



**CONVENTION ON  
MIGRATORY  
SPECIES**

Distribution: General

UNEP/CMS/COP12/Doc.24.1.2/Rev.1  
15 June 2017

Original: English

12<sup>th</sup> MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES  
Manila, Philippines, 23 - 28 October 2017  
Agenda Item 24.1.2

**CONSERVATION OF MIGRATORY LANDBIRDS IN THE AFRICAN-EURASIAN REGION,  
ESPECIALLY IN RELATION TO SUSTAINABLE LAND USE IN AFRICA**

*(Prepared by the African-Eurasian Migratory Landbirds Working Group  
of the Scientific Council)*

Summary:

Resolution 11.17 on Migratory Landbirds in the African-Eurasian Region urges Parties to address the issue of habitat loss and degradation through the development of policies that maintain natural and semi-natural habitats within the wider environment.

This document focusses on the issue of sustainable land use as a way to protect the habitats of migratory landbirds in partnership with the agriculture and forestry sectors. It includes a draft Resolution and several Decisions.

The adoption of this Resolution and Decisions will contribute towards the implementation of targets 3, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 15 of the Strategic Plan for Migratory Species 2015-2023.

This document should be read in conjunction with UNEP/CMS/COP12/Doc.21.1.30 concerning resolutions to repeal in part.

Rev.1 has clarified amendments to Resolution 11.17, and corrected the agenda item number.

## **CONSERVATION OF MIGRATORY LANDBIRDS IN THE AFRICAN-EURASIAN REGION, ESPECIALLY IN RELATION TO SUSTAINABLE LAND USE IN AFRICA**

### Background

1. Resolution 11.17 on an Action Plan for Migratory Landbirds in the African-Eurasian Region urges Parties and encourages non-Parties to address the issue of habitat loss and degradation of migratory landbird species through the development of policies that maintain, manage and restore natural and semi-natural habitats within the wider environment, including working with local communities, and in partnership with the poverty alleviation community and the agriculture and forestry sectors in Africa.

### Sustainable land use

2. The African Eurasian Migratory Landbirds Working Group convened its third meeting in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, from 25 to 27 November 2015, thanks to the funding provided by Switzerland and the hosting by UNEP. During the meeting a [Programme of Work](#) was agreed that gives top priority to tackling land use change in West Africa during the period 2016 – 2020, including the organization of a workshop on this issue.
3. Land use is changing rapidly across West Africa. Agricultural land is expanding, and will continue to do so. Intensification, historically low in the region, is also on the rise. Partly as a result of agricultural expansion and intensification, trees and forest cover are being lost and degraded across the sub-region, and wetlands are declining in extent, productivity and biodiversity richness.
4. The direct drivers of these changes are agricultural expansion and intensification (including irrigation), timber and wood harvesting, infrastructure development (largely road construction and hydro-dam development) and poor governance. The key underlying drivers are population growth (particularly of urban populations) and economic growth, generated by both local and international market demand for commodities.
5. The impacts of these land use changes on local people and biodiversity are largely negative. Although agriculture is a large and important sector in West Africa, unsustainable land management practices can degrade the productivity of land and endanger livelihoods. The loss of trees, woodlands, forests and wetlands is also driving an associated loss of ecosystem services, and their ability to support incomes and resilience.
6. These changes are also leading to loss of natural vegetation and habitat, which has a detrimental impact on biodiversity. This includes those species that require transboundary conservation, such as migratory landbirds. The loss of West African biodiversity also negatively affects people in the sub-region, and further afield.
7. In this context, sustainable land use is defined as sustainable land management practices that, taken together over a defined area, support resilient livelihoods for communities, ecosystem services and sufficient natural and semi-natural habitat to ensure healthy populations of native species. Such practices must also be adapted to climate change and take into account a landscape approach to managing the needs of people and biodiversity.
8. Sustainable land management practices are 'those that serve to maintain ecological resilience and the stability of ecosystem services indefinitely, while providing sustenance and diverse livelihoods for humans'. Agroecology and agroforestry are two areas where sustainable land management practices have great potential to benefit people – particularly smallholders – and birds.
9. There are significant challenges to achieving sustainable land use alongside some solutions, which are clustered in three main areas: engaging with a broad partnership;

