



# PRE-CMS COP 10 WORKSHOP TO ENHANCE THE CAPACITY OF CMS/AEWA NEGOTIATORS ENTEBBE, UGANDA

**26-28 OCTOBER 2011**

Planning and Preparing for Multilateral Negotiations



Federal Ministry for the  
Environment, Nature Conservation  
and Nuclear Safety



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft  
Confédération suisse  
Confederazione Svizzera  
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Confederation

Federal Office for the Environment FOEN



A small, light-colored bird, possibly a warbler, is perched on a thin, brown branch. The bird has a yellowish-brown head, a dark eye, and a small beak. Its body is a mix of light green and yellow, with darker streaks on its wings and tail. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green, suggesting a natural, outdoor setting. The bird is facing left, and its feet are firmly gripping the branch. The overall scene is peaceful and naturalistic.

# **Improving the conservation status of migratory landbirds in The African-Eurasian region**

**Agenda Item 19, Tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, Bergen, 20-25 November 2011**

# Migratory landbirds in the African-Eurasian region

- Migrate 1000s of miles between breeding grounds in Eurasia and nonbreeding grounds in sub-Saharan Africa.
- Some species may travel up to 30,000 km annually.
- Includes a heterogeneous mix of species, with different life-histories and ecologies.





# Migratory land birds move on a broad front across landscapes



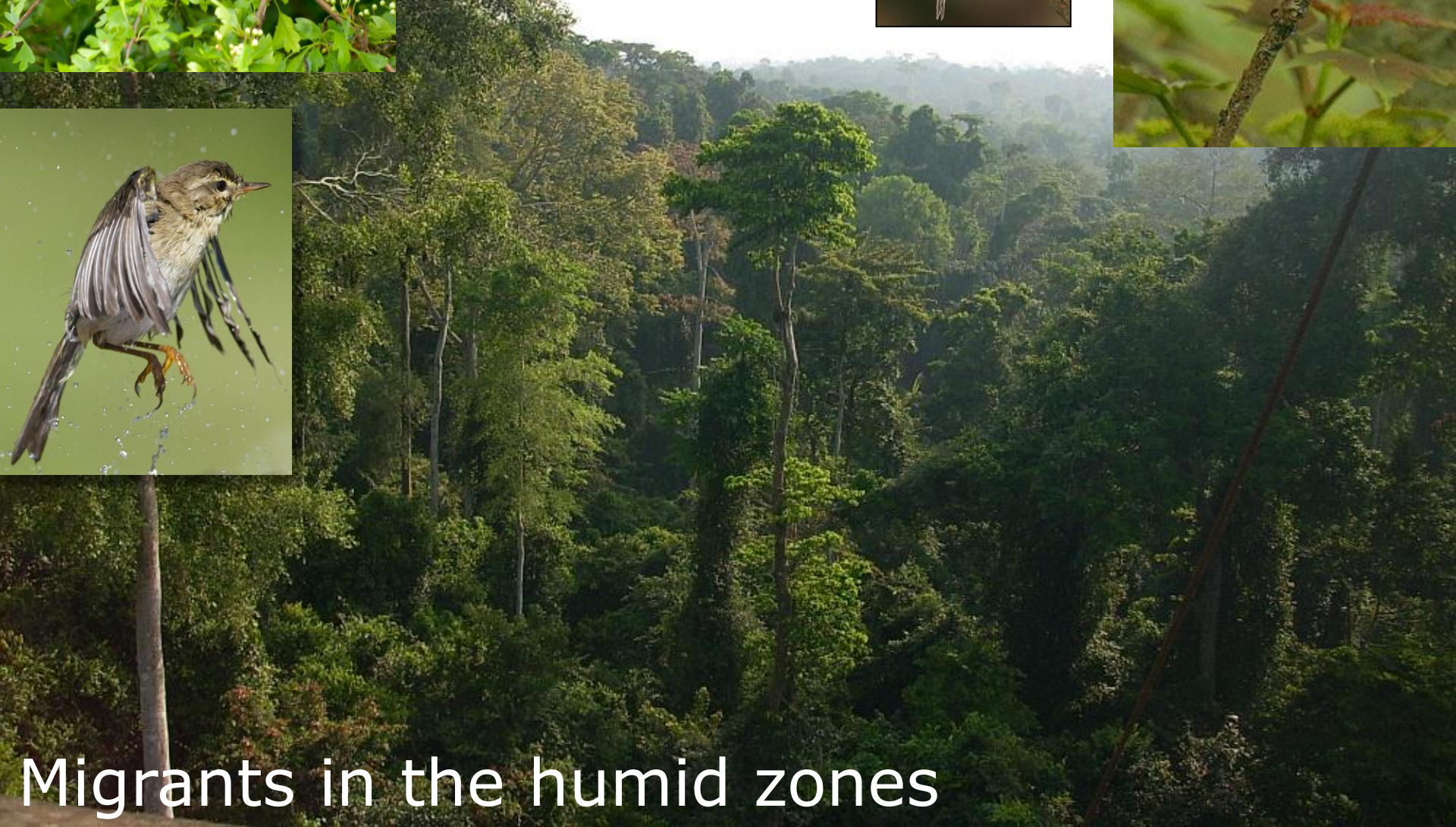
They are dispersed and need large areas of suitable habitat on migration

