate.

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