

Regional activities of the European Region for the implementation of the Convention on Migratory Species and its related instruments (Dec 2009 – Nov 2010)

1. CMS and its relevant instruments

1.1 Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) for conservation of specific species

France

- *CMS*
Aquatic Warbler: France attended the second meeting of the signatories of the Aquatic Warbler MOU in Poland, made a presentation of the implementation of the national action plan on the species and officially signed the MOU at this occasion, becoming a member of the MOU.
- *AEWA*
France has continued to provide its financial support to the African Initiative which serves to finance the position of African Initiative officer at the AEWA Secretariat. France has also provided a financial contribution to fuel the Small Initiative Programme. Several projects were selected and are now financed thanks to this support.

France has accepted to host the 5th Meeting of the Parties in May 2012 which will take place in the town of la Rochelle on the Atlantic Coast. France has actively started preparing the Meeting programme.

France is continuing its support to the SPOVAN project, a three year programme of capacity building and bird data collection on water birds in the Nile Valley, Sudan and South of Egypt.

France has launched and financially supported, in partnership with MAVA foundation, a new three year programme of contribution to the international water bird census and the management of wetlands in the Mediterranean region.

Netherlands

- *AEWA*
On 14-15 June 2010 a conference (symposium) on the occasion of the 15th anniversary of AEWA was held in the Hague, hosted by the Dutch government with the AEWA and CMS secretariats. The participants from ca 35 countries adopted the '*The Hague statement*' (attached), which highlighted *inter alia* the integration of waterbird and other biodiversity concerns in other policies, and the development of flyway networks in conformity with the AEWA Strategic Plan and the use of the Critical Site Network Tool resulting from the Wings over Wetlands Project, launched at this AEWA meeting. Also the '*The Hague Statement*' suggested application of the AEWA approach in other (waterbird) flyway systems and for other migratory bird species such as songbirds, raptors, larger forest birds and steppe species (action would be required by CMS).

During the meeting the book '*Living on the Edge- wetlands and birds in a changing Sahel*' by Leo Zwarts, Rob G. Bijlsma, Jan van der Kamp & Eddy Wymenga was presented and handed out to all national delegations. Apart from its waterbird-relevant information, its information on pressures on and decline of non-waterbird species led to the recommendation in the '*The Hague Statement*' to start work on other migratory birds under pressure.

Norway

- *CMS*
Norway recently accepted to host the next CMS CoP in November 2011. Meetings with the Secretariat both in Bonn and in Norway has been concluded. Logo and slogan for the CoP was published during the CBD CoP in October 2010.
- *EUROBATS*
Norway participated at the MoP6 in September 2010. Norway contributed towards funding of

delegates to attend this MoP. Our national report to Eurobats is posted on the Eurobats web site (under documents of the MoP). Norway is in the final phase of drafting a national action plan for all species of bats (12). A visitor center for information on bats was completed in 2009.

Poland

- Agreement on the Conservation of small cetaceans of the Baltic and North Seas (ASCOBANS),
- Agreement on the Conservation of Population of European bats (EUROBATS),
- Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of Aquatic Warbler.

Slovenia

- Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (AEWA),
- Agreement on the Conservation of cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and contiguous Atlantic Area (ACCOBAMS),
- Agreement on the Conservation of Population of European bats (EUROBATS).

United Kingdom

- Pitcairn signed an MOU for the 'Conservation of Cetaceans and their Habitats in the Pacific Island Region'
- Aquatic warbler – The UK was not able to attend the Second meeting of signatories but provided briefing for it giving the UK position on various issues. UK drafted the national report 2006-09 for the MoU.
- The Conservation of Migratory Birds of Prey in Africa and Eurasia (Raptors) was extended to cover Jersey, Guernsey (including Alderney and Sark) and the Sovereign Base Areas, Cyprus.