c.248 species, 43% declining



Migrants in the arid zones



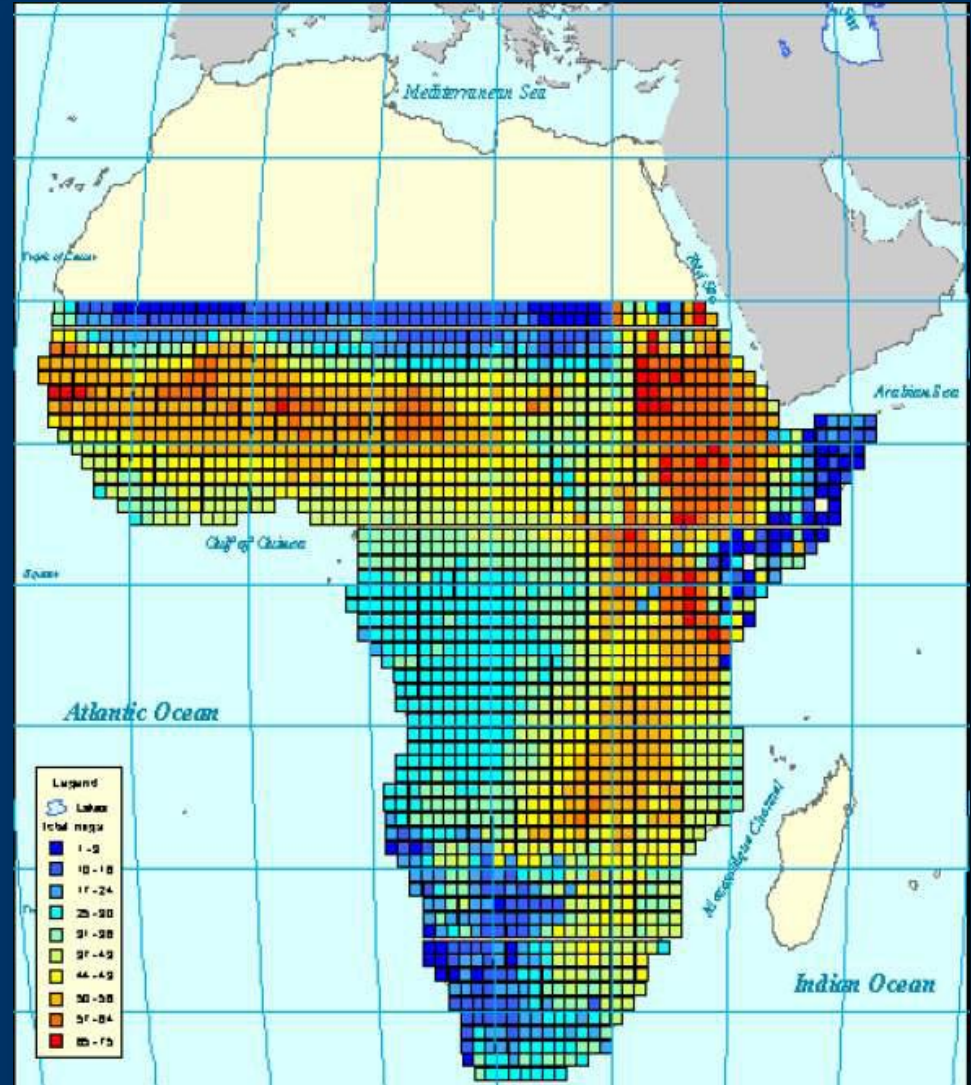


Migrants in the humid zones



# Importance of the Sahel for A-E migrants

- After breeding season, A-E migrants travel southwards, heading for destinations across Africa.
- Greatest diversity of migrants occurs within the Sahelian zone.
- Richness climaxes in East African Sahel, with 125 spp known.
- Few migrants found in rainforests of central Africa and southwest Africa.



# Population trends of African-Eurasian migrants





# A-E migrant landbirds in decline?

- Concerns have been raised about the conservation status of some A-E migrants.
- Initial concerns date back almost 40 years.
- For example, iconic papers of early 1970s highlighted declines of Common Whitethroat and linked to Sahelian drought.
- More recently, key papers have suggested that many A-E migrants have endured widespread and severe declines.

