



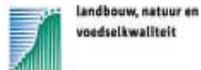
Technical Series No. 2

International Single Species Action Plan for the Conservation of the Sociable Lapwing

Vanellus gregarius



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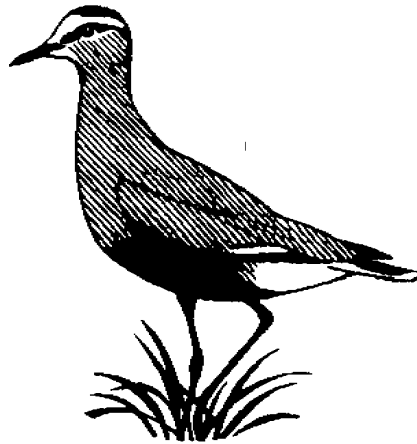


UNEP / AEMWA Secretariat

AGREEMENT ON THE CONSERVATION OF
AFRICAN-EURASIAN MIGRATORY WATEBIRDS

**INTERNATIONAL SINGLE SPECIES
ACTION PLAN FOR THE CONSERVATION OF
THE SOCIABLE LAPWING**

Vanellus gregarius



November 2004

Superseded by the fully revised version (Technical Series No. 47)
May 2012

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The Netherlands**

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Superseded by the fully revised version (Technical Series No. 47)

Foreword

by

Eladio Fernández-Galiano

Head of Natural Heritage and Biological Diversity Division
Council of Europe

Species Action Plans and Species Recovery Plans are one of the most important tools in conservation of biological diversity. By focussing the attention on the fate and problems of a particular threatened species, many other issues come to light: the effects that agriculture, urban development or pollution are having on nature, the interconnection of species, habitats and management, and the complexities of ecological processes. In a time where most conservation efforts in Europe are faithfully devoted to habitat protection in the hopeful wish that it will automatically yield species conservation, looking at the precise case of some species is highly revealing and can tell us where to address in priority scarce conservation resources.

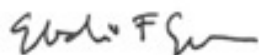
The conservation community recognises the valuable approach on species conservation that led to the US “Endangered Species Act” and the World Conservation Union “action plans” promoted by the Species Survival Commission. In Europe we succeeded in setting European standards for species action plans through the adoption, by the Bern Convention (Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats) of its “Recommendation No. 59 (1997) on the drafting and implementation of action plans for wild fauna species”. This recommendation established standards for the legal and administrative aspects of action plans, for the identification of species requiring special conservation attention, for the technical aspects related to the drafting of action plans (contents, goals, priorities, funding) and for their monitoring and update.

One of the key issues of action plans is the need for international co-operation. Conservation of most species has at present become transboundary and one of the reasons why collaboration between government, international conventions and NGOs is the key to success.

It is in this context that I am particularly glad to welcome the publication of the Species Action Plans for Sociable Lapwing, Great Snipe and Black-winged Pratincole, which are a joint effort of BirdLife International, the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement (AEWA) and the Bern Convention. Other organisations such as the European Commission, the Ramsar Convention and the Protocol concerning Mediterranean Specially Protected Areas of the Barcelona Convention will also play an important role in the implementation of these plans.

For the Bern Convention, these three plans adopted in 2003 have followed 45 other action plans adopted since 1996 on other bird species the implementation of which is monitored by a special expert group set up by the Standing Committee to the Convention.

It is my firm belief that all this detailed technical and political work is serving to guide action on the ground and is helping many governments takes the sometimes-hard decisions needed.



Eladio Fernández-Galiano
Bern Convention Secretariat

Foreword

by

Bert Lenten

Executive Secretary

Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (AEWA)

The African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement (AEWA) is one of the youngest intergovernmental treaties, which was concluded in 1995 and entered into force on 1st November 1999. The Agreement has an ambitious goal to provide protection to and maintain in a favourable conservation status populations of 235 species of migratory birds ecologically dependent on wetlands for at least part of their annual cycle, including many species of pelicans, storks, flamingos, swans, geese, ducks, waders, gulls, terns and others. All together 117 countries fall within the Agreement area and so far 48 Contracting Parties throughout Europe, Central Asia, the Middle East and Africa have acceded to AEWA.

International Single Species Action Plans (SSAPs) are being developed to find out more about populations of species with an unfavourable conservation status throughout their whole range, to identify underlying threats and more importantly to roster all necessary conservation measures in a systematic and structured way. This information is crucial to tackle the problems that have caused and are still causing decline of these species and to allow action to be taken to improve their status in the long term. Such International SSAPs for the most threatened species or populations are required by article 2.2.1 of the Agreement's Action Plan and can only be developed and effectively implemented in close cooperation with Governments, Intergovernmental Organisations and NGOs.

These International Single Species Action Plans for the Sociable Lapwing *Vanellus gregarius*, the Great Snipe *Gallinago media* and the Black-winged Pratincole *Glareola nordmanni* have been elaborated in conjunction with the Bern Convention and BirdLife International. This is the first set of officially released SSAPs for species listed in AEWA Table 1, and all three plans were adopted under Resolution 2.13 at the Second Session of the Meeting of the Parties to AEWA in Bonn, 25-27 September 2002.

The Sociable Lapwing, the Great Snipe and the Black-winged Pratincole have been identified as birds that show a significant long-term decline and are therefore in need of special attention. They share similar breeding habitat requirements and are subject to similar threats, i.e. habitat loss and degradation due to conversion of their habitats to intensive agriculture, predation and human disturbance. The Sociable Lapwing is the most threatened of the three species. For a long time it has been listed on the IUCN Red List in the category "Vulnerable", and is in AEWA Table 1, Column A under Category 1a, 1b and 1c. This list indicates that the species is included in Appendix I of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals, is listed as threatened in Threatened Birds of the World (BirdLife International 2000) and that the population numbers less than about 10,000 individuals. Recently, due to its rapidly worsening population status it was reclassified in the category "Critically Endangered" of the IUCN Red List.

I strongly believe that the Range States involved will make every effort to implement these SSAPs, that they will transform them into National Action Plans and will work together to halt the decline in the populations of these species in the future. I very much hope that the measures described in these plans will be implemented in reality, and will trigger the recovery of the populations of these three bird species to a favourable conservation status.



Bert Lenten

UNEP/ AEWA Secretariat

Foreword

by

Canan Orhun

Head of European Division Office

BirdLife International

Biodiversity, including bird species, is continuing to decline at an accelerating rate. We need to work along different lines that include the establishment of an effective network of protected sites, integrate environment conservation in all relevant policies and improve awareness of the importance of biodiversity.

Only with the correct information on each species' biology and on the causes of its decline, is it possible to define adequate conservation activities for each one. Species action plans are the tools for gathering information, identifying actions and targets we need to achieve to allow the next generation to enjoy at least the same level of biodiversity we do.

BirdLife International has been developing and promoting the species action plans since 1995 when the first plans were developed with the financial support of the European Union and were endorsed and published by the Council of Europe.

BirdLife International always works in cooperation with international treaties in the development and endorsement of the species action plans. The Bern Convention, Bonn Convention (CMS), African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement (AEWA) and the European Union are the fora for cooperation resulting in commitments by national governments and NGOs to translate the documents into concrete conservation actions.

The development of the actions plans for the Sociable Lapwing *Vanellus gregarius*, the Great Snipe *Gallinago media* and the Black-winged Pratincole *Glareola nordmanni* have been possible thanks to the support given to BirdLife International by AEWA and the co-operation of the Bern Convention. We are most grateful to both for this.

The plans have been drawn up through an extensive consultation of experts across the geographical scope of the documents and specific workshops. The format of these action plans is different from the format of those developed in the past. This new format results in documents which are more results-oriented and where the tasks are more clearly linked to threats and targets and set against a clear calendar.

BirdLife International is working with AEWA, the Bern Convention and the European Union to streamline the endorsement and monitoring of the implementation of the action plans and promote cooperation and synergies between Governmental and Non-Governmental organisations.

I am confident that these action plans, like those developed in the last nine years, will soon yield results. BirdLife International, in cooperation with AEWA and several other supporters is already working on the ground implementing the Sociable Lapwing action plan, and hopes that others will join to implement the most urgent actions for all threatened species.



Canan Orhun

BirdLife International

Preface

This International Single Species Action Plan for the Sociable Lapwing *Vanellus gregarius* was commissioned by the Secretariat of the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement (AEWA) and the European Division of BirdLife International, and was prepared by the Russian Bird Conservation Union (BirdLife International Partner Designate in Russia). The first draft was sent out to experts on the species and its conservation, and then discussed on 2 March 2002 at a Workshop on the Sociable Lapwing held in Moscow. All comments and suggestions, as well as outputs from the workshop, were incorporated into the second draft of the Action Plan, also distributed to all contributors. This version is the final output of all the above consultations.

Superseded by the fully revised version (Technical Series No. 47)

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Summary

What is the profile of the Sociable Lapwing?