2. Activities related to:

2.1 Scientific Research and Monitoring

Netherlands

- *AEWA*
 - The AEWA conference on its 15th anniversary (June 2010, The Hague, see paragraph 1.1) was followed by a workshop organized by Wetlands International on the International Waterbird Census, which provides important data (population size & trends) of all waterbirds species in the world and which is therewith essential for the implementation of AEWA, CMS, the Ramsar convention (1% criteria) and EU directives. By contrast, there is a serious lack of funding for the IWC. Models of solutions were discussed. The NL and UK have raised the funding of the IWC in the EU's ORNIS committee in October 2009 and referred to it again in the ORNIS committee of November 2010.
 - In 2010 Alterra published a document on the strengths and weaknesses of the IWC and it is planning a gap filling survey in parts of West Africa early 2011.
 - In the CMS Scientific Council of June 2010 the NL gave a presentation of the role of ecological networks in nature conservation and the Dutch experience in that field. In the note by the secretariat for that same meeting the possible role of such networks in the CMS is discussed. The Dutch scientific institute Alterra in November provided further information on ecological networks and a list of relevant literature to the CMS secretariat.
- *ASCOBANS*
The research into the causes of death of stranded porpoises is going on. Preliminary results indicate that at least 40% of the stranded animals is due to drowning.

Poland

- In 2007 the programme of bird monitoring in Poland co-ordinated by the Polish State Inspectorate for Environmental Protection was launched. In 2010, within the programme 16 subprogrammes were implemented. These included:
 - Monitoring of Common Nesting Birds
 - Monitoring of Flag Bird Species
 - Monitoring of Birds of Prey

- Monitoring of Forest Owls
 - Monitoring of Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos*
 - Monitoring of Greater Spotted Eagle *Aquila clanga*
 - Monitoring of Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*
 - Monitoring of Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*
 - Monitoring of Ferruginous Duck *Aythya nyroca*
 - Monitoring of Dunlin *Calidris alpina schinzii*
 - Monitoring of Mediterranean gull *Larus melanocephalus*
 - Monitoring of Roller *Coracias garrulus*
 - Monitoring of Great Snipe *Gallinago media*
 - Monitoring of Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax*
 - Monitoring of Three-toed Woodpecker *Picoides trodactylus*
- Under the Programme of State Monitoring of Environment co-ordinated by the Polish State Inspectorate for Environmental Protection there also were monitored fresh-water fish and summer shelters of two species of bats (Lesser horseshoe bat and Geoffroy's bat).
 - There is also regular monitoring of avifauna carried out on Important Bird Areas of European Union Importance, co-ordinated by the Polish Society of Bird Protection.

Slovenia

- In the period 2008-2010 the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning in collaboration with the Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Nature Conservation implemented public tenders for monitoring of:
 - wintering waterbirds (IWC) (implemented by DOPPS – BirdLife Slovenia),
 - breeding birds - qualifying species for Natura 2000 sites (implemented by DOPPS – BirdLife Slovenia),
 - bats (implemented by the Centre for Cartography of Fauna and Flora - CKFF).
- There is also regular monitoring of avifauna by managers of protected areas (Sečovlje salt pans, Škocjanski zatok).
- Monitoring of cetaceans has been conducted by NGO Morigenos, and in 2010 there has been an Adriatic – wide survey of cetaceans, that included Slovenian sea, and financed by the Republic of Italy.

United Kingdom

- *AEWA*
 - Continued input to the work plan of the technical committee.
- *ASCOBANS*
 - Ongoing work in the UK on acoustic deterrents or 'pingers' focussing on finding a device that is both effective and safe to use.
 - Presented data on 2D and 3D seismic survey activity in the UK maritime area.
- *CMS*
 - Continued input to the scientific council (UK is vice-chair) including technical input to the scientific councils' working group on global bird flyways and attended the Scientific Council meeting in June in Bonn.
 - The UK is undertaking scientific research into critically endangered shark species (including the porbeagle and spurdog that are listed on CMS) present in UK waters, to better understand how best to conserve and protect these vulnerable species.
- *EUROBATS*
 - The Bat monitoring programme is now in its 14th year. It is producing statistically robust population trends for 11 of the 17 bat species in the UK.

2.2 Education and Public Awareness

France

- *EUROBATS*
France participated at the MoP6 in September 2010 and at this occasion announced it would organize a big public event on "bats and forest" over four days in February 2010, at the occasion of the "Year of the Bat" and the "International Year of Forests".