integrating action across sectors and landscapes; and providing incentives. Meaningful engagement with local communities is critical, but there is a wide constituency of stakeholders required to achieve sustainable land use, including scientific experts and the private sector. Equally, the range of issues involved requires joined up thinking across landscapes and policy areas, and support for solutions such as integrated land use planning that may cut across traditional sectors and departments.

10. At the international, regional and sub-regional level, there are policy frameworks that support sustainable land use in West Africa. Many countries and development partners are considering how they can deliver the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which provide a clear framework for integrated delivery of development and environment objectives.
11. The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) are actively working on sustainable land use in West Africa, through analysis of country implementation on Aichi targets 5 and 15 (on ecosystem restoration), and through supporting targets on land degradation neutrality respectively. The CBD analysis shows that country-level action to deliver Aichi targets 5 and 15 could be stronger in the sub-region, and that there are a variety of national situations with regards to progress under these targets.
12. At a regional level, the African Union's Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme highlights the need for sustainable land and water management; its implementation at a regional and national level in West Africa is a key opportunity to support more sustainable land management practices. Similarly, programmes focusing on land and ecosystem restoration in the sub-region provide opportunities to integrate biodiversity delivery through an integrated approach.
13. Thanks to the funding provided by Switzerland and the hosting of the Nigerian Government, it was possible to organize a workshop on land use change under the title "Sustainable Land Use in West Africa: National and International Policy Responses that Deliver for Migratory Birds and People" held in Abuja, Nigeria from 24 to 26 November 2016. The workshop adopted the [Abuja Declaration](#) on Sustainable Land Use for People and Biodiversity including Migratory Birds in West Africa.
14. Although the workshop in Abuja focussed mainly on West Africa, participants to the workshop thought that the problems related to land use change and its effects on migratory landbirds could be largely extrapolated to the whole of Africa.

#### Draft Resolution

15. As part of the process of consolidation of Resolutions, a revised version of Resolution 11.17 has been produced. This revised version repeals parts of Resolution 11.17 which are out of date. It is contained in UNEP/CMS/COP12/Doc.21.1.30.
16. During the Abuja workshop, a draft resolution on the conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Landbirds, especially in relation to sustainable land use in West Africa was developed for submission to COP. This draft resolution has been integrated into the revised version of Resolution 11.17 contained in document UNEP/CMS/COP12/Doc.21.1.30.
17. According to document UNEP/CMS/StC45/Doc.19/Rev.1, Resolution 10.27 on Improving the Conservation Status of Migratory Landbirds in the African-Eurasian Region is proposed to be repealed as it is redundant with the draft resolution which is being submitted for adoption.

Update of the list of species covered by the Landbirds Action Plan

18. COP 12 will consider the adoption of a new taxonomic reference for passerine birds, The Handbook of the Birds of the World and BirdLife International *Illustrated Checklist of the Birds of the World, Volume 2: Passerines*, by Del Hoyo, J. and N.J. Collar (2016). If this new reference is adopted then the list of species covered by the Landbirds Action Plan will have to be updated accordingly to bring it in line with the new reference and with the reference adopted at COP 11 for non-passerine birds.