The Sociable Lapwing breeds currently in Kazakhstan and central part of southern (further “south-central”) Russia. Its breeding range includes northern and central Kazakhstan, and in Russia extends currently from the Orenburg region, across Chelyabinsk, Kurgan, Omsk and Novosibirsk regions to the area around Barnaul in the Altai. Within this area the species is very much scattered, numbers are low and declining. On migration Sociable Lapwings are found in a large range of countries of Middle, Central and Southern Asia (Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Iran, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan). Countries of primary importance for wintering are Eritrea, India, Iraq, Israel, Oman, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and still possibly Egypt, Ethiopia and Sudan. Vagrant birds have also been recorded in a wide range of Asiatic and European countries. The population has undergone significant and rapid decline in the second half of the 20th century, and this is considered ongoing. Population size was recently estimated at not more than 10,000 adult individuals (a rather optimistic estimate in Collar *et al.* 1994, Tucker & Heath 1994), or fewer. A few years later it was considered that the population numbers not more than 1,000 breeding pairs in the total range of the species (Khrokov 2000, BirdLife International 2001). Estimates made during the Sociable Lapwing Workshop in Moscow in 2002 (Appendix I) suggest that the situation is far worse: the world population is estimated at 200-600 breeding pairs (ca. 600-1,800 birds). The Sociable Lapwing is listed in Appendix I and II of the Bonn Convention, in column A category 1a, 1b and 1c of Table 1 of AEWA, in the IUCN Red List as a globally threatened species in the category "Critically Endangered" (BirdLife International 2004). This recent update of the species' IUCN Red List status resulted from the conclusions of the workshop held in March 2002 in Moscow and from the drafting of this Action plan. It is included as Vulnerable in the Red Data Book of Asia due to lack of data on the reasons for the population decline. Although included in the Red Data Book of the ex-USSR countries, no practical conservation measures have been undertaken so far.

Why an international Action Plan for the Sociable Lapwing?

The Action Plan of AEWA, paragraph 2.2.1. states that “*Parties shall cooperate with a view to developing and implementing international single species action plans for populations listed in Category 1 of Column A of Table 1...*”.

There are four primary reasons for the compilation of the Sociable Lapwing Action Plan: (1) the population of the Sociable Lapwing continues to decline; (2) its global population is estimated at 1,500-3,000 breeding pairs, or most probably under 1,000 breeding pairs; (3) reasons for the ongoing decline are unknown, and it is even unclear whether the main threats are at breeding or at stopover and wintering sites; (4) no practical conservation measures have been taken so far.

The present Action Plan addresses these issues and identifies actions with the aim of implementing them in order to secure for the Sociable Lapwing a favourable condition throughout the species' range.

What is the basis of the Action Plan?

The Action Plan is based on the analysis of all available published information on the Sociable Lapwing, and on the results of extensive consultation processes. In addition, the Workshop on the Sociable Lapwing, which took place in Moscow in March 2002, provided an opportunity to incorporate into the final draft of this Action Plan a wealth of knowledge, opinions and suggestions from species experts.

What is the objective of the Action Plan?

The general objective of the plan is to ensure that the population of the Sociable Lapwing becomes stable as a result of conservation initiatives such as habitat conservation measures, protection of colonies and wintering and stopover sites etc., based on adequate understanding of threats and limiting factors.

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What does the Action Plan consist of?

The Action Plan presents a framework for conservation of the Sociable Lapwing and its habitats. Measurable objectives are set at national and international levels, and management options are given for each country.

Which countries are involved?

Implementation of the Action Plan requires effective international co-ordination of organisation and action. Countries especially involved with the implementation are Russia and Kazakhstan (breeding), Eritrea, India, Iraq, Israel, Oman, Pakistan, Sri Lanka (wintering), and Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Iran, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, United Arab Emirates and Uzbekistan (migration).

What should these countries do?

There should be commitment of all individual Range States. These should develop their own National Action Plans. In these Action Plans, management activities should be described, on the basis of the management options that have been presented in this International Action Plan.

How should the Action Plan be implemented?

A working group under the AEWA Technical Committee should be established for implementation of Single Species Action Plans. Activities mandated to the working group are listed. The plan was formally adopted at the Second Session of the Meeting of the Parties of AEWA, which took place from 26-29 September 2002 in Bonn, Germany, and at the 23rd Meeting of the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention, which took place from 1-4 December 2003 in Strasbourg, France. The plan should be reviewed every three years thereafter.

As a number of Range States for this species are not Contracting Parties to AEWA, it is recommended that National Action Plans be developed by the Range States, and endorsed by the Government of each state.

1. Introduction

The Sociable Lapwing *Vanellus gregarius* is protected under national legislation all over its breeding range in Russia and Kazakhstan. However, the decline of species population that was observed throughout the entire 20th century - most notably at the beginning of the century, later from 1930 to 1960 and then from the 1970s to the 1990s - requires urgent measures to be undertaken by the AEWA Range States, as well as by the states that have not yet joined this international agreement, but are responsible for the survival of the Sociable Lapwing during breeding, migration and wintering.

This Action Plan describes and evaluates current knowledge on ecology, habitat requirements, and seasonal distribution of the Sociable Lapwing, as well as conservation measures that need to be undertaken both by governmental and non-governmental bodies to ensure that the decline of the species population does not continue further. The plan also outlines the most urgent requirements to cover existing gaps in current knowledge about this species and its population decline. Although habitat transformation in breeding grounds has so far been indicated as the main reason for the decline in the middle of 20th century, the factors that influenced the further decline in the end of 1990s are not so clear and are probably related to the state of habitats in areas of migration staging and wintering. These issues have to be clarified, and are thus considered among the most urgent activities which will determine the success of the implementation of this Action Plan.

The overall objectives of the Action Plan are:

- In the short-term (**3 years**)
 1. To define main factors affecting the population of the Sociable Lapwing in the areas of breeding, staging and wintering, and to undertake actions to reduce negative impact of the key negative factors.
 2. To organise co-ordinated targeted research to clarify general population characteristics such as breeding success, mortality rates and causes of mortality, current distribution, seasonal changes in habitat requirements, migratory links / distribution of birds from certain breeding areas to particular migration corridors and wintering grounds.
 3. To ensure that all appropriate actions defined in this Action Plan are undertaken in order to stop further decline of the Sociable Lapwing throughout its range.
- In the long-term (**20 years**)
 1. To reverse the population trend of the Sociable Lapwing, with the species occurring with stable or increasing numbers within the “traditional” breeding and wintering ranges of the mid 20th century.

To reach successfully these short-term and long-term objectives the following measures have to be undertaken:

- International co-operation between individual experts, governmental and non-governmental bodies of all the species’ range states must be ensured to guarantee the development and implementation of adequate monitoring and research, conservation, habitat management and other relevant activities provided by the Action Plan for the benefit of the Sociable Lapwing;
- A working group on Threatened Steppe Waders must be established and operate under the AEWA Secretariat (or leading role delegated to one of the bodies of a Sociable Lapwing range state);
- To control human activities negatively affecting the Sociable Lapwing in breeding, staging or wintering areas;
- To ensure that adequate legislation for the conservation of the Sociable Lapwing exists and is enforced by all range states;
- To develop new mechanisms of international co-operation, including subsidies required for habitat management in areas occupied by Sociable Lapwings to ensure that no detrimental human activities take place in the breeding, staging or wintering areas of this species.

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The Action Plan presents operational and measurable objectives, and management options to achieve these objectives. It is a framework to ensure the coherence of and communication about the national plans. The framework leaves room for manoeuvre for the Range States to tune their management policy to the national situation, as long as the objectives are achieved.

The *success* of the Action Plan to large extent *depends on*:

1. the support for its implementation;
2. the efforts of the Range States to draw up and implement National Action Plans;
3. adherence to the time frame for monitoring and evaluation;
4. communication of information on progress and activities in the Range States,
5. organisational matters such as: a clear vision on the role of the AEWA Technical Committee and a decision on the potential establishment of a new working group in this committee (or delegation of this role to a body, such as the proposed Threatened Steppe Waders Working Group).

The Plan applies for a period of three years, after which it should be evaluated and reviewed.