Poland

- *Bats*
In 2009, several NGO's in Poland conducted educational programmes in schools of different type aimed at changing the negative stereotype of bats in the society.
- *Baltic Harbour Porpoise*
In 2009, the efforts towards increase the public awareness about the harbour porpoises as a species which requires special protection in the Baltic Sea were continued. The greatest coverage was achieved by the Polish Post Office's campaign issuing a series of stamps titled „Mammals of the Baltic" which presented image of three protected species of seal as well as that of the harbour porpoise. The print run for each stamp was 540 000. Special envelopes and postcards were also issued.
- In 2009, a DVD film entitled „Baltic Harbour Porpoises" was published, which was created by the Hel Marine Station group team.
- The course for biology teachers from schools of various levels in the province of Pomerania was conducted. The course was focused on broadening knowledge of the biodiversity of the Baltic Sea with prominence given to endangered resources of the Baltic harbour porpoises and methods of protecting them.
- *Monitoring*
In the years 2009-2010, the manual guide books on monitoring of nesting birds, animal species and natural habitats were published by the State Inspectorate for Environmental Protection were published

Slovenia*Marine turtles*

There was a project undertaken ("Ohranimo želvo v slovenskem morju") by the Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Nature Conservation, Regional unit Piran. Project included a public awareness campaign on importance of marine turtles in nature that included exhibitions and distribution of a brochure to stakeholders and general public.

Cooperation among fishermen and competent institutions for nature conservations has been established. Turtles, caught in nets, were brought to Aquarium Piran on rehabilitation, than they are tagged and later released back to the sea.

United Kingdom

- *CMS*
Information on CMS published on the Defra and Joint Nature Conservation Committees' (JNCC) websites
- *ACAP*
Articles on ACAP have been published in JNCC's Nature News. UK have delivered a public presentation in the Falkland Islands on ACAP and the UK's involvement

2.3 Capacity Building**Germany**

- A Junior Professional Official has been provided to support the CMS Secretariat at least within the period 1.10.2010 until 30.9.2012. Her tasks will focus on Central Asian Issues (like the Central Asian Flyway)

Poland

- Dealing with CMS the Ministry of Environment is co-operating with some external bodies, i.e. the Institute of Environmental Protection in Warsaw, the Hel Marine Station located on the Baltic seashore and some ecological NGO's.

Slovenia

- In the reporting period there has been a slight increase in the number of staff in public services responsible for nature conservation when compared to the period before 2008. There are also seminars, conferences and other events, aimed at improvement of knowledge and skills of people working in nature conservation taking place several times per year.

United Kingdom

- *CMS*
 - Attended the Third Meeting on International Cooperation on Migratory Sharks in February.
 - Attended the Future Shape working group meeting in June 2010.
- *ACAP*
 - Development and implementation of ACAP plans for the South Atlantic Overseas Territories (OTs). The plans span the range of categories included in the template and have been developed as tools to guide the South Atlantic OTs and the UK government in their work to meet the obligations of ACAP.
 - Implementation of the ACAP coordination project which contributes to all the categories on the template.
 - Attended the fifth meeting of ACAP's Advisory Committee.
- *ACCOBAMS*
 - The UK continues to encourage collaboration with ASCOBANS.
- *AEWA*
 - Attended and participated in the 15th Anniversary Symposium in The Hague, June 2010.
- *ASCOBANS*
 - Attended the 17th Meeting of the Advisory Committee in October 2010.
- *EUROBATS*
 - Continued support of the iBats project. iBats is a partnership between The Zoological Society of London and The Bat Conservation Trust and runs a number of national and international bat biodiversity monitoring projects.

2.4 International Cooperation

Netherlands

- The NL pleaded for accession of the EU and EU countries to the new CMS birds of prey MoU in the ORNIS committee of October 2009 and reiterated this in the ORNIS committee of November 2010. The NL is of the view that for EU countries strategies for the conservation of raptors under this MoU can best be done in an EU framework, as it already exists in the EU.
- The Netherlands has funded a project led by DLG in which Dutch and Russian site managers cooperate and exchange information on the conservation of the Bewick's swan. In the framework of this project Wetlands International has prepared a draft Single Species Action Plan for this severely declining species, which is to be tabled at AEWA MOP5 in 2012.
- In March 2010 a workshop on the possibilities for the Russian Federation to accede to AEWA was held in Moscow, co-funded by the Dutch government.