## Where Have All the Whitethroats Gone?

by Derek Winstanley, Robert Spencer and Kenneth Williamson  
*The 'crash' of the Whitethroat population in 1969 was one of the more startling revelations of the Trust's Common Birds Census; but more alarming is the bird's failure to make any sort of*

*J. Orn.* 114, 1973: S. 348—360

Aus dem Max-Planck-Institut für Verhaltensphysiologie, Vogelwarte Radolfzell  
(vormals Vogelwarte Rossitten)

Über starken Rückgang der Dorngrasmücke *Sylvia communis*  
und anderer Singvogelarten im westlichen Europa

Von Peter Berthold

1. Einführung

BIOLOGICAL CONSERVATION 131 (2006) 93–105



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## Long-term population declines in Afro-Palearctic migrant birds

Fiona J. Sanderson<sup>a,\*</sup>, Paul F. Donald<sup>a</sup>, Deborah J. Pain<sup>a</sup>, Ian J. Burfield<sup>b</sup>, Frans P.J. van Bommel<sup>b</sup>

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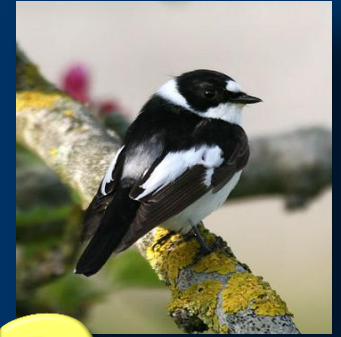
# Sources of A-E migrant landbird population trend information

- Country-specific breeding bird surveys.
- Europe-wide species trend indicators.
  - Pan European Common Bird Monitoring Scheme (PECBMS).
  - BirdLife's *Birds in Europe 2* database.
- Migration count data from European bird observatories.





# Trends of A-E migrant landbirds in Europe: PECBMS, 1990-2009



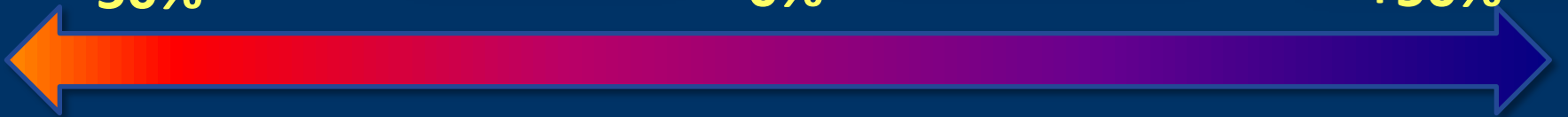
27

12

-50%

0%

+50%



Decline

Increase

# Examples>>>>

- How have A-P migrants fared at a European scale? Well, in total, trend information is available for 46 A-P migrants in Pan European Common Bird Monitoring Scheme (PECBMS).
- 27 species decreased in size between 1990-2007. Of these, two species decreased by more than 50% - these were the Black-tailed Godwit and the Woodchat Shrike. A further 14 species declined by more than 20%, including the Yellow Wagtail, Short-toed Lark, and Northern Weatear.