2. Biological assessment

<p>General information</p>	<p>The Sociable Lapwing <i>Vanellus gregarius</i> is a small migratory wader which breeds in Kazakhstan and south-central Russia between 47° and 53°N, and winters in southwestern Asia and northeastern Africa in the zone from 10° to 30°N. During the breeding season it can be found in dry steppes and semi-deserts, mainly in areas with feather grass <i>Stipa pennata</i> and/or wormwood <i>Artemisia</i> spp. steppe habitats, and often in association with saltmarsh areas.</p>
<p>Population development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First poorly-documented decline probably happened at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century when last cases of breeding are thought to have occurred in eastern Ukraine. • Major decline in the 1950s, supposedly as a result of habitat deterioration in breeding grounds, i.e. ploughing of virgin steppes (confirmed reduction of numbers on migration in the Lower Don area to complete absence after 1968; in central parts of Northern Kazakhstan in the 1960s numbers had declined by between 50 and 75% compared to the 1930s); decline observed at wintering grounds in Pakistan and India. Last records in Sudan. • Further strong decline in the 1970s-1980s, coinciding with reduction of breeding range (15.6% decline from 1986 - 1991 in the Pavlodar region of Kazakhstan; disappeared in Saratov and Volgograd regions of European Russia; in the Kourgaldzhyn area of Kazakhstan numbers were halved from 1970 to 1972); no continuous distribution was recorded anymore. Also further decline in numbers in Indian wintering grounds. Birds no longer found in Egypt. In the late 1980s the world population was estimated at 2,500 - 10,000 birds. • Ongoing population decline by the end of the 1990s, confirmed by data from several surveys in areas where the Sociable Lapwing formerly commonly bred. In the early 1990s breeding densities in northern Kazakhstan were one order of magnitude lower than in the 1930s, while flock sizes were two orders of magnitude lower. By the end of the century it had become an extremely rare species in the southeast of the breeding range and there was no record of breeding from the European part of the former breeding range. Possibly no longer breeds in Europe. The only recent records from wintering areas in India are from Haryana and Rajasthan (50 birds or usually less and not every year). During the workshop in Moscow in 2002 the global population was estimated at 200-600 breeding pairs (ca. 600-1,800 birds).
<p>Distribution throughout the annual cycle</p>	<p>In January is at wintering grounds in Israel, Eritrea, Oman, Pakistan and India (data on wintering extremely scarce).</p> <p>In February large flocks (in former time) in Iraq, first migrants are present in Uzbekistan; latest individuals usually leave Pakistan and India.</p> <p>In March Sociable Lapwings migrate through Turkey and the Caucasus states, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan, appear in southern Kazakhstan.</p> <p>In April latest Sociable Lapwings leave the Red Sea, Turkey and Pakistan wintering grounds, while earliest already occupy southern breeding grounds; start egg-laying in Central Kazakhstan; latest migrants still observed in Uzbekistan.</p> <p>In May birds arrive to northern Kazakhstan; start of the main breeding season.</p> <p>In June are on breeding grounds in Russia and Kazakhstan; hatching of chicks from mid June.</p> <p>In July first fledglings observed on breeding grounds (early July); in the middle of the month form flocks and start movements; first birds appear on migration in Uzbekistan.</p> <p>In August main departure from Kazakhstan and Russia, in the middle of this month birds reach Uzbekistan, southern Kazakhstan, and Turkmenistan.</p> <p>In September last birds leave Central Kazakhstan and Russia; first records in Sri Lanka, Syria, Egypt.</p> <p>In October small numbers appear in Iraq, in arid areas of Sudan and Eritrea. Last records in Uzbekistan.</p> <p>In November last migrants still in Turkmenistan, but most had reached wintering grounds in the countries surrounding the Red Sea and in India and Pakistan.</p> <p>In December is at wintering grounds in Israel, Eritrea, Oman, Pakistan, and India.</p>

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Productivity	<p>Knowledge is very poor; available data suggest low breeding success. Mortality during breeding (eggs, chicks and young) varies from 7% to 87%-100%.</p> <p>Main reasons for this are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trampling of nests by grazing cattle. • High predation rate, namely by Rooks <i>Corvus frugilegus</i>, Corsak Foxes <i>Vulpes corsak</i> and Red Foxes <i>Vulpes vulpes</i>. • Human disturbance. • Treatment of arable fields with colonies in areas of intensive agriculture.
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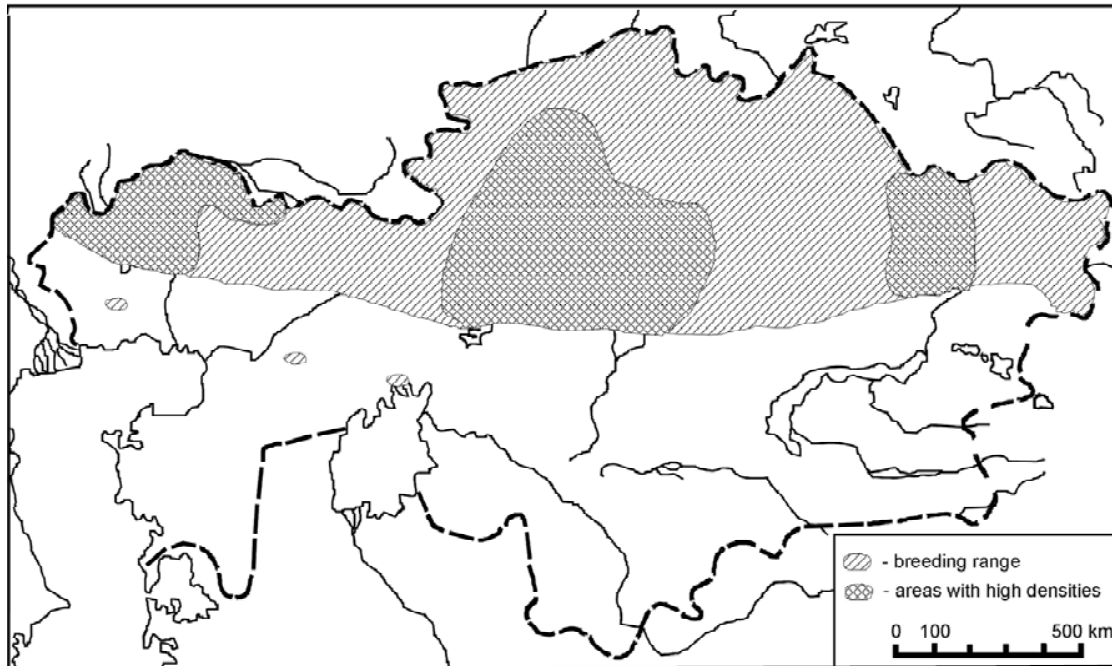
Life history	Breeding:	Feeding:	Migration:
	<p>Formation of pairs starts already during spring migration.</p> <p>Breeds in loose colonies of 2–30 pairs, with nests 20–200 m apart. Distance between adjacent colonies may exceed 35-75 km. Recently more often single nests or broods are found.</p> <p>Colonial breeding and aggressive behaviour in colonies determines successful reproduction (protection against predators). Recent phenomenon: single birds are found with single nests or broods.</p> <p>Clutch size of 2-4, rarely 5 eggs.</p> <p>Incubation mainly by female during 21-25 days.</p> <p>Fledging period ca. 33-37 days.</p> <p>Mortality (eggs, chicks and young) varies from 7% to 87%-100%.</p>	<p>On breeding grounds almost entirely insectivorous, mainly beetles and their larvae, grasshoppers, and moth larvae.</p> <p>Similar diet (insects) is known from Indian wintering grounds.</p> <p>In Punjab, Pakistan, known to eat freshly sown grains and green caterpillars in winter.</p>	<p>In spring migrates in small flocks of 5 - 15 individuals, while on autumn migration might form larger flocks up to 100 individuals (formerly, in the middle of 20th century, up to 1000 birds).</p> <p>Spring migration lasts from late February - May (depending on the region).</p> <p>Autumn migration is stretched even within one area: e.g. in Turkmenistan from August till late November.</p> <p>Former migration in broad front now goes probably in two main corridors: one from northeast Africa and the Middle East across the Caspian Sea area, another from India and Pakistan across Afghanistan and Central Asia.</p> <p>Direction of spring migration is thought to have changed from northern to northeastern in the area north of the Caspian Sea. This might be a reflection of breeding range contraction.</p>

Habitat requirements	Breeding habitat:	Migration and winter:
	<p>Virgin dry steppes and semi-deserts, mainly in areas with feather grass <i>Stipa pennata</i> and/or wormwood <i>Artemisia</i> spp. steppe habitats, and usually in salt marsh areas close to wet patches.</p> <p>Grazed or heavily grazed areas with low vegetation cover are preferred.</p> <p>Seldom breeds in spring crops on arable land.</p> <p>After rapid decline in the 1970s breeding was observed in grassland areas among sand dunes between Volga and Ural rivers.</p> <p>Avoids areas with taller and dense vegetation.</p>	<p>Dry plains, sandy wastes and short-grass areas, often at shallow water or in areas adjacent to water.</p> <p>Prefers dry cultivated or semi-cultivated tracts rather than stony or sandy wastes and deserts.</p> <p>Often feeds in wheat fields in Pakistan.</p>

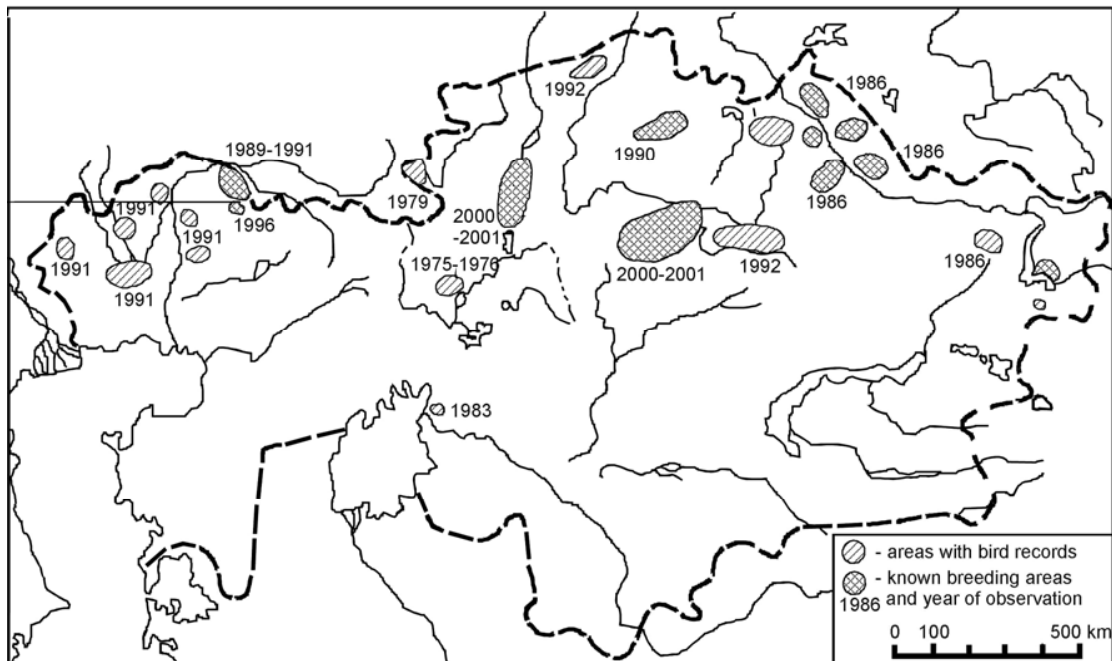
Geographical range of the Sociable Lapwing