Poland

- In May 2010 Poland hosted Second Meeting of the Signatories to the Memorandum of Understanding concerning Conservation Measures for the Aquatic Warbler in conjunction with the final meeting of the LIFE Project "Conservation of Aquatic Warbler in Poland and Germany". The leading partner of this Project is the Polish Society for Bird Conservation. Under this Project there is on-going bilateral cooperation between Poland and Germany on Protection of the Aquatic Warbler, including monitoring and active protection of this species.
- Poland is a participant of an international project SAMBAH (Static Acoustic Monitoring of the Baltic Sea Harbour Porpoise) launched in October 2010. The project involves almost all EU countries around the Baltic Sea, with Sweden as the Leading Partner. The ultimate goal of the Project is to secure the conservation of the Baltic Sea harbour porpoise.
- In February 2010, the 6th meeting of ASCOBANS Jastarnia Group was organized by the Polish Ministry of Environment in the premises of the Hel Marine Station in Poland. This working group was established to take forward the implementation of the Recovery Plan for the Baltic Harbour Porpoise.

Slovenia

- There is an on-going bilateral cooperation with Serbia, Montenegro and Croatia on transposition and implementation of the EU Wild Birds and Habitats Directive that included conservation of migratory species, covered by this Convention and its daughter Agreements.

United Kingdom

- *ACAP*
 - Contributed to the EU Action Plan for Reducing Incidental Catches of Seabirds in Fishing Gears.
- *ASCOBANS*
 - Implemented a Conservation Plan for the Harbour Porpoise in the North Sea and adopted a recovery Plan for Baltic Harbour Porpoises (Jastarnia Plan).
- *EUROBATS*
 - iBats project extended to Romania, Bulgaria, Ukraine, Russia and Hungary through a workshop.

2.5 Protection of Migratory Species, conservation measures

Germany

- As a follow up activity of the year of the Gorilla Germany will co-finance a WWF Gorilla project. The project is focussed on sustainable Gorilla tourism in Kamerun (Campo Ma'an NP) . Germany will contribute 109.000 € - and WWF 12.000,-€ and 83.0000,- € in kind. The project duration is over two years and until the of 2012.

Netherlands

- *ASCOBANS*
A National Plan for the Conservation of the Harbour Porpoise in the Dutch EEZ is under development and will be finished in spring 2011.
At the Ascobans AC meeting in Bonn in October a Steering Group for the Conservation Plan of the harbour Porpoise in the North Sea was established. The Netherlands will take the lead. Terms of reference for this group which will work intersessionally till the next MOP were agreed. The terms of reference for the coordinator of the Conservation Plan will be examined by this Steering group.

Norway

- *AEWA*: Norway contributes financially to the full time officer working on the ISSAP for the Lesser White-fronted Goose. We also finance a number of activities related to flyway issues (several countries) and the first international meeting of the ISSAP for LWfG (Helsinki, November 2010). Nationally we have established in 2009 a national action plan for this species. A feasibility study by the WWT was completed in 2010 relating to supplementation of the wild population of LWfG.
- Norway has financed work on a flyway management plan for the Svalbard population of the pink-footed goose. A workshop in November 2010 will produce a draft to be circulated spring 2011.

