

AEWA MOP 5 HIGHLIGHTS: TUESDAY, 15 MAY 2012

AEWA MOP 5 convened for its second day in La Rochelle, France, on Tuesday, 15 May 2012.

Delegates considered the Implementation Review Process (IRP), the report on International Implementation Tasks (IITS), the Wings Over Wetlands (WOW) Project, and reports from the Standing Committee (SC) and Technical Committee (TC), Depository and Secretariat.

During the afternoon, delegates discussed finance and administrative matters, proposals for amendments to the Agreement, institutional arrangements, and then convened in working groups.

IMPLEMENTATION REVIEW PROCESS

Sergey Dereliev, AEWA Secretariat, presented the SC's IRP report (AEWA/MOP5.16). He reviewed the IRP's aims and procedures, and provided details on the three cases it has addressed to date on: illegal hunting of the critically endangered sociable lapwing in the Syrian Republic; drainage of the Salina of Ulcinj for tourism development in Montenegro; and a wind farming project adjacent to Lake Durankulak posing risk to the globally threatened red-breasted goose in Bulgaria. MONTENEGRO and BULGARIA provided updates on their efforts in these cases, and delegates agreed to add to the proceedings a note asking the SC and TC to continue studying the present and future cases.

REPORT ON AEWA INTERNATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION TASKS 2009-2016

The Secretariat addressed progress made towards the AEWA IITs (AEWA/MOP5.17 Corr. 1) and the draft resolution (AEWA/MOP5 DR 3 Corr. 1). He said that the Secretariat had accrued EUR1.4 million in voluntary contributions and currently 13 of the 31 tasks have been partly or fully implemented, but that approximately EUR12 million are required to complete all tasks. He noted that the draft resolution contains a list of the tasks as revised by the TC.

Stressing the continuing funding gap, NORWAY suggested clear prioritization of the tasks, and SWITZERLAND called for increased efforts to contact parties directly to secure funding for particular tasks.

REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WOW PROJECT AND POST-WOW PROSPECTS

Gerard Boere, Chair, WOW Project Steering Committee, outlined the implementation of the WOW project and follow-up plans (AEWA/MOP Inf 5.9), noting an independent evaluation concluded the project had achieved almost all its original aims. He explained the primary critique was the substantial amount of time required by the AEWA Secretariat to identify co-finance sources. Boere underscored that key outputs of the WOW project are being used by other initiatives.

The Secretariat then introduced the draft resolution (AEWA/MOP5 DR 4) urging parties to make use of the outputs and the Global Environment Facility (GEF) to continue funding flyway

projects. The EU proposed including reference to the African Initiative, and delegates agreed to discuss this in the Scientific and Technical Working Group.

IMPLEMENTATION AND REVISION OF THE COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

Florian Keil introduced this item (AEWA/MOP 5.18) and presented the draft resolution (AEWA/MOP5 DR 5). He highlighted the need for a coordinated revision process to adjust the Strategy to current needs.

NORWAY suggested prioritizing the Secretariat's activities, citing the African Initiative and work on the Critical Site Network as main priorities. SENEGAL called for geographic priorities in AEWA's communication.

WORLD MIGRATORY BIRD DAY

Keil presented the report on this annual event (AEWA/MOP5.19). He lauded the growing participation in these celebrations. Noting capacity constraints, and the work associated with the Secretariat-driven event, he asked parties to consider the future of the World Migratory Bird Day and possible future steps.

Many delegations voiced support for the concept. SENEGAL, LIBYA and MALI suggested reconsidering the date of the event, noting that many migratory birds have left Africa by May, and TUNISIA recommended the theme should not be changed annually, but always celebrate migratory birds.

PROPOSALS FOR AMENDMENTS TO THE AGREEMENT

Dereliev introduced this agenda item (AEWA/MOP5.20 and 5.20 Addendum Rev.1) and the draft resolutions (AEWA/MOP5 DR6 and DR7).