Countries of Breeding	Countries of Migration	Countries of Wintering	Countries of Vagrancy
Kazakhstan Russian Federation	Afghanistan Armenia Azerbaijan Bahrain Iran Iraq Kuwait Kyrgyzstan Qatar Saudi Arabia Syria Tajikistan Turkey Turkmenistan United Arab Emirates Uzbekistan	Eritrea India Israel Oman Pakistan Sri Lanka Azerbaijan (?) Ethiopia (?) Egypt (?) Iraq (?) Sudan (?) United Arab Emirates (?)	Belgium Britain China Cyprus France Germany Greece Hungary Ireland Italy Jordan Lebanon Maldives Malta Morocco Mongolia Netherlands Poland Romania Somalia Spain Switzerland Ukraine former Czechoslovakia

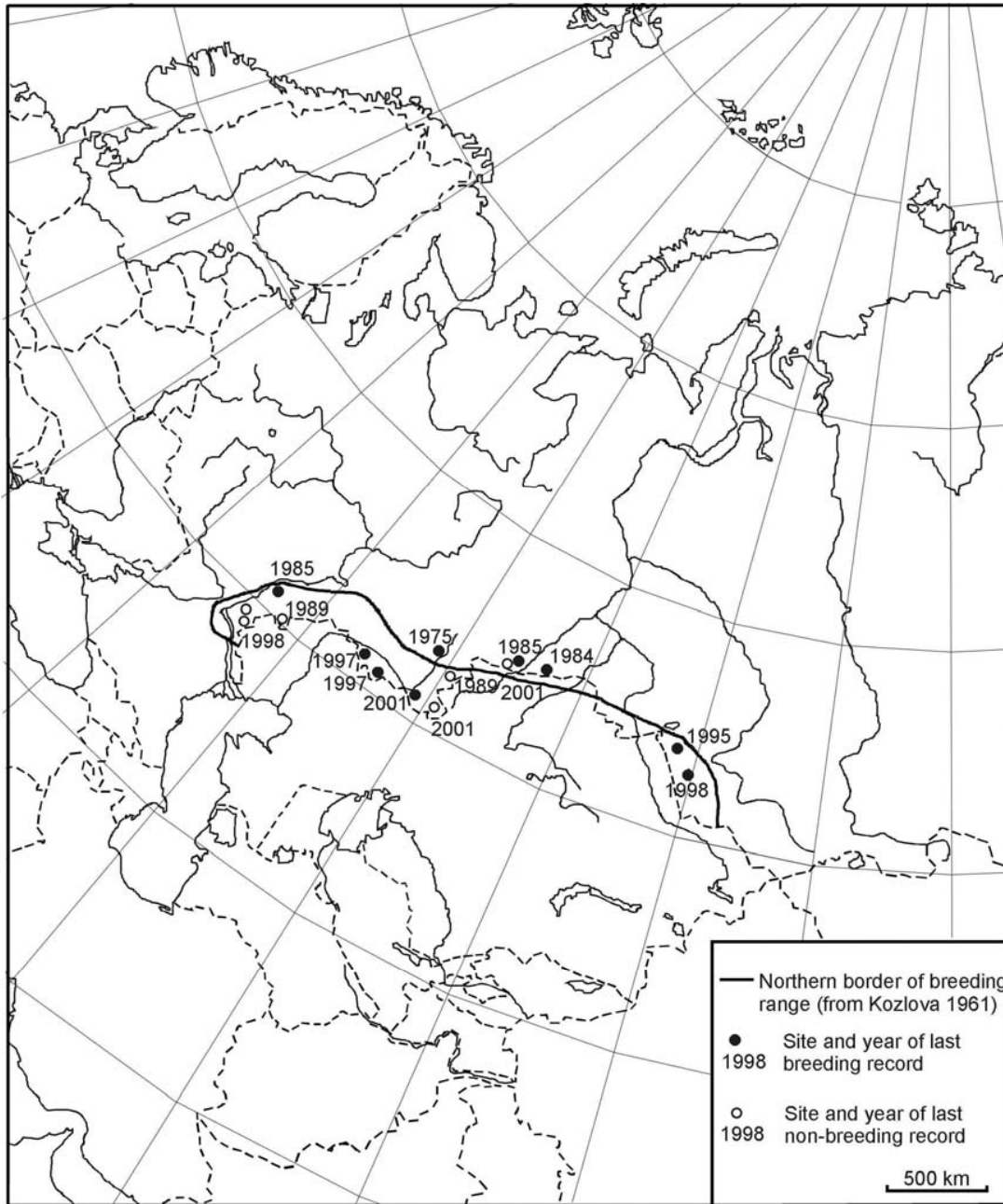
**Former breeding distribution of the Sociable Lapwing *Vanellus gregarius* in Kazakhstan
(after Dolgushin 1962)**



**Breeding distribution of the Sociable Lapwing *Vanellus gregarius* in Kazakhstan
1975-2001**



Breeding distribution of the Sociable Lapwing *Vanellus gregarius* in Russia in the 1970-2000s



Knowledge on the Sociable Lapwing

Quality of knowledge on the Sociable Lapwing was assessed during the Moscow workshop to define the priority areas for the targeted research and monitoring needed to reach the objectives of this Action Plan. Preliminary information for each country is suggested on the basis of available literature.

0 – no data; 1 – very little data; 2 – expert assumption; 3 – good quantitative data

Country	Population Size	Distribution	Timing/ presence	Habitat use	Key negative factors
Afghanistan	0	0	0	0	0
Armenia	1	1	1	0	0
Azerbaijan	1	1	1	0	0
Bahrain	0	0	0	0	0
Eritrea	1	1	1	0	0
India	2	2	2	2	0
Iran	1	1	1	0	0
Iraq	1	1	1	0	0
Israel	1	1	2	1	0
Kazakhstan	2	2	3	3	2
Kuwait	1	1	1	0	0
Kyrgyzstan	0	0	1	1	0
Oman	1	1	0	0	0
Pakistan	2	2	2	2	0
Qatar	1	1	1	0	0
Russia	2	1	3	3	2
Saudi Arabia	0	0	1	0	0
Sri Lanka	1	1	1	0	0
Syria	0	0	1	0	0
Tajikistan	0	1	1	1	0
Turkey	0	1	1	1	0
Turkmenistan	1	1	1	1	0
United Arab Emirates	0	1	2	2	0
Uzbekistan	1	1	2	2	1

3. Human Activities

This chapter gives an overview of current human activities potentially affecting the Sociable Lapwing population and their relevance by country.

Overview of human activities/threats related to the Sociable Lapwing

Human activities potentially affecting the Sociable Lapwing can be subdivided into three categories:

1. Human activities/threats potentially affecting the Sociable Lapwing population.
2. Human activities/threats affecting habitat quality, such as deterioration and contamination.
3. Human activities/threats affecting habitat quantity, such as land reclamation for urban and industrial developments.

Explanation of threats for Sociable Lapwing

Reduced grazing – Based on current breeding distribution it would appear that, in addition to “solonchaks” and salinas, Sociable Lapwings prefer habitats with moderate grazing in steppe areas. Possibly the species evolved during a geological period or periods when the open semi-arid grasslands of Eurasia were naturally grazed by large wild mammals; these were later replaced by herds of domesticated sheep and cattle reared by nomads. It seems that grazing and trampling create a sparse vegetation structure favourable for breeding of Sociable Lapwings, and that animal manure supports increased insect abundance, which serves as a food stock for the birds. Such grazed grasslands could be considered the primary natural habitats of the Sociable Lapwing. When the nomadic way of life ceased, first in Europe (in the 18-19th centuries) and later in Asia (20th century), extensive grazing was greatly reduced and concentrated in areas close to settlements. Areas without grazing (including strict nature reserves in steppe areas) have since become overgrown with dense vegetation unsuitable for the Sociable Lapwing. Breeding of Sociable Lapwings became patchier and also concentrated on pastures close to human settlements. Economic depression in Russia and Kazakhstan in the 1990s led to a further reduction in grazing due to a decline in the number of domestic animals (e.g. cattle reduced by 50% and sheep by 75% in the Orenburg Region of Russia).

Overgrazing – Since nomadic grazing was replaced by grazing on permanent pastures close to human settlements (see “Reduced grazing” above), these local areas have been suffering from overgrazing because of the increased density of animals. The importance of this habitat change for the Sociable Lapwing is unknown.

Agricultural development – The conversion of virgin steppes to extensive arable land, which took place first in the European part of the Sociable Lapwing breeding range (in the 19th century) and then in the Asian part (20th century, especially in the 1950s when cultivation of the steppes became a high priority policy in the USSR), was formerly a major threat. However this threat is no longer of importance except where fallow land is ploughed.