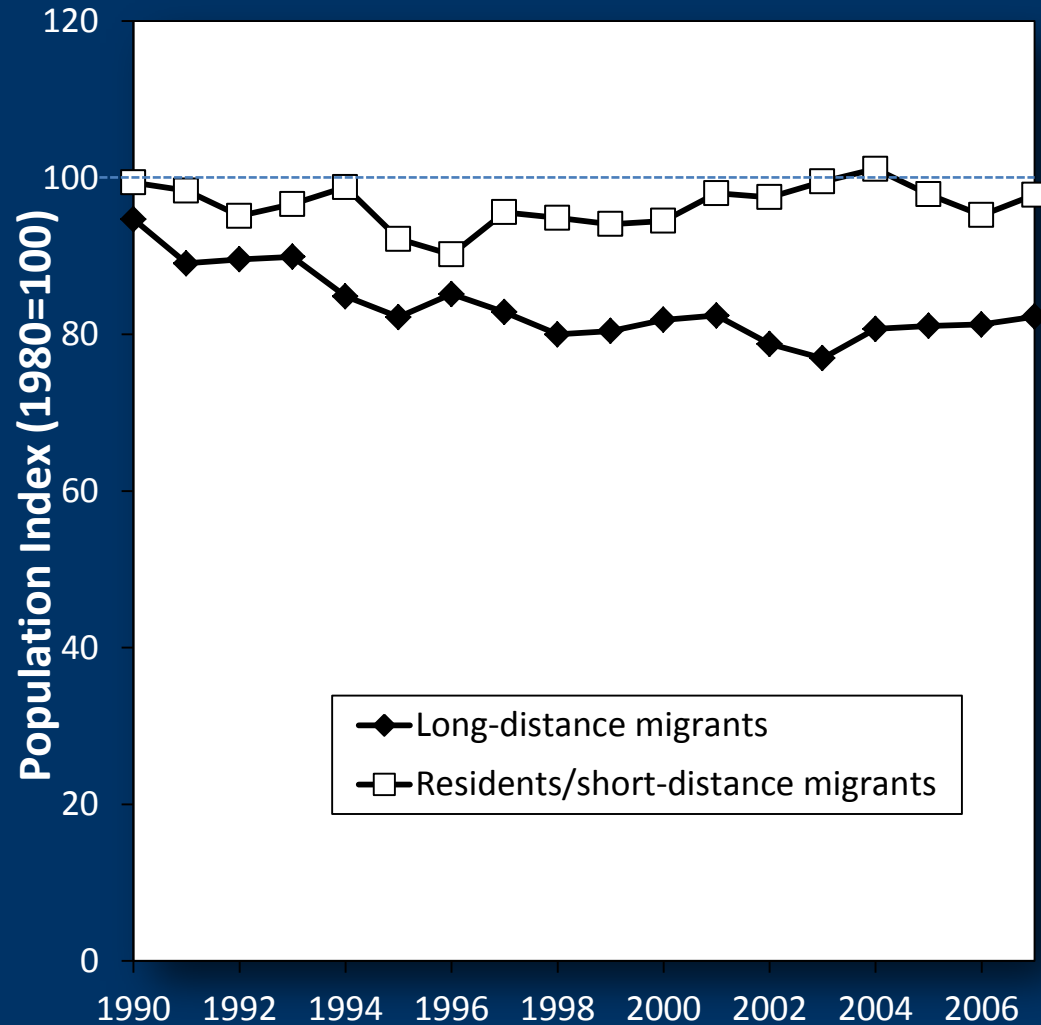


# Examples>>>>

- Not all migrants declined however – 14 species increased. Of these, 4 species increased by between 20-50%, including the Common Redstart and Great Reed Warbler. A further 3 species increased by more than 50%, the two represented here being the Collared Flycatcher and the Red-backed Shrike.

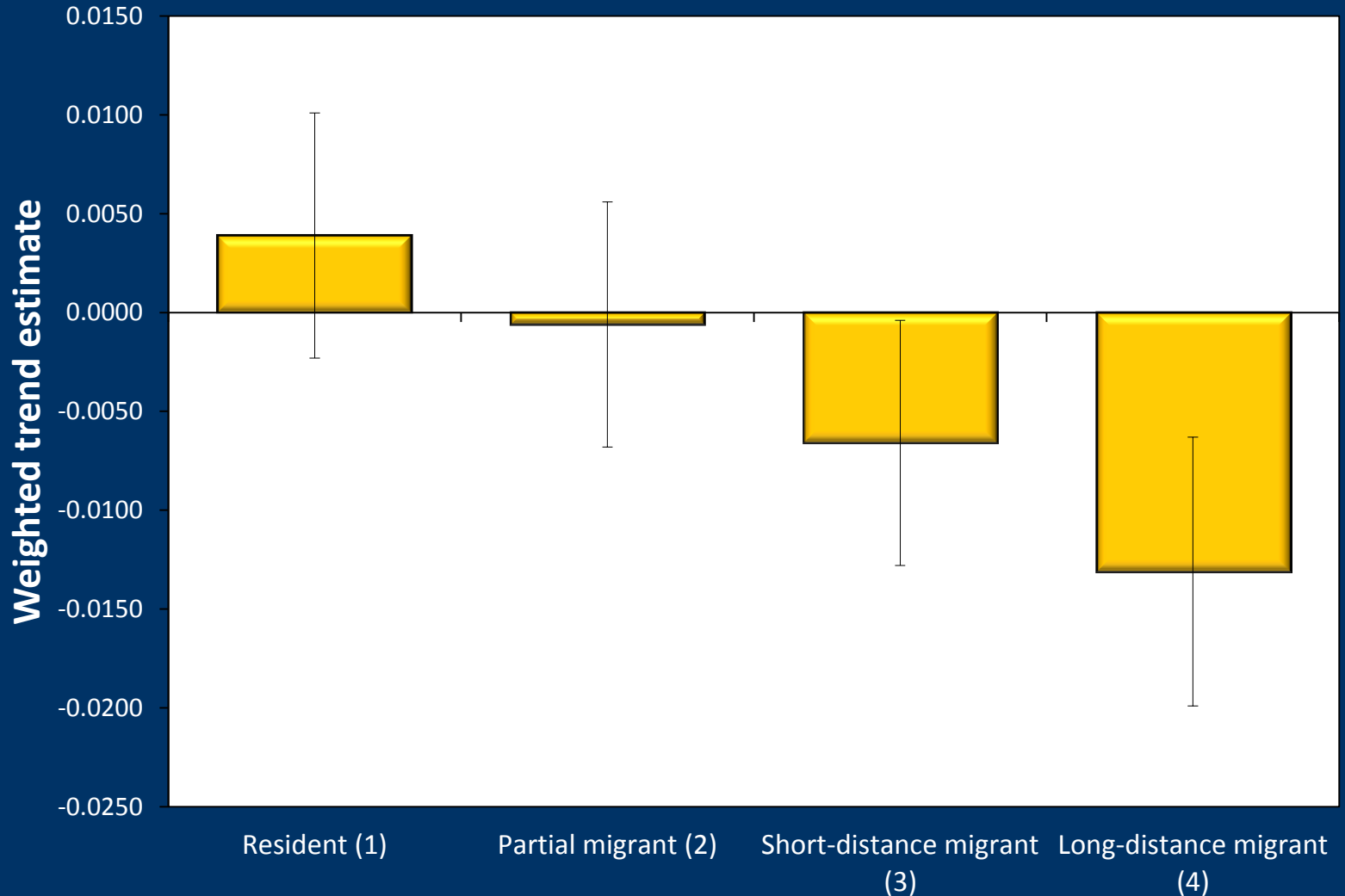
# Population trends and migration strategies