Poland

- *Migrating Birds*
In 2010, 16 programmes of monitoring of birds, including migrating birds, were implemented in Poland by the State Inspectorate for Environmental Protection.
- *Baltic Harbour Porpoise*
Since 2002, under the ASCOBANS agreement, Poland has been involved in implementation of the Recovery Plan for the Baltic Harbour Porpoise (Jastarnia Plan). The Hel Marine Station is co-ordinator of actions undertaken under the Jastarnia Plan, including monitoring and active protection of porpoises was.
- *Bats*
Among 830 Natura 2000 sites proposed to establish in Poland under the Habitat Directive, there are 26 sites covering important refuges of bats. In 2009, the management plan for Natura 2000 site "Nietoperek" for the years 2010–2029 was established. The site is covering the biggest wintering place of bats in lowland part of Europe.
- *Conservation measures*
In 2009, under the Bird Directive, 141 Natura 2000 sites for the conservation of birds were established in Poland.
- In December 2009, the Minister of the Environment have selected five areas protected for needs of the HELCOM Baltic Sea Protected Area system. Among tem there are two areas dedicated to the Baltic harbour porpoise protection in the Pomerania Bay and in the Puck Bay.

Slovenia

- *Marine turtles*
In the frame of the above mentioned project "Ohranimo želvo v slovenskem morju" cooperation among fishermen and competent institutions for nature conservations has been established. Turtles (*Caretta caretta*), caught in nets, were brought to Aquarium Piran on rehabilitation, than they were tagged and released back to the sea.
- *White-tailed eagle*
Regular checking of known nests during the breeding season is being carried out for the White-tailed Eagle. Nest control has proven to be a successful method to enable the fledging of White-tailed Eagle offspring.
- *Humpback whale*
At the only time of occurrence of a whale in the Slovenian sea ministry has issued a guidance on whale watching, inspection services have increased their activity and public awareness campaigns were launched by NGO, who is has also monitored whales.
- *Conservation measures*
A new protected area, Ljubljansko barje Landscape park has been established in 2008, comprising of about 150 km² of cultural landscape, wetlands and woodlands.

United Kingdom

- *ACAP*
Involvement in the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT), as well as other Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs), to strengthen seabird by-catch mitigation measures.

2.6 Administrative, Institutional & Legislative /Policy measures**Netherlands**

- The Netherlands leads a working group on the evaluation of the Secretariat arrangements of ASCOBANS in which Belgium and Finland will participate. A preliminary report will be prepared for AC18.

Norway

- A new national act on biodiversity was passed in the Parliament and entered into force 1st of July 2009. The act gives stronger guidance on protection of threatened species and threatened habitat types. It also gives new regulations relating to import and trade in alien species that might pose a risk to the environment.

Slovenia

- In order to strengthen the implementation of the European Community legislation on impact assessment and on conservation of wild birds and flora, fauna and habitats there have been smaller changes of relevant legislation, and strengthening of institutions responsible for implementation of this legislation.
- First steps have been made towards a possible signatory of the Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of Migratory Birds of Prey in Africa and Eurasia.

United Kingdom

- *CMS*
 - UK chairs the finance and budget sub-committee for CMS
 - UK is a member of and active contributor to the working group regarding the future shape of CMS.

- UK continues to press for strong, scientifically led management measures at all fisheries management meetings, and where appropriate through conservation bodies such as CMS and CITES.
- Shark species that have been identified as vulnerable or endangered, including basking shark, spurdog and porbeagle, have been protected in the UK (and throughout Europe) through a range of fisheries management measures, including zero TAC's and prohibitions on landings of species under the Common Fisheries Policy.
- UK affords the basking shark additional legal protection from harm and disturbance under the UK's Wildlife and Countryside Act (WCA).
- **ASCOBANS**
 - Developed guidance for those carrying out activities in the marine environment to inform on issues connected with disturbance of cetaceans.
 - Prepared a report, jointly with the University of Aberdeen and Lighthouse Field Station, to provide the results of acoustic propagation modelling and prediction of underwater noise from seismic survey operations proposed for the Moray Firth region during 2010.
 - The Marine Management Organisation was created under the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009, bringing together key marine decision-making powers and delivery mechanisms to provide an integrated method of planning, regulating and licensing activity in the marine area.
 - UK has set up a Military Underwater Sound Stakeholder forum.

3. Activities planned for next year

France

- In 2011, France will continue the activities underlined in chapters 1.1. and 2.2. France is also planning to sign the Bird of Prey MoU.