Recommended actions

19. The Conference of the Parties is recommended to:

- a) adopt the proposed amendments to Resolution 11.17 contained in Annex 1;
- b) adopt the draft decisions contained in Annex 2;

## ANNEX 1

## PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO RESOLUTION 11.17

**ACTION PLAN FOR MIGRATORY LAND BIRDS  
IN THE AFRICAN-EURASIAN REGION (AEMLAP), ESPECIALLY IN RELATION TO  
SUSTAINABLE LAND USE IN AFRICA**

*NB: Proposed new text to the resolution that has been repealed in part in Doc 21.1.30 Annex 2 is underlined. Text to be deleted is ~~crossed out~~.*

*Concerned* that there is compelling scientific evidence of widespread declines of African-Eurasian migratory landbirds in recent decades, and that these declines are of growing conservation concern in both scientific and political arenas as the European breeding populations of some formerly widespread species have more than halved in the last 30 years,

*Aware* that the status of migratory landbirds is widely used as an indicator of the overall health of the environment and other biodiversity, *inter alia* the achievement of Target 12 of the CBD Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and when monitored with standardized methods migratory landbirds can provide an effective indicator of sustainable land use,

*Aware also* that the key drivers of this decline appear to be degradation of the breeding habitats, particularly within agricultural systems and woodland and forests, and in the non-breeding areas the combined factors of anthropogenic habitat degradation, unsustainable harvest and climate change,

*Concerned* that current trends in African land use, alongside those in Eurasia, are leading to considerable landscape changes that can have significant negative impacts on biodiversity, including migratory birds. This problem needs to be addressed because such biodiversity is valuable both in its own right and for the ecosystem services it provides. These services constitute the foundation of resilient livelihoods for rural people, who are some of the poorest in the region.

*Noting* that the African Eurasian Migratory Landbirds Working Group ('the Working Group'), at its second meeting in Abidjan, from 25 to 27 November 2015, agreed on a Programme of Work, as endorsed by the 1<sup>st</sup> Meeting of the Sessional Committee of the Scientific Council on 18-21 April 2016, where land use change was given top priority,

*Welcoming* the report of the workshop on Sustainable Land Use in West Africa: National and International Policy Responses that Deliver for Migratory Birds and People (LUMB) ('the workshop') that was held in Abuja, from 24 to 26 November 2016 and the Abuja Declaration on Sustainable Land Use for People and Biodiversity including Migratory Birds in West Africa,

*Further welcoming* the BirdLife International and NABU project: African Biosphere Reserves as Pilot Sites for Monitoring and Conservation of Migratory Birds (AfriBiRds), funded by Germany, and the potential of the project to contribute to the development of national wild birds indices and generation of information on migratory birds in general, as well as the BirdLife partnership project "Living on the Edge".

*Recalling* the relevance of sustainable land use for CMS and its Strategic Plan 2015 – 2023, and for other CMS Family instruments such as the Agreement on the Conservation of African Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds ('AEWA') and its Strategic Plan 2009 – 2017, and the Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of Migratory Birds of Prey in Africa and Eurasia ('Raptors MOU'),

*Further recalling* the importance of sustainable land use for implementing a wide range of international agreements including the Sustainable Development Goals ('SDGs'), the Strategic

Plan for Biodiversity 2011 – 2020, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change ('UNFCCC') and its Paris Agreement, the Ramsar Convention and its Strategic Plan 2016 – 2024 and the Convention on Combating Desertification ('UNCCD') and its Strategic Plan 2008 – 2018,

Taking into consideration the African Union Framework and Guidelines on Land Policy, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN ('FAO') Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure (VGGT), the Strategic Objective 2 of the FAO Revised Strategic Framework, the Ministerial Declaration on food security and the agricultural sectors in a changing climate made at the 29<sup>th</sup> FAO Regional Conference for Africa, on 8<sup>th</sup> April 2016, the recommendations of the participants of the FAO Regional Meeting on Agroecology in Sub-Saharan Africa, on 6 November 2015, Resolution 2/24 of the UN Environment Assembly, and the UN Environment Programme and its Poverty and Environment Initiative ('PEI'), and the UN Development Programme ('UNDP') and its Strategic Plan 2014 – 2017,

Further taking into consideration the West African Regional Agricultural Investment Programme (ECOWAP 25), the Economic Community of West African States ('ECOWAS') Convergence Plan for the Sustainable Management and Utilisation of Forest Ecosystems, Nationally Determined Contributions under the UNFCCC and the African Union Agenda 2063 to support sustainable management practices and approaches that will support birds and people in West Africa,