Annual changes in mean population index for different groups of European breeding birds.





# Comparing trends of different migration strategies



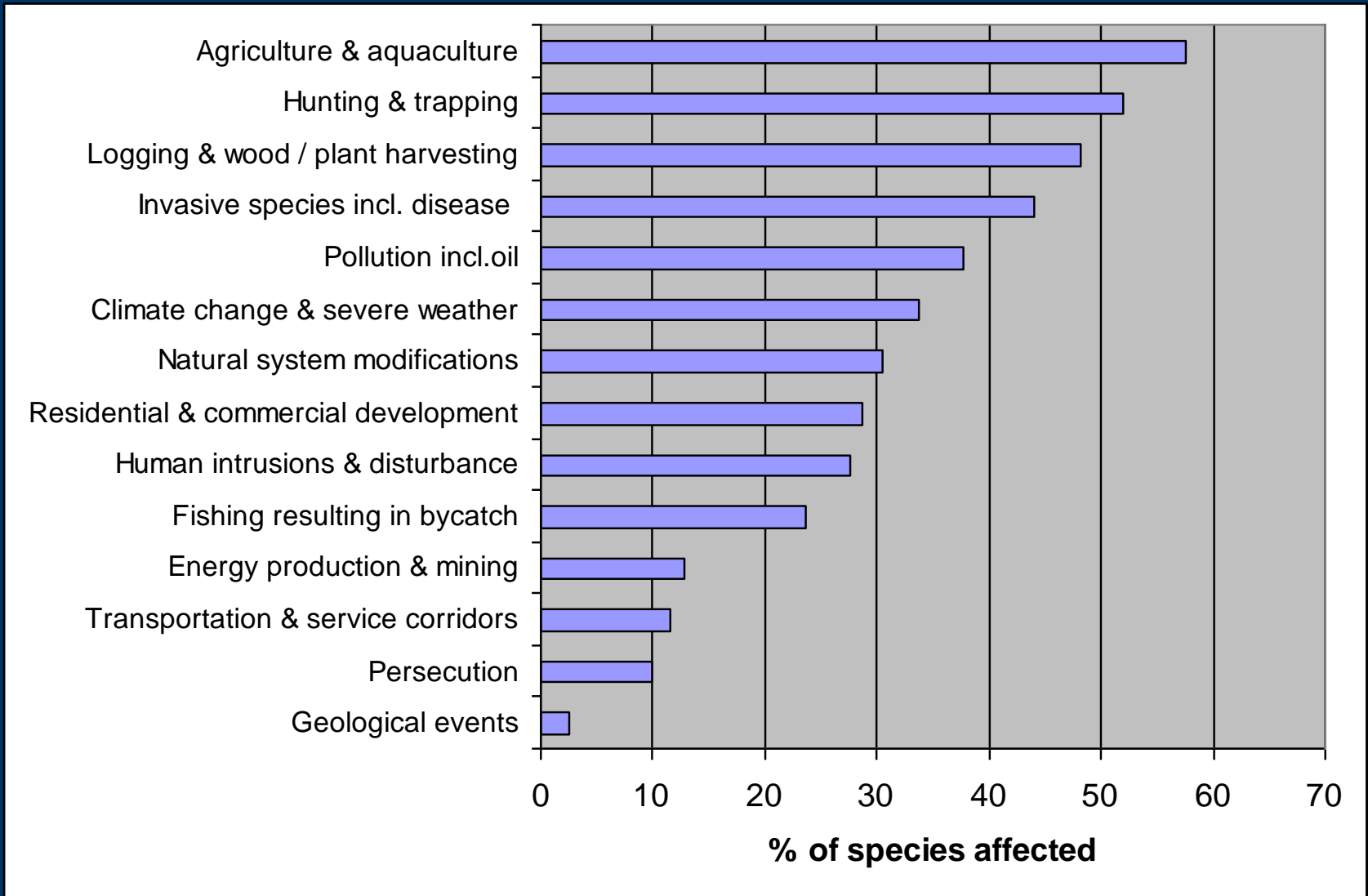
# Trends of A-E migrant landbirds: conclusions

- Available trend data clearly demonstrate large-scale declines of several A-E migrant landbirds across Europe.
- Trends of A-E migrant landbirds often (significantly) more negative than those of residents and short-distance migrants.
- However, need to be careful not to excessively generalise – some A-E migrants have increased recently.
- Nonetheless, the considerable proportion of declining species highlights the need to give A-E migrant landbirds high conservation priority.