Poland

- In 2011, it is going to be launched a new LIFE+ Project "Management of the habitats of Aquatic Warbler *Acrocephalus paludicola*" which aims at the active protection of the Aquatic Warbler in four sites in Eastern Poland. There will be still ongoing process of preparing management plans for the Natura 2000 sites in Poland protected under the Birds Directive, including many important sites for migratory birds.
- It is planned to start in 2011 two new monitoring programmes covering wintering waterbirds and wintering seabirds in Poland. The programmes will be co-ordinated by the State Inspectorate for Environmental Protection.

Slovenia

- In 2011 it is planned to continue with monitoring of taxonomic groups, listed in chapter 2.1. It is planned to undertake a scientific and technical review of data in light of criteria for designation of a marine Natura 2000 site (including species covered by CMS). In the field of capacity building and international cooperation it is foreseen to continue with activities, listed in chapters 2.3 and 2.4.

United Kingdom

- The UK is following the domestic and European procedure needed to sign the MoU on sharks, and hope to have signed and ratified the agreement in time for its first formal meeting.



‘Flyway conservation in action’

The Hague Action Statement on the conservation of migratory waterbirds and their habitats, land use changes and development cooperation

The Hague Action Statement expresses the outcome of discussions by participants to the symposium celebrating the 15th Anniversary of the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (AEWA). The symposium took place on 14 and 15 June 2010 in The Hague, the Netherlands and was attended by over 100 participants from 32 countries across the whole AEWA region and beyond.

During the last 15 years, AEWA has achieved much in stimulating international cooperation for the conservation of migratory waterbirds. It has developed action plans, published technical assessments and brought together interested parties across Africa and Eurasia. AEWA continues to promote and support crucial international conservation actions for migratory waterbirds and their wetland habitats.

State of the art and achievements

- Migratory birds are a part of our daily life and in the hearts of all people.
- Migratory waterbirds need special attention due to their particular vulnerability to habitat changes, unsustainable harvesting and disturbance.
- Many measures are in place, and AEWA has already had significant, positive impacts, but the decline of waterbirds and their habitats has not been curbed sufficiently.
- Waterbirds are essential sentinels of ecosystem health.
- Therefore, it is clear that we have to increase our efforts dramatically.

The continuing decline of populations and their habitats as well as the failure to reduce the rate of loss of biodiversity (the 2010 World Summit on Sustainable Development target) are compelling reasons for enhanced action. We recall the Edinburgh Declaration of 2004 and its endorsement by AEWA and the Ramsar Convention and call upon all stakeholders, countries, inter-governmental organizations (IGOs), non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the scientific community to strengthen its implementation.

Participants noted recent publications such as: Global Biodiversity Outlook-3 (May 2010); the Report of the Trondheim Conference on Biodiversity (February 2010), UNESCO Biodiversity Science Policy Conference (January 2010), EU priorities on halting the loss of biodiversity in Europe (January 2010), Arctic Biodiversity Trends (May 2010) as well as the outcome of the CBD-SBSTTA 14 deliberations on protected areas, inland waters and coastal marine areas. These documents contain, *inter alia*, alarming information on the loss of biodiversity and habitats and provide a clear agenda for future AEWA priorities.

Future challenges

- The continuing loss of biodiversity, including waterbirds and their habitats;
- The huge geographic and economic scale of the factors which are driving change in land use and that of wetland habitats, resulting in significant negative effects on migratory waterbirds, and can, for example, lead to the shifting of migratory routes;
- The need to approach biodiversity protection in coherence with other global challenges, such as food and water security and climate change;
- The importance of focussing on transboundary aspects, and the integration of the conservation of migratory birds in other sectors; and
- The need to enhance the extent and focus of future funding from donor agencies in response to the declining status of wetlands and waterbirds and the ever-increasing threats and pressures on them.

Urgent call on AEWA Parties, other Range States, partner organizations¹ and the corporate sector to increase activities and contributions

This Action Statement highlights selected priorities at the flyway level that can both boost the implementation of the AEWA Strategic Plan and address new challenges:

1. Reverse waterbird habitat loss and degradation due to human activities and mainstream actions for waterbirds with those of food security, water security, climate change and sustainable socio-economic development

The continuing loss and degradation of waterbird habitats is alarming, having already caused significant population declines, both regional and global. These losses are related to a growing human population. The only solution is to develop more sustainable approaches to land- and water-use that respect the needs of both people and biodiversity, including migratory birds, and limit further claims on land and water.