Noting that land use change is a key driver of continuing loss of biodiversity across Africa, and that the drivers of land use change and the solutions that can achieve sustainable land use identified at the workshop are applicable to conservation in many landscapes across Africa and beyond,

Recalling that Resolution 10.27 of the Tenth Conference of the Parties urged Parties and invited non-Parties and other stakeholders with the CMS Secretariat to develop an Action Plan for the conservation of African-Eurasian migrant landbirds and their habitats throughout the flyway, which was adopted for adoption at the 11<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Conference of the Parties, on the basis of which the COP can consider the need for a new instrument or using an existing instrument as a framework,

Further recalling Resolution 11.16 on the Prevention of Illegal Killing, Taking and Trade of Migratory Birds, and the Guidelines to Prevent Poisoning of Migratory Birds adopted through Resolution 11.15,

Taking note of the report of the workshop to elaborate an Action Plan on African-Eurasian Migratory Landbirds, that took place in Accra between 31 August and 2 September 2012, and *thanking* the Government of Ghana for effectively hosting this workshop,

*Acknowledging* with thanks the contributions of the members of the Working Group on African-Eurasian Migratory Landbirds (the Working Group) and its coordination by BirdLife International established under the CMS Scientific Council,

*Further acknowledging* the essential role of the financial donors of this project, which made it possible to develop the Action Plan, in particular the Government of Switzerland and BirdLife International and its national partners,

*Welcoming* the establishment of the Migrant Landbirds Study Group (MLSG) as an international network of specialists and organizations working on research, monitoring and conservation of migratory landbird species, *taking note* of the results of its inaugural Meeting in Wilhelmshaven, Germany, 26-28 March 2014 and of the Friends of the Landbirds Action Plan (FLAP) as a forum for interested stakeholders, individuals and organizations to follow and support the CMS Action Plan and migrant landbird conservation in general, and

*Further welcoming* the initiative of EURING (European Union for Bird Ringing) and the Scientific Council to produce a European Atlas of Bird Migration, based on recoveries of ringed birds, with the support of the CMS Secretariat and the Italian Government,

*The Conference of the Parties to the  
Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals*

1. *Adopts* the “African-Eurasian Migratory Landbirds Action Plan (AEMLAP)” (the Action Plan), and its Annexes, contained in Annex II of document UNEP/CMS/COP11/Doc.23.1.4/Rev.1 and *urges* Parties and *encourages* non-Parties and stakeholders to implement the Action Plan as a matter of priority, especially in line with the AEMLAP Programme of Work 2016-2020;
2. ~~*Especially*~~ *Urges* Parties and *encourages* non-Parties to address the issue of habitat loss and degradation of migratory landbird species through the development of policies that maintain, manage and restore natural and semi-natural habitats within the wider environment, including working with local communities, and in partnership with the poverty alleviation community and the agriculture and forestry sectors in Africa;
3. *Especially urges* Parties and *encourages* non-Parties to work together with agencies, organizations and local communities to address harmful land use changes in the African-Eurasian flyway region, notably West Africa in the first instance, by promoting sustainable land use through practices and approaches set out in the Abuja Declaration;
4. *Calls on* Parties and non-Parties to recognize and support joint action by relevant Conventions and international processes on sustainable land use of benefit to migratory birds that can deliver the objectives under international agreements, including the Sustainable Development Goals;
5. *Requests* Parties and invites Range States to implement existing measures under CMS, AEWA, the Raptors MOU and other relevant international environmental treaties, especially where these contribute to the objectives of the Landbirds Action Plan, in order to increase the resilience of migratory landbird populations and their potential to adapt to environmental change;
6. *Calls on* Parties to urgently address the problems of illegal and of unsustainable taking of landbirds during migration and wintering and ensure that national conservation legislation is in place and enforced and implementation measures are taken, and requests the Secretariat to liaise with the Bern Convention and other relevant fora in order to facilitate the national and international mitigation of the problem of illegal killing of birds in line with Resolution 11.16 on the Prevention of Illegal Killing, Taking and Trade of Migratory Birds;
7. *Urges Parties* and *invites* non-Parties to implement the Guidelines to Prevent Poisoning of Migratory Birds as adopted through Resolution 11.15; in particular those referring to agricultural pesticides which have a special significance for migratory landbirds as a major source of mortality;
8. *Requests* the Scientific Council and the Working Group, in liaison with the Migrant Landbirds Study Group to promote work to address key gaps in knowledge and future research directions, in particular through the analysis of existing long-term and large-scale datasets, the European Atlas of Bird Migration, the use of new and emerging tracking technologies, field studies of African-Eurasian migrant birds in ~~Sub-Saharan~~ Africa, use of survey and demographic data from the Eurasian breeding grounds and use of remote sensing earth observation data of land cover change in ~~sub-Saharan~~ Africa;
9. *Further requests* the Scientific Council and the Working Group, in liaison with the Friends of the Landbirds Action Plan to promote and encourage increased public awareness of,