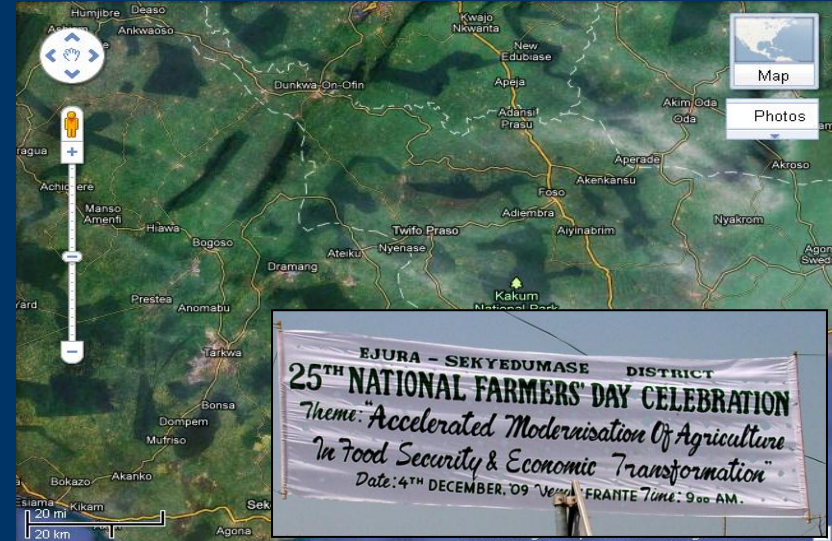
**Why ?**

# Migratory birds face many **threats**





# Land use change is the biggest single threat to migratory A-E landbirds



Intensification of agriculture  
in Europe

Intensification of agriculture  
in Africa

# Land use change is the biggest single threat to migratory A-E landbirds



**Drought & desertification  
in the arid zones of Africa**



**Increased grazing pressure**

# Land use change is the biggest single threat to migratory A-E landbirds



**Timber extraction**



**Increased demand for wood-fuel**

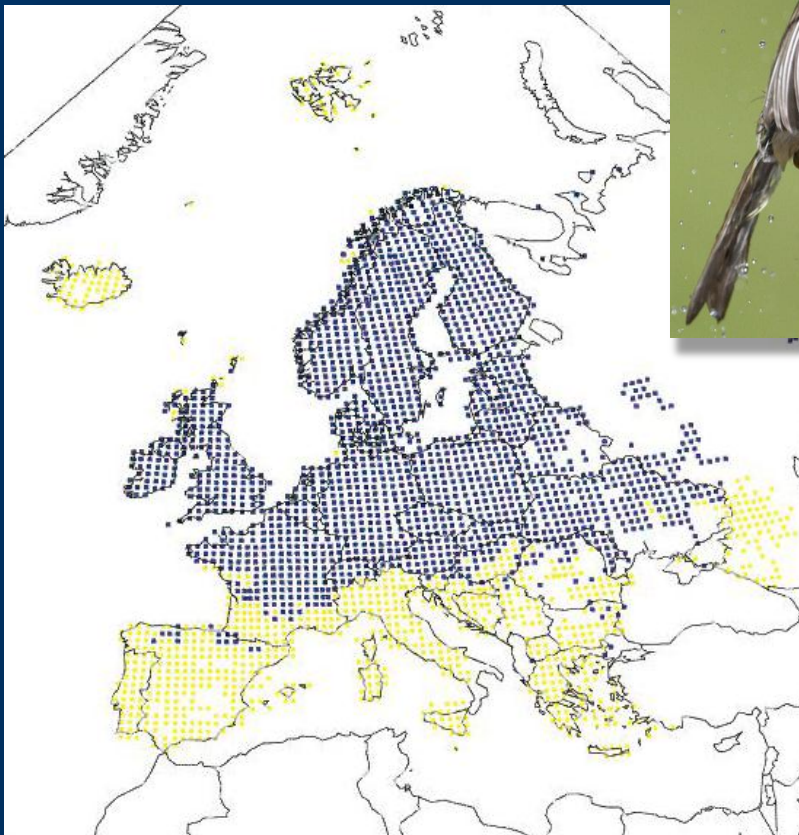
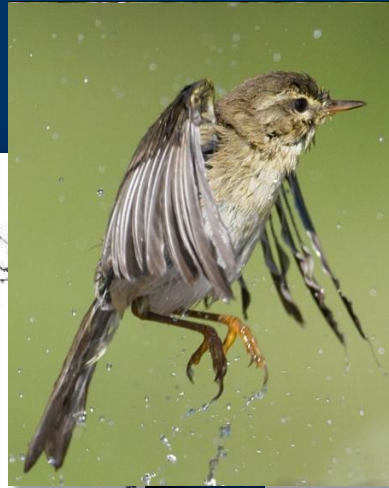