Agricultural intensification – Being similar in appearance to the species’ natural habitats, arable land with sparse vegetation often attracts Sociable Lapwings for breeding. Intensive agriculture involves regular treatment of fields during the season using special vehicles, which destroy many nests of birds breeding there. This threat is thought to be particularly significant on the periphery of the species’ breeding range. For example, the last known breeding colony of Sociable Lapwings on arable land in the Saratov Region (Lower Volga River) was regularly destroyed in the 1980s by agricultural vehicles. It seems that arable land with intensive agriculture function is an “ecological trap” for breeding Sociable Lapwings.

Land abandonment – Absence of grazing on grassland favours the development of tall dense vegetation (climax vegetation associations) unsuitable for breeding Sociable Lapwings (see “Reduced grazing” above). Similarly, fallow arable land is suitable for breeding Sociable Lapwings only before it becomes overgrown with tall dense vegetation. Ploughing of fallow land on poor soils with subsequent sowing of meadow grasses prevents the growth of tall vegetation and thus favours the Sociable Lapwing. Abandonment of arable land was widespread across the species’ breeding range in the 1990s.

Afforestation – Planting of trees in human settlements (old Slavonic tradition) and also forest strips to protect arable land in steppes (governmental policy in the USSR in the late 1940s – 1960s) had mostly indirect negative influence on breeding colonies of Sociable Lapwings. Mature trees provide ideal nesting sites for corvids, which are significant predators of ground nesting birds, including the Sociable Lapwing. Afforestation in southern Russia and parts of Kazakhstan resulted in expanding of the breeding ranges and a dramatic increase of numbers of corvids, especially the Rook.

Irrigation – This indirect threat is related to the conversion of virgin steppes into arable fields as well as to afforestation. In arid areas it has some positive effect by helping to expand “solonchaks” and salinas, as well as increasing the number of wetlands suitable for migrants.

Hunting – Can be a significant threat. However hunting on Sociable Lapwings is prohibited in the majority of range states. Information is missing from some countries of Africa and the Middle East.

Illegal hunting – Some occasional (non-intentional) illegal shooting of Sociable Lapwings takes place during winter/spring hunting season(s) on waterfowl, as well as for taxidermy purposes.

Egg collection – Rare cases of egg collecting by private collectors are known/suspected in Kazakhstan.

Human disturbance – Human disturbance is thought to affect the breeding success of Sociable Lapwings not by changing the natural time/energy budget of breeding birds, but by decreasing breeding success as a result of reduced protection by adults for their nests/chicks against avian predators (corvids, gulls, birds of prey). Human disturbance is expected to be greatest in grazing meadows in the vicinity of settlements.

Use of agricultural chemicals/pesticides – Fertilizers and insecticides were widely used for agriculture in the USSR in the 1960-1980s. Also in the same period cereal grain treated with poison (ZnO_2P_3) was spread from airplanes against rodents in areas with natural nidus of plague. This chemical could have been accumulated in Sociable Lapwing tissues through the food chain (insects), influencing survival of birds and their offspring. No chemicals were used in the 1990s, however, in 2000-2001, insecticides against locusts were again spread from airplanes within breeding localities of Sociable Lapwings. There is no information about the use of chemicals in the species’ non-breeding range.

Climate change – Controversial information is being published about recent climate change (desertification vs. increased rainfall) within the breeding range of the Sociable Lapwing. It is clear that in wet seasons dense and tall vegetation develops which results in reduced densities of breeding Sociable Lapwings. The opposite situation was recorded in dry seasons.

Development – Neither urbanization nor industrial developments, road and railway constructions, nor tourism are significant threats for the Sociable Lapwing. There are tentative plans for a large-scale oil development in northern Kazakhstan with the associated construction of a road network.

Predation by corvids – Former natural predation was dramatically increased by predation of eggs and chicks by corvids (especially Rooks) since the 1960s as a result of the afforestation policy (see “Afforestation” above). Foraging of corvids takes place at a distance up to 10 km from rookeries/trees.

Predation by foxes, birds of prey, gulls and other natural predators – Some level of natural predation on eggs, chicks and adult birds always exists, and healthy populations are adapted to compensate it (this is reflected in the equilibrium of productivity and mortality within a population). Demographical parameters in the Sociable Lapwing population are not documented.

Predation by dogs – Possibly a significant threat to nests and chicks in the vicinity of human settlements, where breeding Sociable Lapwings are currently concentrated as a result of wide scale extensive grazing.

Trampling by cattle and sheep – Intensity of grazing in pastures close to settlements has increased dramatically as a result of changes in cattle-breeding practice (see “Reduced grazing” and “Overgrazing” above). Taking into account that pastures are the preferred habitat of Sociable Lapwings, trampling of eggs and chicks has become a real threat for the species population.

Threats/human activities affecting the Sociable Lapwing and their relevance by country/region.

0 – no; 1 – low; 2 – medium; 3 – high; ? - unknown

Threats:	Russia	Kazakhstan	Migration Europe	Migration Asia	Winter Africa & Middle East	Winter Asia
Habitat loss						
Reduced grazing	3	3	0	0	?	?
Overgrazing	1?	1?	0	0	1?	1?
Agricultural expansion	0	1	0	0	0	0
Agricultural intensification	2 (3 locally)	2	0	0	?	?
Land abandonment	1	1	0	0	0	0
Afforestation	1	0	0	0	0	0
Irrigation	1	0	0	0	0	0
Persecution/disturbance						
Hunting	0	0	0	0	?	0
Illegal hunting	2	2	2	2	?	?
Egg collection	1	1	0	0	0	0
Human disturbance	2?	2?	0	0	0	0
Pollution						
Use of agricultural chemicals/pesticides	1?	1?	1	?	?	?
Climate change						
Desertification	?	?	0	?	?	?
Increased rainfall	?	?	0	0	0	?
Development						
Tourism	0	Potentially 1	0	0	0	0
Roads, oil/gas drilling	0	Potentially 1	0	?	?	0
Other types of threats						
Predation by Rooks	3	3	0	0	0	0
Predation by other species	1	1	0	0	0	0
Trampling by sheep/cattle	3	3	0	0	0	0

4. Policies and Legislation

This chapter provides an overview of relevant national and international policies and legislation. Legislation regarding transport, agriculture, etc. will not be discussed, although this may have a considerable indirect influence on the Sociable Lapwing.

International policies and legislation

Title	Work title	Year	Objective and relevance
Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat	Ramsar Convention	1971	Stem increasing destruction of wetland habitats by designating wetlands for inclusion on a list of "Wetlands of International Importance". Conservation and wise use of these wetlands. Compensate for loss of wetlands. Consultation about implementation of the Convention.
Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals	Bonn Convention/ CMS	1979	Concerted action for the conservation and effective management of migratory species. Consists of two appendices: Appendix I of species requiring strict protection and Appendix II of species for which agreements need to be made for their conservation and management. AEWA is an example of such an agreement. The Sociable Lapwing has been listed in Appendix I of CMS.
Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds	AEWA	1995	The Sociable Lapwing is one of the 235 species currently included in Annex 2 to the Agreement. Furthermore in Annex 3 (Action Plan) the species has been listed in Table 1, Column A under category 1a, 1b & 1c. In accordance with the Action Plan, high priority should be given by Parties to the conservation of species listed in Column A, category 1, and developing and implementing International Single Species Action Plans.
Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats	Bern Convention	1979	Conservation of wild flora and fauna and their natural habitats especially those species and habitats whose conservation requires the co-operation of several states. "Special attention [should] be given to the protection of areas that are of importance for the migratory species specified in Appendices II and III (incl. most birds) and which are appropriately situated in relation to migration routes as wintering, staging, feeding, breeding or moulting areas". The Sociable Lapwing has been listed in Annex III.
EU Council Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds	EU Birds Directive	1979	Conservation of birds and bird habitats by European co-operation. Establish network of protected areas: Special Protection Areas (SPAs). The Sociable Lapwing has been listed in Annex I. The Birds Directive laid the foundation for the Habitats Directive.
EU Council Directive on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora	EU Habitats Directive	1992	Establish a strategic network (Natura 2000) of European Habitats and protect the most threatened species in Europe. Countries have to submit lists of "Special Areas of Conservation" (SACs). Two annexes list habitat types and species. The Article 6 obligations of the Habitats Directive also have to be implemented in the Special Protection Areas of the Birds Directive.
Convention on Biological Diversity	CBD	1992	Maintain a sustainable diversity and spread of flora and fauna across the world. Each contracting party shall develop national strategies, plans or programmes for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity.

NB: The European Directives and international conventions can have different legal implications: the special legal status of EU Directives makes it possible to enforce implementation through the European Court of Justice, whereas the legal implications of conventions depend on their translation into national legislation.

Threat and convention status for the Sociable Lapwing *Vanellus gregarius*

Global Status ¹	European Status ²	SPEC category ²	EU Birds Directive Annex ³	Bern Convention Annex ⁴	Bonn Convention Annex ⁵	African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement ⁶
CR	CR	1	I	II	I	A1a, 1b & 1c

¹ BirdLife International (2004). *Threatened Birds of the World 2004*. CD-ROM. Cambridge, UK: BirdLife International. Categories: EX = Extinct; EW = Extinct in the Wild; CR = Critically endangered, EN = Endangered; VU = Vulnerable; LR = Lower Risk, cd = conservation dependent, nt = near threatened, lc = least concern; DD = data deficient, NE = Not Evaluated.