David Stroud, UK Joint Nature Conservation Committee, elaborated on the interpretation of the term "extreme fluctuation in population size or trend" used in the context of Table 1 of the AEWA Action Plan (Status of the populations of migratory waterbirds) (AEWA/MOP5.21) and the draft resolution (AEWA/MOP5 DR7), which proposes to replace "extreme" with "large." He clarified that "extreme fluctuation" as defined by the IUCN, rarely occurs in the case of waterbirds.

Szabolcs Nagy, Wetlands International, addressed the interpretation of the term "long-term significant decline" (AEWA/MOP5.22 and AEWA/MOP5 DR7), highlighting three problems with the current definition, most notably its inability to trigger management actions in the case of rapidly declining populations. He presented the TC proposal to extend the definition of "long-term decline" to include cases in which a "decline can be predicted based on at least 10 years of the most recent data."

The EU suggested that all definitions used within the AEWA context be combined in a single document.

INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

Marco Barbieri introduced the draft resolution on institutional arrangements for the SC (AEWA/MOP5 DR 17), and outlined its provisions on appointment of members, funding and requirements for the SC to meet at least twice between MOP 5 and 6. He explained that all current members had only served

one term and are eligible to serve a second, and noted only one vacancy in the SC, for Europe and Central Asia. The EU announced the region would forward a candidate for this position following consultations.

Dereliev presented the draft resolution on institutional arrangements for the TC (AEWA/MOP5 DR 18), pointing to amendments and adjustments to the *modus operandi* and its annexes proposed in the operative text. He presented the list of names for regional representatives and alternates proposed for the TC. UGANDA, supported by MALI, agreed to submit a proposed amendment to the *modus operandi* of the TC on the matter of parties having access to summaries of the qualifications of nominees, to inform their decisions. Delegates agreed to the proposed list of TC nominees and to continue discussions in the Finance and Administrative Working Group.

FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

REPORT ON FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS: Barbieri introduced the report on finance (AEWA/MOP5.40 Rev.1), and Bert Lenten, CMS, explained the recruitment process for the AEWA Executive Secretary post. Lenten outlined that the responsibilities of the post have increased since 2003 and are now consistent with a P5 posting, as opposed to P4. The EU suggested, and delegates agreed, to continue discussions in the Finance and Administrative Working Group.

BUDGET PROPOSAL: Barbieri then introduced the budget proposal (AEWA/MOP5.41 Rev.1), noting six scenarios were provided for.

STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT OF WATERBIRD MONITORING: Dereliev introduced the documents on the strategic development of waterbird monitoring in the African-Eurasian flyways (AEWA/MOP5.42 Rev.1 and AEWA/MOP5 DR 22), recalling previous commitments under the Agreement to long-term monitoring.

Nagy stressed the need to: improve efficiency of data management and reporting; underpin global coordination by a global data management system; and identify long-term funding sources.

Dereliev outlined scenarios for financing, noting options included allocating funds for the IWC in the AEWA core budget, or establishing a new waterbird monitoring trust fund.

FUTURE PERIODICITY OF MOP SESSIONS: Barbieri introduced the proposal, emanating from MOP 4, to amend the periodicity of the MOP cycle from three to four years (AEWA/MOP5.43 and AEWA/MOP5 DR 23).

REPORTS

STANDING COMMITTEE: SC Chair Øystein Størkersen briefly presented the SC's report (AEWA/MOP5.6).

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE: TC Chair Jelena Kralj presented the TC's report (AEWA/MOP5.7), highlighting the TC's new strategy of conducting most of its work in ten separate working groups. She said two outstanding tasks of the TC, relating to re-writing the Guidelines for Sustainable Harvest of Migratory Waterbirds and the identification of important sites vulnerable to climate change, had been included in the list of IITs for the next triennium.

DEPOSITARY: The NETHERLANDS provided the status report from the Depositary (AEWA/MOP5.8). He noted there are currently 65 parties, and that with Zimbabwe's accession on 1 June this would increase to 66.

SECRETARIAT: Marco Barbieri, Acting Executive Secretary, AEWA, presented the report of the Secretariat 2009-2012 (AEWA/MOP5.9). Barbieri reported on, *inter alia*: recruitment of new parties to the Agreement; strategic cooperation with other organizations; coordination and implementation of single species action plans (SSAPs); and policy-related developments.