and support for, migratory landbird conservation along the length of the flyway among the general public and stakeholders, including about how individual birds are shared across countries and act as indicators of the overall health of the environment, of people and all biodiversity;

10. *Instructs* the Secretariat, in collaboration with Parties and relevant international organizations, subject to the availability of funds, to organize regional workshops to address specific issues and promote the implementation of the Action Plan and share best practice and lessons learnt in the effective conservation of migratory landbirds;
11. *Calls on Parties* and *invites* non-Parties and stakeholders, with the support of the Secretariat, to strengthen national and local capacity for the implementation of the Action Plan including, *inter alia*, by developing partnerships with the poverty alleviation community and developing training courses, translating and disseminating examples of best practice, sharing protocols and regulations, transferring technology, and promoting the use of online tools to address specific issues that are relevant to the Action Plan;
12. *Encourages Parties and non-Parties to develop national common bird monitoring schemes with a view to the establishment of national wild bird indices as indicators of sustainable land use and ecosystem health, which can eventually form the basis of a global wild bird indicator that can be utilised by the different MEAs and international processes that deal with sustainable land management;*
13. *Requests* the Working Group and the CMS Scientific Council, in liaison with the Migrant Landbirds Study Group and the Friends of the Landbirds Action Plan, with the support of the CMS Secretariat, to support implementation of develop as an emerging issue Action Plans for a first set of species including the Yellow-breasted Bunting *Emberiza aureola*, Turtle Dove *Streptopelia turtur* and European Roller *Coracias garrulus* adopted through draft Resolution contained in (UNEP/CMS/COP12/Doc.24.1.11);
14. *Urges Parties* and *invites* UNEPUN Environment and other relevant international organizations, bilateral and multilateral donors, including from the poverty alleviation community, to support financially the implementation of the Action Plan including through the provision of financial assistance to developing countries for relevant capacity building;
15. *Calls on Parties* and the Scientific Council to report progress in implementing the Action Plan, including monitoring and efficacy of measures taken, ~~to COP12 in 2017~~ to each meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

## ANNEX 2

## DRAFT DECISIONS

**CONSERVATION OF MIGRATORY LANDBIRDS IN THE AFRICAN-EURASIAN  
REGION, ESPECIALLY IN RELATION TO SUSTAINABLE LAND USE IN  
AFRICA**

*NB: Decision 12.AA a) and 12.BB a) should be read in conjunction with Document 21.1.30 Annex.3. Proposed new text is underlined. Text to be deleted is ~~crossed-out~~.*

***Directed to the Secretariat***

12.AA. The Secretariat shall:

- (a) Subject to the availability of funds, organize in the intersessional period between COP 12 and COP 13 a consultation meeting of Range States to agree on whether the Action Plan should remain as a stand-alone document or whether a new CMS instrument should be developed or an existing CMS instrument should be used as institutional framework;
- (b) In the intersessional period between COP12 and COP13, promote the importance of sustainable land use for migratory birds, and the specific practices and approaches in the Abuja Declaration, with relevant UN agencies and other international institutions and to seek opportunities for collaborative action to encourage sustainable land use for migratory species and people;
- (c) Update the species list of the Landbirds Action Plan according to the standard taxonomic references for birds adopted at COP11 and COP12, and changes to the IUCN Red List.