² BirdLife International (2004) *Birds in Europe: population estimates, trends and conservation status*. Second edition. Wageningen, The Netherlands: BirdLife International. (BirdLife Conservation Series No. 12). CR – critically endangered, meets IUCN Red List Criteria for CR at European level; SPEC category 1 – European species of global conservation concern, i.e. those classified as Threatened, Near Threatened or Data Deficient under the IUCN Red List Criteria at global level (BirdLife International 2004, IUCN 2004).

³ The species shall be subjected to special conservation measures concerning their habitat in order to ensure their survival and reproduction in their area of distribution.

⁴ Give special attention to the protection of areas that are of importance (Article 4) and ensure the special protection of the species (Article 6). For more details see the Convention text.

⁵ Animals for which agreements need to be made for the conservation and management of these species. For more details see the Convention text.

⁶ A1a, 1b & 1c – included in Appendix I of CMS; listed as threatened in the Threatened Birds of the World (BirdLife 2000); or population which numbers less than about 10,000 individuals.

National policies, legislation and activities

National activities on Sociable Lapwing conservation	Russia	Kazakhstan	Migration Europe	Migration Uzbekistan	Migration Azerbaijan	Winter Asia
<i>Species</i>						
Legal protection status in all areas and periods	A	A	A	A	A	A
Research	No	some A	some A	A in plans	No	?
Regular population census and monitoring	No	No	No	A in plans	No	?
<i>(Semi)-natural habitat</i>						
Site protection	No	No	No	N/A	No	?
Site management	No	No	No	N/A	No	?
Monitoring (use) of protected sites	No	No	No	N/A	No	?
<i>Man-made habitats</i>						
Promotion of appropriate agricultural policies	No	No	No	No	No	?
Policies to reduce potential agricultural conflicts	No	No	No	No	No	?
<i>International co-operation</i>						
Regular meetings to discuss international monitoring	No	No	No	No	No	?

A
Activity

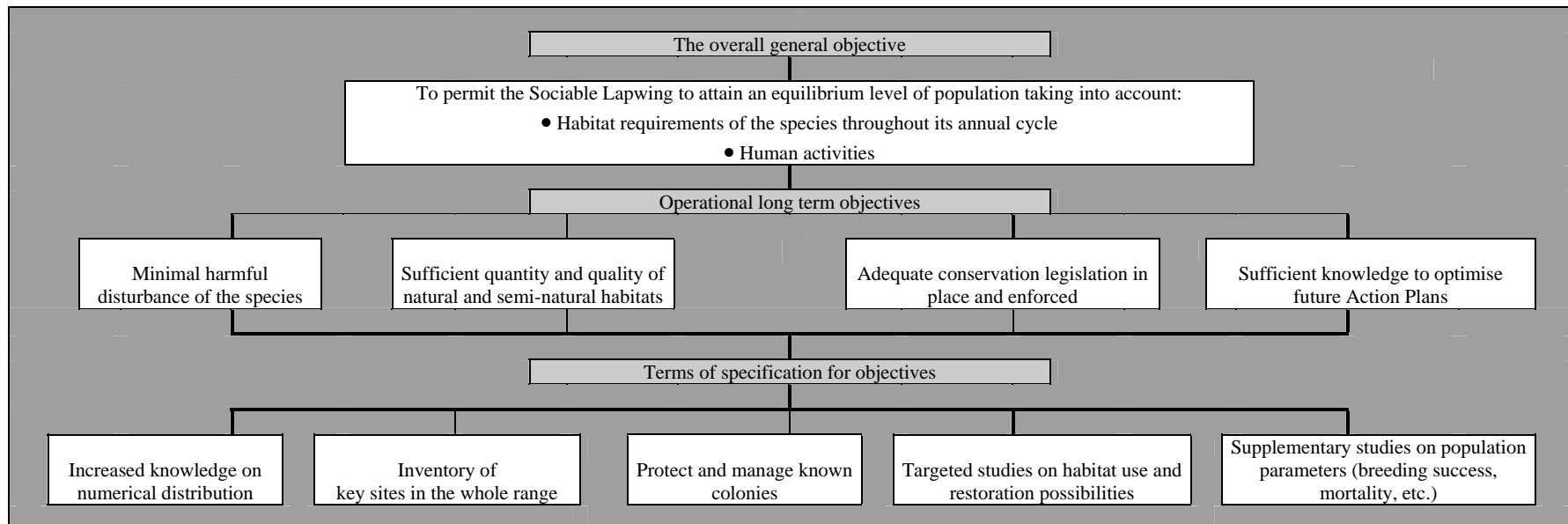
No
No activity

N/A
not applicable

5. Framework for Action

The individual countries in the Sociable Lapwing geographical range are responsible for the successful implementation of this Action Plan. Without the commitment of the Range States and all interested groups concerned, the Action Plan will remain ineffective. In this chapter the framework of objectives and a list of subjects that need to be taken up in the National Action Plans are presented.

Framework for Action



Measurable objectives

<p>Protection and monitoring of known breeding colonies</p>	<p>Inventory of key sites in the whole range</p>	<p>Increased knowledge on numerical distribution</p>	<p>Targeted studies on habitat use and restoration possibilities</p>	<p>Supplementary studies on population parameters (breeding success, mortality, etc.)</p>
<p>Within three years country should have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all colonies with protection status; • all sites with management plans in place and implemented; • protection of colonies involves local people. 	<p>Within three years country should have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • completed an updated inventory of key sites (see Appendix II); • located and identified habitat threats to sites of international importance; • given indications on how to improve the status of these areas. 	<p>Within three years country should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • complete inventory of current distribution and population size; • initiate monitoring programme, including population size and trends. 	<p>Within three years country should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • make detailed studies on habitat use and potential threats to the Sociable Lapwing; • make a plan with actions to be undertaken to restore habitat quality and quantity where appropriate. 	<p>Within three years country should have/provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • information for analysis of overall population parameters, including breeding success, mortality rate, impact of threats etc.; • population monitoring data available.

All National Action Plans should include (all actions need to have a time-table):

- Regular survey of geographical distribution and numbers, especially surveys of poorly known areas for unknown key sites
- A comprehensive survey of key sites and their protection status
- Survey of/actions to improve existing policies and legislation (*see chapter 4*)
- Survey on threats/human activities (*see chapter 3*)
- Overview of present or expected threats to sites of international importance (criterion of international importance: 1% of the total population, ≥ 6 birds or ≥ 2 breeding pairs)
- Survey of present or expected threats to sites of national importance. Proposed management options to deal with these threats (*see chapters 5 and 6*)
- Identification and localisation of “stakeholders” for each of the key sites
- Provisions for maintenance of habitat quality/quantity
- Provisions for habitat restoration, where appropriate
- Elaboration and implementation of monitoring and control systems (*see chapter 7*)
- Identification of financial implications/responsibilities
- Communication plan (with AEWA, governmental and non-governmental organisations, and Threatened Steppe Waders Working Group when set up)
- Public awareness and training plan
- Identification of financial resources for implementation of the National Action Plan
- Overall expected effects of measures taken

During the Moscow workshop on the Sociable Lapwing Action Plan the following activities were suggested to diminish or overcome threats for securing the species' wellbeing in breeding grounds

Priority: 1 – high; 2 – medium; 3 – low

Threats	Activity	Priority
Hunting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public awareness/education • Training • Increase game wardening 	2 1 (locally) 2
Use of pesticides	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study, monitoring • Contact and discuss with authorities 	3 3
Egg collection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public awareness/education • To alarm custom authorities 	1 1
Predation by rooks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To scare rooks from colonies (local relevance) • Development of control methods taking account of the interests of agriculture 	3 3
Other predators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wardening of colonies 	3
Renewing of ploughing of old fields	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreement with farmers • Nest protection signs/constructions 	3 2
Trampling by cattle, sheep	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nest protection constructions 	3
External aid funds for agriculture development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To identify donors of aid finances and to link aid to environmental target 	3
Reduced grazing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management in protected areas (moderate grazing) • Management in other areas where species occurs 	3 3
Land privatisation (potential)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lobbying and closely following legislation development • To link privatisation with habitat management 	3 3

6. Action by country

To assist the Range States in developing their own National Action Plans, this chapter describes objectives, management options and the relation between the national objectives and the international objectives per Range State.