# Loss of stopover sites

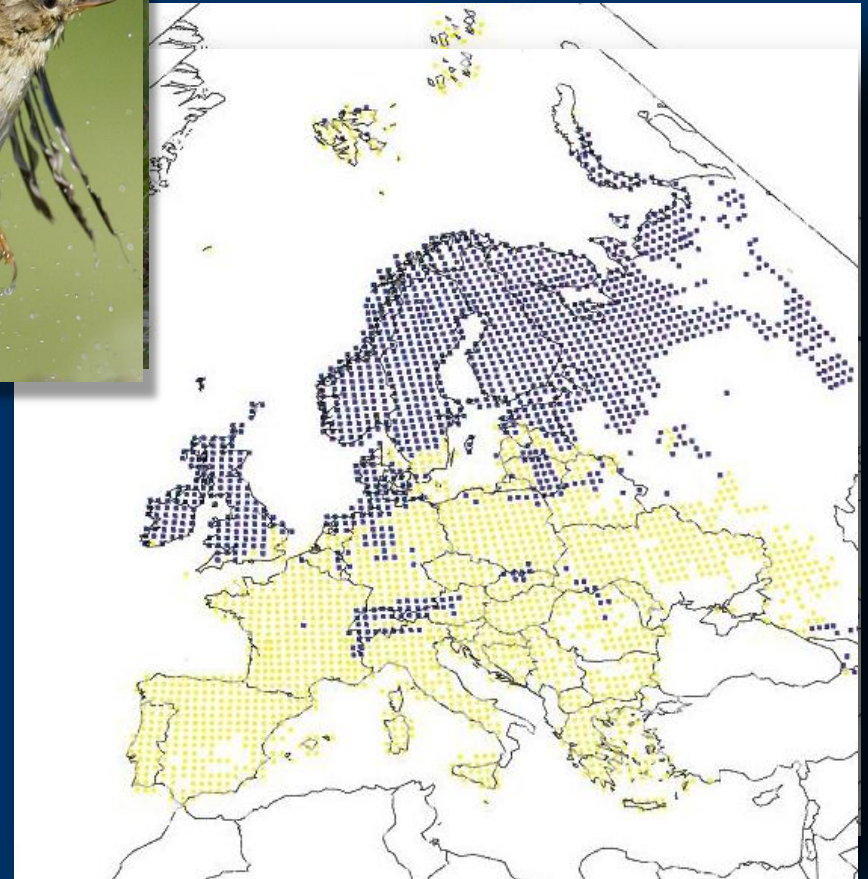
- A-E migrants need access to rich stopover sites along their migration routes.
- Loss of key stopover sites can have catastrophic repercussions.
- Conceivably, the severest effects would be felt with the loss of key staging sites next to Sahara desert.
- Sites in North Africa and along north coast of Med. important for autumn crossing of Sahara.
- Sites in Sahel important for spring crossing of Sahara.



# Climate change: shifting breeding distributions-e.g. Willow warbler



Present distribution



Future distribution

# Climate change:

- Likely to bring about spatial shifts in the bio-geographic ranges of migrants
- In other words, prevailing temperature and rainfall regimes will deteriorate in some areas, making it difficult for migrants to survive
- On the other hand, in some areas conditions may be favourable
- Some migrants may even need to under even longer migrations



# Climate change: disrupting synchrony

- Advances in laying date are not sufficient to keep up with prey.
- Migrants may be limited in response to climate change as migration behaviour initiated by changes in photoperiod.
- Being out of synchrony can cause populations to decline.
- Consequences most severe in habitats with short food peaks



# Unsustainable hunting & disturbance are additional pressures



## A combination of threats is likely to be influencing the declines

- Assessing the importance of potential drivers of decline on the non-breeding grounds and during migration is difficult, because we have a poor understanding of migrants of these stages.
- More research is needed into the fundamental ecology of migrants in Africa and *en route* there.
- Migrants rely on multiple, widely-dispersed sites for their survival. There is a greater probability of detrimental change occurring at one of these sites, breaking a crucial link in the migratory chain.





**What & How ?**



**AEMLAP ?**



# Summary of global status of instruments 1/2

- Globally: more than 30 different international, flyway-based instruments for migratory birds.
- Many more instruments that are NOT flyway-based but make a significant contribution to the conservation of migratory species and **habitats**.
- Plus a wide range of relevant NGO-led partnerships.
- Effectiveness of flyway-based conservation instruments must be seen in this wider context.
- Opportunities for synergy, but also duplication, overlap, competition...