Actions:

- Develop and implement approaches that combine conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, including that of migratory birds and their habitats, while promoting livelihoods, poverty alleviation and an increased food security, for example and where appropriate, by both efficient food production on some of the existing agricultural area (thereby reducing the need for more habitat to be transformed into agricultural area) as well as integration of biodiversity objectives with agriculture in other areas;
- Introduce national measures to protect shorelines, wetlands and other critical bird habitats;
- Promote and implement sustainable practices in agriculture, fisheries, pastoralism, integrated water management and hunting, by promoting and applying biodiversity-inclusive economic development and sectoral policies;
- Make full use of the financial mechanisms, created in the context of climate change policies, to combine avoidance of deforestation, carbon storage and sequestration through wetland restoration, with the protection and management of habitats of migratory birds;

¹ Multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs); international, and national, non-governmental organizations; and governmental agencies and institutions.

- Integrate the conservation and sustainable management of migratory birds and their habitats in programmes and activities of national planning agencies and development cooperation agencies and organizations and promote the use of broad impact assessments and the priority setting of environmental issues by the recipient countries; and
- AEWA should engage with the UN Environment Management Group on the Integration of Biodiversity across the UN System which has been established to enhance collaboration between UN treaties.

2. Further develop and manage site networks

Modern research techniques applied to migratory birds (satellite transmitters, colour marking schemes, stable isotope analysis, *etc.*) have shown that waterbirds have many different migration strategies and that they may shift their migratory routes due to changes in their habitats. Both broad-front migration and a clear connectivity between larger areas via staging sites occur in many species. Many areas used by waterbirds are extensively farmed landscapes, whose management is best influenced by environmentally friendly agricultural policies. Other areas may be subject to legal protection, for example as Ramsar sites, or as Natura 2000 sites in the European Union. The Critical Site Network tool, developed under the UNEP/GEF Wings Over Wetlands Project, is an essential source of information for such actual or potential protected areas.

Actions:

- Conduct research and field surveys to better understand and monitor:
 - movements of birds within and between sites in protected area networks and also at a flyway scale; and
 - the adequacy of current site networks to provide for the requirements of waterbirds;
- Urgently develop a comprehensive and coherent climate resilient flyway network of protected and managed sites and other adequately managed sites, of international and national importance for waterbirds, taking into account existing networks in conformity with Target 1.2 of the AEWA Strategic Plan and the proposed Target 11 of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) 2020 Strategic Plan;
- Use and regularly update the Critical Site Network tool with information about those important areas that are not necessarily part of formal protected area systems;
- Promote the full involvement of local communities and encourage use of best practice, shared lessons and information exchange between sites and countries, for example through the use of the Critical Site Network tool; and
- Strengthen capacity for flyway conservation through, among other instruments, the Flyway Training Kit.

3. Ensure harvesting practices are sustainable

Sustainable hunting does not occur everywhere throughout the AEWA region even though it is promoted by national and international hunting organizations as well as by the Agreement itself. Some threatened and declining species are still being harvested (for example, Sociable Lapwing). Waterbird hunting in parts of the AEWA-region is sometimes unsustainable. The meeting also noted the alarming situation in parts of Africa as described in *‘Living on the Edge’*²: intensive harvesting of waterbirds in Sub-Saharan wetlands (and probably elsewhere in Africa) that is currently unsustainable. Projects are in place to develop alternative sources of income and protein instead of waterbirds.

² *Living on the Edge – Wetlands and Birds in a Changing Sahel*, by Leo Zwarts, Rob Bijlsma, Jan van der Kamp & Eddy Wymenga (2009, ISBN 978 90 5011 280 2).