Breeding areas (Russia and Kazakhstan)

Priority: H – high, M – medium, L – low

International objective	Priority	National management options/actions	Measurable objective
Increase knowledge on numerical distribution	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each country undertakes extensive surveys to assess numbers, distribution, population trends to have best possible knowledge on these issues Develop system to monitor and assess changes in numbers and distribution and start its operation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Current distribution map available per country and overall breeding range ✓ System to monitor and assess changes in numbers and distribution in place
Inventory of key sites in the whole range	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All available published and unpublished information collated and transformed in easy-to-use formats available for decision-making Countries produce national (or joint) reports on the distribution, conservation status, stakeholders etc. of all key sites of the species 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Results of inventory available for decision-makers ✓ All key sites known and monitored
Threat evaluation	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Study of nest/chick loss from various reasons in known colonies Evaluation of human/dog/cattle disturbance on breeding success and time budget of breeding birds Study of monitoring effect of pesticides (used for locust control) on birds and on food availability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Importance of various threats known ✓ Quantitative data available on causes of nest loss ✓ Habitat threats determined
Targeted studies on habitat use and restoration possibilities	M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overview of overall population habitat preferences undertaken Learn about detailed characteristics (soil/vegetation structure, food availability) of high quality habitats of the Sociable Lapwing Analysis of distribution of suitable versus occupied habitats 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Habitat requirements of the species reassessed in relation to recent decline
Adequate enforcement of conservation legislation	L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National and regional authorities ensure/involved in enforcement of legislation Significant penalties introduced for illegal taking of birds/eggs/chicks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ High penalties in place in both countries
Supplementary studies of population parameters	M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A body in one of the two breeding countries to take responsibility for the Threatened Steppe Waders Working Group for concerted actions on population modelling Key experts to join efforts to provide species population model (and to assess gaps in knowledge) To start ringing and colour-marking project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Population modelling tried and results available ✓ Knowledge about site fidelity, mate faithfulness and other population parameters is obtained
Facilitate increase in breeding performance of the Sociable Lapwings	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure adequate seasonal protection of all breeding colonies Develop and implement system to monitor annual breeding success Develop method(s) to control numbers of Rooks and other predators around breeding colonies Reduce disturbance by control of access to key areas Applied studies on practical effect of specific actions to protect colonies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Data on annual breeding success obtained and made available widely ✓ All known breeding colonies receive adequate protection

Good quality habitats	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain or enhance the current status of habitats • Encourage protection for all sites of importance for the Sociable Lapwing • Support establishment of National Parks with grazing of wild animals • Develop a proper management system (moderate grazing) for protected sites, involving management plans • Support of international programme on habitat management with help of traditional extensive grazing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Actions for improvement of habitats ✓ Inventory of sites where natural habitats should be restored, listing of threatened sites ✓ All known colonies have management plans ✓ Management practice developed and tested ✓ Develop recommendation for management to farmers
Development, endorsement and implementation of National Action Plans	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ National Action Plans in place in both countries, published, and endorsed and implemented at all levels ▪ National legislation amended and enforced as provided in the International and National Action Plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ National Action Plans available ✓ All national bodies committed to implementation
Public awareness and involvement of local stakeholders	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Public awareness materials to be produced and widely distributed ▪ Local stakeholders involved in practical on-ground conservation of breeding colonies ▪ Facilitate information exchange between interested bodies ▪ Could this species be a flagship for Russia-Kazakhstan environmental co-operation? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Effective public awareness materials produced and distributed for local population and decision makers ✓ Protection of colonies involves local people ✓ Web site launched ✓ Articles published in magazines, newspapers, journals for general public and scientific community
Training	L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Training for wardens of Sociable Lapwing reserves to provide knowledge in proper protection and habitat management ▪ Training for hunters of some local communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Wardens of reserves where Sociable Lapwings breed have knowledge to secure colony protection and area management

Migration areas (all range states of the species, including breeding and wintering countries)

Priority: H – high, M – medium, L – low

International objective	Priority	National management options/actions	Measurable objective
Increase knowledge on numerical distribution	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Co-ordinated international actions undertaken (surveys and other sources) to assess numbers and distribution of the Sociable Lapwing throughout the entire migration area The value of different migration corridors/flyways assessed on the basis of numerical distribution data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ information (database or maps or reports) on numerical distribution of Sociable Lapwings during spring and autumn migration available for decision-making
Inventory of key sites in the whole species range	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All countries involved in co-ordinated international surveys of key areas used by Sociable Lapwings as stopovers Value and protection status of these areas assessed Adequate protection of key known sites guaranteed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ all key sites of stopovers during migration known and ✓ measures undertaken for their adequate protection
Threat evaluation	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Study of bird mortality causes Evaluation of human/dog/cattle disturbance on distribution and time budget of birds Study on pesticides accumulation in food chain 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ importance of various threats known
Targeted studies on habitat use	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All surveys of the species to include assessments of habitat requirements as integral component Learn about detailed characteristics (soil/vegetation structure, food availability) of high quality habitats of the Sociable Lapwing Assessments of the status and extent of occupied versus apparently suitable habitats undertaken 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ information on habitat requirements/habitat-related limiting factors available for decision-makers
Adequate enforcement of conservation legislation	M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All countries to ensure that species is strictly protected, and that This legal protection is adequately enforced 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ the Sociable Lapwing legally and effectively protected by all Range States
Supplementary studies of population parameters	M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reasons for mortality/number decline on migration assessed and made available to wider audience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ new data obtained and made available
Good quality habitats	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All range states undertake actions to ensure that the state of habitats occupied by migratory Sociable Lapwings does not deteriorate Habitat management measures undertaken where appropriate Develop a proper management system (moderate grazing on breeding grounds) for protected sites, involving management plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ extent and quality of habitat ensure stable or increasing numbers of Sociable Lapwings at migration stopovers ✓ management practice developed
Development, endorsement and implementation of National Action Plans	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Range States to produce National Action Plans for conservation of migratory Sociable Lapwings and their habitats 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ national Action Plans in place and implementation on-going
Public awareness and involvement of local stakeholders	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public awareness materials produced for different levels of the society (decision-makers, local public in important sites, national governments and NGOs etc.) All range states ensure that no deliberate or accidental harm to birds on stopovers is caused by local public/stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ effective public awareness materials produced and distributed; species known and care is taken by wider public

Wintering areas (Eritrea, India, Israel, Oman, Pakistan, Sri Lanka)

Currently Israel and India are probably the two most important wintering countries for the species, although data is extremely scarce, it shows a dramatic decline in numbers.

Priority: H – high, M – medium, L – low

International Objective	Priority	National management options / actions	Measurable objective
Increase of knowledge on numerical distribution	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Co-ordinated international actions undertaken (surveys and other sources) to assess numbers and distribution of the Sociable Lapwing throughout the entire wintering range The current value of different wintering grounds assessed on the basis of census data 	✓ information (database or maps or reports) on numerical distribution of Sociable Lapwings in winter available for decision-making
Inventory of key sites in the whole winter range of the species	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All countries involved in co-ordinated international surveys of key areas used by Sociable Lapwings as wintering sites Value and protection status of these areas assessed Adequate protection of key sites guaranteed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ all key wintering sites known and ✓ measures undertaken for their adequate protection
Targeted studies on habitat use and restoration possibilities	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All surveys of the species in wintering grounds to include assessments of habitat requirements as integral component Assessments of the status and extent of occupied versus apparently suitable habitats undertaken 	✓ information on habitat requirements/habitat-related limiting factors available for decision-makers
Adequate enforcement of conservation legislation	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All countries to ensure that species is strictly protected, and that This legal protection is adequately enforced 	✓ the Sociable Lapwing legally and effectively protected by all Range States
Supplementary studies of population parameters	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reasons for mortality/number at wintering grounds assessed and made available to wider audience 	✓ knowledge about limiting factors is gained
Good quality habitats	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All range states undertake actions to ensure that the state of habitats occupied by wintering Sociable Lapwings does not deteriorate Habitat management measures undertaken where appropriate 	✓ extent and quality of habitat ensure stable or increasing numbers of Sociable Lapwings during wintering
Development, endorsement and implementation of National Action Plans	M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Range States to produce National Action Plans for conservation of wintering Sociable Lapwings and their habitats 	✓ national Action Plans in place and implementation ongoing
Public awareness and involvement of local stakeholders	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public awareness materials produced for different levels of the society (decision-makers, local public in important sites, national governments, NGOs etc.) All range states ensure that no deliberate or accidental harm to birds on wintering grounds is caused by local public/stakeholders 	✓ effective public awareness materials produced and distributed; species known and care taken by wider public in wintering areas

7. Implementation

General preconditions

For the Action Plan to be successfully implemented, agreement on information exchange, communication and monitoring, clarity on necessary financial resources and a realistic time-schedule are a prerequisite. It is most important that individual countries will only consider measures that might affect the population after consultation with the other countries involved has taken place. The UNEP/AEWA Secretariat and the Technical Committee will play a mediating role.

A special working group under the Technical Committee should be established to co-ordinate the implementation of the Sociable Lapwing Action Plan. In this working group all Sociable Lapwing Range States and interested groups should be represented. The Range States have a responsibility to monitor national achievements and communicate these to UNEP/AEWA Secretariat, with the request to disseminate this information to the AEWA Threatened Steppe Waders Working Group and other Range States. The population model will be a very important instrument in relation to this monitoring. This chapter will describe these essential preconditions for the implementation of the International Action Plan.

Population model

A population model that shall be based on the current situation of the population and include actual data and parameters: survival estimates for different ages (at least on the basis of similar lapwing species), as well as more general survival estimates derived from population censuses and productivity assessments. This model has to be completed as soon as possible. The population model will be analysed/tested by the Threatened Steppe Waders Working Group under the AEWA Technical Committee. The model will be used in preparation of newer versions of the International Action Plan, and will serve as a basis for further understanding of species population decline and recovery possibilities.