***Directed to the Scientific Council***

12.BB. The Scientific Council shall:

- (a) Continue the Working Group on African-Eurasian Migratory Landbirds until COP13, extending its membership to incorporate expertise from geographical regions currently absent, to facilitate and monitor the implementation of the Action Plan, and to develop indicators to assess the implementation of the Programme of Work 2016 – 2020;
- (b) In the intersessional period between COP12 and COP13 work with the Migratory Landbird Study Group, relevant academic institutions, research-funders and the Working Group, in order to actively promote research that addresses key knowledge gaps relating to migratory landbird conservation in African landscapes, inter alia, to:
  - identify migratory pathways and strategies using tracking technologies to understand migratory connectivity so enabling field research to be targeted more effectively;
  - undertake detailed field studies in sub-Saharan Africa and at staging sites, in conjunction with existing data where appropriate, to better understand species distribution patterns, habitat use and foraging ecology, and in particular identify and enhance conservation of the stop-over sites immediately to the north and south of the Sahara (including through data collection and seeking linkages with relevant stakeholders);
  - synthesise data from European breeding grounds to explore spatial and temporal patterns in demographic parameters in relation to migratory pathways and large-scale

- patterns of environmental change;
  - use satellite image earth observation data to improve understanding where land cover is changing and how this impacts Afro-Palaearctic migrant birds, and research the drivers of land use / land cover change;
  - seek better understanding of how to influence the economic and social policy drivers causing land use / land cover change at different scales;
- (c) And to report to COP 13 on the extent to which progress has been made on these and other priorities, and potential opportunities to promote these research areas including dialogue with national and international research-funding agencies.

***Directed to Parties***

12.CC. Parties are requested to:

- (a) Provide financial contributions for the implementation of the Programme of Work 2016-2020;
- (b) Provide at least 50 per cent funding for the AEMLAP coordinator, corresponding to €50,000, in the core budget of CMS, such that the resources provided for the implementation of AEMLAP are commensurate with those provided for the implementation of AEWA and the Raptors MOU, while appealing to donors to make voluntary contributions to cover the other half of the funding, and note the support of BirdLife International in providing coordination where funds are available to support it;
- (c) With the support of the Secretariat, work together with relevant UN agencies and other stakeholders, via a CMS-UNCCD hosted workshop, to agree a plan for adoption at CMS COP13 in 2020, on the integration of biodiversity requirements, as indicated by wild birds, into the land degradation neutrality delivery at national level, with a focus on West Africa (countries of the Sahel and Guinea Savannah) and potentially also North-west Africa (countries of the Maghreb);
- (d) Report on progress in implementing the AEMLAP, and in particular in delivering sustainable land use in West Africa, and integrating it into delivery against other relevant international agreements, including monitoring and efficacy of measures taken, to COP13 in 2020, via their national reports.

***Directed to Parties, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations***

12.DD. Parties, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations

- (a) And particularly Parties, bilateral and multilateral donors, GEF, UNDP, UN Environment, UNCCD, ECOWAS and other relevant international organizations, in the intersessional period between COP12 and COP13, are requested to support financially the implementation of the Action Plan, in particular to tackle the barriers to sustainable land use in Africa, including the priorities for West Africa recommended by the Abuja workshop, and including through the provision of financial assistance to developing countries for relevant capacity building;
- (b) Shall make voluntary contributions to support the Working Group to organise at least one meeting within the intersessional period between COP12 and COP 13 to among other activities, review the implementation of the Action Plan and the Programme of Work.