Florian Keil presented the AEWA Information and Communication Technology (ICT) overview (AEWA/MOP5.10), noting the internet provides a way to "reach out across the flyway." He outlined the goal of extending virtual workspaces used by the TC and SSAP working groups to other working groups of the Agreement. Keil asked parties to consider how to build the Secretariat's ICT capacity in a sustainable way.

SENEGAL encouraged the Secretariat to provide translation in French as well as English for its online Africa portal.

OTHER MATTERS

RAPTORS MOU: Nick Williams, Interim Coordinating Unit for the CMS MoU on the Conservation of Birds of Prey in Africa and Eurasia (Raptors MoU) announced Slovakia as the 40th signatory of the MoU, and welcomed Rastislav Rybanič, Slovakia, to sign on behalf of his country. Rybanič said species like the red-footed falcon will benefit from this international conservation cooperation.

WORKING GROUPS

FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE: The Working Group, chaired by Øystein Størkersen (Norway), convened on Tuesday afternoon to consider draft resolutions on the budget (AEWA/MOP5 DR 21), a structural funding regime for the IWC (AEWA/MOP5 DR 22) and the periodicity of AEWA meetings (AEWA/MOP5 DR 23), along with their associated documents. Størkersen recalled the Group's aim of finding consensus, and led participants through initial general comments on the six budget scenarios, retaining or upgrading the current Executive Secretary P4 post, three or four year meeting cycles, and the potential transfer of temporary staff positions to core Secretariat positions. They also discussed the current level of the Trust Fund, to determine the flexibility of the budget. Divergent initial views were expressed on all issues, and delegates requested additional information from the Secretariat on the budgetary implications of upgrading the Executive Secretary post.

SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL: The Working Group, chaired by Malta Qwathekana (South Africa), met Tuesday afternoon. Participants heard a presentation by Hein Prinsson, Bureau Waardenburg, on the conflict between migratory birds and power grids (AEWA/MOP5.38). On the draft resolution (AEWA/MOP5 DR 11), SENEGAL suggested removing reference to Special Protection Areas under the EU Birds Directive, and agreed to consult with the EU bilaterally. Delegates then agreed the resolution.

On national reporting and the online reporting system (AEWA/MOP5 DR 1), SENEGAL expressed concern over harmonization with reporting under the EU Birds Directive, and agreed to consult bilaterally with the EU. Delegates then agreed the draft resolution, with minor amendments.

Delegates also agreed the draft resolution on implementation and revision of the communication strategy (AEWA/MOP5 DR 5), noting that AEWA national focal points may also be national focal points for communication, education and public awareness.

On conservation guidelines, TC Chair Jelena Kralj presented revised guidelines on: regulating trade in migratory waterbirds (AEWA/MOP5.33); avoidance of introduction of non-native waterbird species (AEWA/MOP5.34); and identifying and tackling emergency situations for migratory waterbirds (AEWA/MOP5.35). Baz Hughes, Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust, presented the guidelines on the translocation of waterbirds for conservation purposes (AEWA/MOP5.36). The EU suggested several amendments to the resolution adopting the guidelines (AEWA/MOP5 DR 10), and the Working Group agreed to revisit the issue on Wednesday.

IN THE CORRIDORS

Participants plowed steadily through MOP 5's heavy agenda on Tuesday. As two working groups began their work late Tuesday however, the sheer scale of the work ahead became clear. The Scientific and Technical Working Group was mandated with addressing 12 resolutions in under two hours. While it confronted the task head on, by early evening the impossibility of the task was clear, with the Group managing to agree just three resolutions. While the Finance and Administrative Working Group had a shorter list of tasks, negotiations were equally challenging. Interventions and corridor conversations revealed divides between the "small handful" of major donors and some others on the question of upgrading the post of the Executive Secretary. As one donor made clear, in a period of financial austerity contributions cannot be increased and available funds should go "to projects, not personnel."