Monitoring

The success of this Action Plan stands or falls with the commitment of countries to monitor the population and habitats, as well as the effects of management measures on the species. Only if countries demonstrate this commitment can proper management decisions be made. All countries are requested to continue and/or initiate a regular population census and monitoring of the population (including productivity/age ratio censuses) and their habitats, with special attention to monitoring of known regular breeding, stopover and wintering sites. Collected data will be assembled within the BirdLife International World Bird Database and/or Wetlands International IWC (International Waterbird Census). The Threatened Steppe Waders Working Group will be vital in organising this monitoring process.

Organisation

In the organisation structure of AEWA, the Agreement Secretariat plays a key role. The Agreement Secretariat co-ordinates the flow of scientific information and technical advice. It also calls meetings of the AEWA parties. The Technical Committee was established in accordance with the Agreement text and is a subsidiary body to the Meeting of the Parties. Article VII, paragraph 5 of the Agreement text permits the Technical Committee to establish working groups for special purposes. This article can be used for the establishment of a Threatened Steppe Waders Working Group.

Threatened Steppe Waders Working Group

A special Threatened Steppe Waders Working Group under the AEWA Technical Committee shall be established to implement this Action Plan.

The working group shall, under the supervision of the Technical Committee and taking into account the role of the Agreement Secretariat, be mandated to undertake the following activities:

- Co-ordinate and facilitate information exchange between the Range States (and between AEWA and the Range States)
- Collect country data and draft annual reports on the implementation of the Action Plan
- Assist in and co-ordinate the process of the preparation of National Action Plans
- Prepare and submit a review of the Action Plan to the triennial Range States' meeting and to AEWA
- Monitor implementation of the Action Plan
- Organise intermediate meetings with groups of the Range States (training, emergency measures, etc.)

The working group will call for an emergency meeting of the Range States if:

- Total population size has declined by more than one third in any period of four or less consecutive years or
- Major changes in relevant habitats, or sudden catastrophes occur within the range of the Sociable Lapwing that is likely to affect the population further

The Threatened Steppe Waders Working Group should consist of a team of several technical advisors. In order to ensure effective communication between the Technical Committee and the working group, at least one member of the Technical Committee should also participate in the working group.

Detailed Terms of Reference based on the above description of activities will be prepared by the Technical Committee, and endorsed by the Range States before the Threatened Steppe Waders Working Group starts its work.

Country actions

In all communication between the Range States (Contracting and Non-contracting Parties) to AEWA, the Agreement Secretariat plays a co-ordinating role. To ensure effective communication, countries should provide information to the Agreement Secretariat. This is intended to ensure that all parties receive all relevant information. In order to implement the Action Plan, the Range States should commit themselves to at least the following points:

- Endorse this International Action Plan
- Prepare, in co-operation with the working group, and based on chapters 5 and 6 of this International Action Plan, a National Action Plan by the end of the first year
- Implement this National Action Plan
- Endorse the Terms of Reference of the working group
- Through the Agreement Secretariat, inform the working group about relevant issues in the country
- Appoint focal points responsible for the communication with the working group and relevant stakeholders in the country
- Prepare an annual progress report
- Prepare a review of the National Action Plan every three to five years
- Maintain and further develop adequately funded monitoring programmes to deliver key data.

Time frame for monitoring, evaluation and communication

Time path	1 st year ↓	2 nd year ↓	3 rd year ↓	4 th year ↓
Actions	<p>AEWA Technical Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare Terms of Reference for the working group • Prepare International Single Species Action Plan 	<p>Working group:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist and co-ordinate National Action Plans • Monitor implementation of the (national and international) Action Plans and prepare annual progress report • Facilitate information exchange (web page) • Organise meetings/training • Develop monitoring protocol 	<p>Working group:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor implementation of the (national and international) Action Plans and prepare annual progress report • Facilitate information exchange • Organise meetings/training • Meeting of the Threatened Steppe Waders Working Group 	<p>Working group:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare triennial Range States meeting • Prepare Action Plan review • Monitor implementation of the (national and international) Action Plan and prepare annual progress report • Facilitate information exchange • Organise meetings/training
	<p>Range States:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Endorse the International Action Plan • Endorse Terms of Reference for the working group 	<p>Range States:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare National Action Plan • Implement National Action Plan • Prepare annual progress report • Appoint national focal point • Exchange information 	<p>Range States:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement National Action Plan • Prepare annual progress report • Exchange information 	<p>Range States:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement National Action Plan • Prepare annual progress report • Exchange information
	⇓	⇓	⇓	⇓
Products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Endorsed International Action Plan • Endorsed working group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Action Plans • Annual progress reports of Range States • Annual progress report on the International Action Plan • National Focal Points • Meetings/training • Information exchange 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual progress reports of Range States • Annual progress report on the International Action Plan • Meetings/training • Information exchange 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Triennial Range States meeting • Reviewed Action Plan • Three-year report of Range States • Three year report on the International Action Plan • Annual progress report of Range States • Annual progress report on the International Action Plan • Information exchange

Glossary

In this Action Plan, the following definitions have been used:

Habitat - environment meeting the conditions required by a particular species

Natural habitat - environment of a particular species, which has not been changed by human interference in recent history, e.g. virgin steppes and semi-deserts

Semi-natural habitat - environment of a particular species, which has been moderately modified by humans, e.g. steppes used for grazing, etc.

Man-made habitat - man-made environment of a particular species, e.g. farmland

Range States - (independent) countries within the range in which a particular animal species occurs

Stopover sites (areas) - areas where migratory bird populations stay for a prolonged period of at least several days during the non-breeding season, where the birds can both forage and rest. Usually this term is only applied to so-called staging grounds during autumn and spring migration

Wintering grounds - staging grounds during the winter

Key sites – areas which are essential for the survival of a significant part of the population at any stage of its annual cycle, i.e. for this migratory bird species: breeding grounds, staging areas and wintering sites.

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Appendix I: Overview of key sites per country

Numbers in column 7 refer to month(s) of observation, letters to season of the annual cycle (B – breeding, P – post-breeding)

Site	Habitat type	Co-ordinates	Area (ha)	(Inter)national designation (year)	Peak numbers	Peak month (number of months in use)	Ownership	Management Responsibility
Mouth of Samur River, Russia	Seaside lowland with wetlands	41°52'N 48°30'E	7,000	Natural Park (100%)	1985: 100 ind.	P	state	state
Vicinity of Borisoglebovka (Semenovski Zakaznik), Russia	Fields, pasture	51°00'N 46°45'E	35,000	Zakaznik (100%)	1986: 6+ pairs 1996: 0	B	state	state
Kulaksay Lowland, Russia	Meadows (pasture)	50°44'N 55°50'E	5,000		1997: 5 pairs	B	state	state
Kupy Area, Russia	Meadows, steppes, wetlands	51°14'N 53°46'E	2,000		1997: 2 pairs	B	state	state
East Manych River Valley, Russia	Steppes (pasture)	45°60'N 44°50'E	7,000		1998: 2 ind. 2000: 10 ind.	VIII VIII	state	state
Blagoveschenskaya, Russia	Steppes, wetlands	53°00'N 80°00'E	71,000	Zakaznik (partly)	1998: 10+ pairs 1980-1990: 25+ pairs	B	state	state
Lysyi Liman Lake, Russia	Saltmarshes	45°50'N 44°03'E	3,500	Hunting Zakaznik	1999: 132+ ind.	P (IX)	state	state
Stepnovski Saltmarshes, Russia	Fields, wetlands	50°00'N 45°45'E	40,000		1998: 10+ ind.	IV	state	state
Bulukhta, Russia	Steppes, salt-marshes	49°20'N 46°10'E	62,500		1998: 32+ ind.	IV	state	state
Naurzum, Kazakhstan	Dry steppes, lakes and patches of forest	51°30'N 64°30'E	190,700 (87,700 protected)	Strict Nature Reserve (1933) & adjacent areas	30 pairs	IV, V	state	state
Kurgaldzhino, Kazakhstan	Dry Steppes, salinas, lakes, pastures	50°30'N 70°01'E	237,100 (19,826 suitable for breeding)	Strict Nature Reserve (1968)	40 pairs	V	state	state
Aydar Lake, Uzbekistan	Wetland	39°50'N 64°52'E	1,500,000	Hunting Zakaznik (2000)	Unknown	4 (III-IV, VIII-IX)	state	state
Makhmudchala Lake, Azerbaijan	Wetland	39°30'N 48°40'E	8,000		1 bird	?	state	Society of Hunters and Fishermen of Azerbaijan
Kura River Estuary, Azerbaijan	Wetland	39°25'N 49°25'E	15,000		?	?	state	state
Gyzylgach, Azerbaijan	Wetland	39°00'N 49°00'E	88,000	Strict Nature Reserve (1929)	12 birds	?	state	state

Appendix II:
Estimates of the breeding population of the Sociable Lapwing, made during the Moscow workshop (2nd March 2002)

Region, country	Min. breeding pairs	Max. breeding pairs
<i>Russia:</i>		
Orenburg region	50	70
Altaysky kray	10	50
Kurgan region	0	1
Chelyabinsk region	0	1
Novosibirsk region	1	3
Omsk region	0	1
<i>Kazakhstan</i>		
West-Kazakhstan region	10	50
Aktyubinsk region	10	50
Kustanay region	30	70
North-Kazakhstan region	10	50
Akmolinsk region	30	70
Pavlodar region	10	50
East-Kazakhstan region	5	25
Karaganda region	5	25
<i>Total</i>	171	516

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