Actions:

- Intensify and extend current projects of development cooperation agencies aiming at the reduction of harvesting of waterbirds in African non-breeding areas with structural provision of alternative food resources for human communities. In particular, to contribute to that goal by providing support to the African Initiative of AEWA;
- Identify and eliminate any unsustainable harvesting of migratory waterbirds, including unsustainable spring hunting, especially in Eurasia; and
- Promote practices that ensure that existing community-based harvesting practices are sustainable and share lessons learned with respect to these practices.

4. Continue and further improve the monitoring and reporting on the status of migratory waterbirds, their habitats and use at a flyway scale through the (extended) International Waterbird Census (IWC)

Continued and extended data collection is absolutely essential, *e.g.* for Single Species Action Plans (SSAPs) and needs to be widely supported. Within the International Waterbird Census global programme, priority should be given to collecting better quantity and quality of data for Africa, the Middle East and Central Asia as well as other monitoring, for example of Important Bird Areas (IBAs).

Actions:

- Establish a consortium by the end of 2010 involving countries, MEAs and other stakeholders, including local communities, and building upon the WOW Partnership, to secure adequate financial resources for international data collection, analysis and dissemination of updated and topical information necessary for waterbird conservation of the AEWA region, in particular through the extended International Waterbird Census and related products, including *Waterbird Population Estimates* and the Critical Site Network tool;
- Create a structured sustainable source of financing to implement and coordinate Single Species Action Plans and to synergise actions between SSAPs within the AEWA and other flyway initiatives to make more efficient use of resources and expertise; and
- Build capacity for monitoring and reporting of the status of migratory waterbirds in Africa, the Middle East and Central Asia.

5. Protect migratory bird species under pressure

It is also becoming increasingly clear that many other migratory bird species are under pressure. Their international protection is as important as it is for waterbirds. AEWA could in future play a role in this respect. Where species are in need of special conservation actions, all sources of data and information should be used to implement relevant activities.

Actions:

- Apply approaches taken by AEWA (*e.g.* those supported by the WOW project and the recently established WOW partnership), in other flyway systems;
- Secure adequate resources for the implementation of AEWA SSAPs and strengthen linkages and the implementation of actions to benefit multiple SSAPs;
- Promote closer cooperation between Range States of the species covered by SSAPs, such as the Black-tailed Godwit and Lesser White-fronted Goose;

- Share lessons learned and successful tools between flyway agreements and initiatives;
- Promote the use of SSAPs for species that cause damage to agriculture or fisheries, in line with the AEWA Action Plan; extend the recently initiated adaptive management approach for the Svalbard Pink-footed Goose to other relevant species;
- Consider developing an early warning system / mechanism for the risk assessment of invasive species of waterbirds (and other animals and plants that impact on waterbirds), through CMS/AEWA in collaboration with national governments, other MEAs and international organizations, in particular the Global Invasive Species Programme; and
- Strengthen linkages and synergies with other flyway initiatives, and consider the application of the AEWA approach, whether within AEWA or through joint initiatives of AEWA and other relevant CMS instruments (to be developed), to other bird migratory species, including songbirds, raptors, larger forest birds, and steppe species, in situations where these species use the same flyways and largely the same habitats.

6. Promote the development of future international initiatives

The Global Environmental Facility (GEF) has provided substantial and crucial support for the Wings Over Wetlands project – through which an innovative array of tools has been developed to assist in the implementation of AEWA. However, changes to GEF funding criteria mean that in the future such international flyway-scale projects will be difficult to support. Given the demonstrably effective outputs from WOW, the meeting urged that GEF reconsiders these criteria, in line with recommendations of the UNEP publication “*The Experience of UNEP GEF & Partners in Flyway Conservation*”, in order to support new international initiatives.

Actions:

- Increase the effectiveness of protected area networks at the ecosystem scale;
- Develop and support systems for the collection and analysis of relevant data to underpin and adapt the design of protected area networks in response to climate change and land use changes; and
- Support the establishment of financial mechanisms by Parties, other Range States, partner organizations and the corporate sector to enable AEWA, CMS and the Ramsar Convention to implement CBD decisions relevant to migratory species conservation and habitat management at the forthcoming CBD COP³.

³ CBD COP10, 18 - 29 October 2010 - Nagoya, Aichi Prefecture, Japan (<http://www.cbd.int>)