# Summary of global status of instruments 2/2

- Each category of flyway-based conservation instrument and each individual instrument within a category has its own strengths and weaknesses.
- Each instrument has to be assessed against circumstances unique to the flyway, species and conservation challenges concerned.
- Key questions for assessing a proposed new flyway-based instrument:
  - Flyway and species/populations covered?
  - Main threats and pressures affecting conservation status of those species/populations?
  - Why would the proposed instrument be better than an alternative approach or existing instrument?
  - Broad geopolitical context?



# Species group coverage

Coverage of species groups (on paper) is strongest for:

- Waterfowl (Anatidae);
- Shorebirds/waders (Scolopacidae);
- Other migratory waterbirds such as divers (loons), grebes, cranes, herons etc;
- Nearctic-breeding passerines and other land birds that migrate to the Neotropics;
- Raptors (particularly in Africa-Eurasia).

# Species group coverage

Coverage of species groups (on paper) is **weakest** for:

- Inter-tropical and intra-tropical migrants in **all** regions;
- **Passerines (particularly in Africa-Eurasia** and Asia-Pacific, though coverage good for Nearctic-breeding passerines in Americas);
- **Other land birds** (with some exceptions e.g. certain species covered through bilateral treaties in the Americas and Asia – Pacific regions; also CMS MoU on African-Eurasian raptors and CMS MoU on Middle European population of Great Bustard);
- Migratory seabirds not covered by the CMS ACAP Agreement and whose flyways at sea are only partly covered by instruments such as AEWA, or Partnership for the East Asian – Australasian Flyway (EAAFP).

A small, light-colored bird is perched on a thin, brown branch with small, round buds. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green, suggesting a natural, outdoor setting. The bird is facing left, and its tail feathers are visible on the right side of the frame.

## **Multiple habitats and issues**

**We have an URGENT need to develop a  
co-ordinated flyway-scale approach to  
the conservation of African-Eurasian  
migrant landbirds**



**BirdLife  
International  
is well placed  
to support  
this initiative**





# Key expected deliverables of AEMLAP

AEMLAP will provide a framework for:

- ❖ coordinated, targeted research to tackle key conservation questions
- ❖ establish multi-disciplinary teams to understand human and bird resource use and needs
- ❖ Strengthen local action along the Africa- Eurasian flyway, particularly with respect to education
- ❖ Build capacity within the flyway to ensure effective implementation of a flyway action plan for the conservation of African –Eurasian migrant landbirds
- ❖ The action plan is meant to channel European funding to African conservation action

# Key expected deliverables of AEMLAP

- The plan (among various other competing priorities, including from within CMS) is intended to benefit the interests of the African governments, e.g. by leading to funds coming into the countries for encouraging land use which develops livelihoods for people from the habitats which they share with migrant birds.

# Key expected deliverables of AEMLAP

- Working across borders and major vegetation zones along the Africa- Eurasia flyway will facilitate the development of an ecosystem- scale conservation framework and build sufficient capacity that will enable a sustainable basis for future initiatives for migrant birds

# What are we appealing for at this Prep meeting

- That at the forthcoming COP, African parties support the adoption of the document calling for the implementation of an Africa-Eurasia Migratory Landbird Action Plan (AEMLAP) as an initiative aimed at tackling such complex conservation issues and to encourage all parties to work together to promote land use policies and practices that provide ecosystem services for people and benefit migrant landbirds that share the habitats.



# What are we appealing for at this Prep meeting:

- Governments (Africa and European) willing to really champion this action plan; integrate the plan into their national action plans, fund its production...and contribute towards its implementation

# Warm up EU countries?

- Given that the current Hungarian presidency of the EU is considering proposing some sort of CMS instrument for Central European grassland birds, perhaps it would be worth talking to MME (BirdLife in Hungary) to get them to expand their horizon – and that of their EU colleagues – to support the idea of the landbird action plan instead.
- Poland has taken over the EU Presidency-aim to get them to support and actively champion our idea among their EU colleagues.

# In support of AEMLAP

- Switzerland
- Poland (EU)
- Saudi Arabia (Chair of the CMS Standing Committee)
- CMS Scientific Councillor for Birds
- CMS Flyways Working Group- chaired by Wetlands International
- Ghana

# SIDE EVENT AT COP- BERGEN-NORWAY

ALL REPRESENTATIVES OF THE AFRICA  
GOVERNMENTS THAT WILL BE  
PRESENT IN BERGEN, CORDIALLY  
INVITED TO ATTEND THE SIDE EVENT  
ON **TUESDAY 22<sup>nd</sup> OF NOVEMBER 2011**,  
WHERE **AEMLAP** WILL BE OFFICIALLY  
UNVAILED TO THE INTERNATIONAL  
COMMUNITY



# Acknowledgements

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