Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds

First report by South Africa on the implementation of the Agreement

AGREEMENT ON THE CONSERVATION OF AFRICAN-EURASIAN MIGRATORY WATERBIRDS (The Hague, 1995)

Implementation during the period 2003 and 2007

Contracting Party: Republic of South Africa
Designated AEWA Administrative Authority: Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism
Full name of the institution: Ministry of Environmental Affairs and Tourism
Name and title of the head of the institution: Mr Marthinus Van Schalkwyk, Minister
Mailing address: Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, Private Bag X 447, PRETORIA, 0001, SOUTH AFRICA
Telephone: +27 12 310 3611
Fax: +27 12 322-0082
Email:

Name and title (if different) of the designated contact officer for AEWA matters: Dr G.T Willemse, Deputy Director
Mailing address (if different) for the designated contact officer: Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, Private Bag X 447, PRETORIA, 0001, SOUTH AFRICA
Telephone: +27 12 310 3836
Fax: +27 12 320 7026
Email: gwillemse@deat.gov.za

Table of Contents

1. OVERVIEW OF ACTION PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

1.1 Summary of progress to date

SPECIES CONSERVATION

South Africa has a wide range of legislation that is being implemented at the national and provincial level for the conservation of migratory waterbirds. The Sea Birds and Seal Protection Act (Act No. 46 of 1973), Marine Living Resources Act (Act no 18 of 1998) allows high level of protection on seabirds and the National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act (Act 10 of 2004) offers a variety of protection measures for some species that are listed in the Annex of the Agreement.

Mitigation measures for the longline fishery were gazetted on 2 September 1998 under the Marine Living Resources Act, 1998 (Act No. 18 of 1998), and an observer scheme was initiated in 2000. During 2002 and 2003 it was intended that between 15 and 20% of voyages would have scientific observers aboard.

The following single species action plans are implemented in South Africa for the conservation of some waterbirds species listed in the Annex 2 of the Agreement. South Africa is participating in the development of a Species Action Plan for the Maccoa Duck *Oxyura maccoa,* which is listed as a Priority Species (Category A, column 1c). Six other African countries participating in the development of this action plan include Botswana, Ethiopia, Namibia, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zimbabwe.

- African Penguin – Population & Habitat Viability Assessment published in 1999 (Penguin Conservation Assessment And Management Plan (Penguin Camp)
- South African National Plan of Action for Reducing the Incidental Catch of Seabirds in Longline Fisheries published in 2002
- Conservation Assessment and Management Plan for Southern Africa Coastal Seabirds published 2003
- Oystercatcher Conservation Programme (OCP) coordinated by Percy Fitzpatrick Institute of African Ornithology
- South African White-winged Flufftail *(Sarothrura ayresi)* Action Plan.

HABITAT CONSERVATION

Marine protected areas

Four new Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) have recently been declared in terns of the National Environmental Management: Protected Areas Act (Act No. 57 of 3003) around the coast of continental South Africa bringing the total to 23 MPAs and offering enhanced protection to 18% of the total coastline. A number of coastal seabirds are protected in the MPAs under Sea Birds and Seas Protection Act (Act No. 46 of 1973). Including these are Diomedeidae (albatrosses), Procellaridae (petrels), Spheniscidae (penguins), Stercoraridae (skuas) and Sulidae (gannets), Laridae (gulls, terns), Phalacrocoracidae (cormorants) and Pelecanidae (pelicans).

Important Bird Areas Conservation programme in South Africa

The Important Bird Areas (IBA) project aiming to protect a number of sites in South Africa that are important to globally threatened species, range restricted species, biome restricted species or which regularly hold massive concentrations of specific birds.

Important Bird Areas include Grassland Biosphere Reserve (SA020), Blue Swallow Natural Heritage Site – SA014, Soutpansberg – SA003 and Steenkamsberg – SA016. Grassland Biosphere and Steenkamsberg are discussed as they offers high level of protection to a large number of migratory waterbirds, which include White-winged Flufftail (*Sarothrura ayresi),* Corncrake (*Crex crex),* Baillon's Crake (*Porzana pusilla)* and several breeding populations of Crowned Crane (*Balearica regulorum),* Wattled Crane (*Bugeranus carunculatus).* Globally significant numbers of Yellow billed Duck (*Anas undulata)* and Spurwinged Goose (*Plectropterus gambensis)* also occur at this area.

Conservation of Wetlands

The wetland conservation policy for South Africa complement and strengthen a number of national policies and is a shared responsibility between DEAT, Department of Water Affairs and Department of Agriculture. Discussed below are legislations that DEAT is responsible for.

- **Environment Conservation Act (Act No. 73 of 1989)**

The primary purpose of this Act is to provide for the protection of the environment against disturbance, deterioration, defacement, poisoning, pollution, or destruction as a result of man-made structures, installations, processes or products of human activities. The Act calls for the Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism to identify activities that in his opinion may have detrimental effect on the environment, whether in general or in respect of certain areas, and to make regulations with regard to these activities. Activities identified, that will have detrimental effect on wetlands, include the construction or upgrading of:

- transportation routes and structure, and manufacturing, storage, handling or processing facilities for any substance which is dangerous or hazardous and is controlled by national legislation;
- canals and channels, including diversions of normal flow of water in a riverbed and water transfer schemes between water catchments and impoundments;
- dams, levees or weirs affecting the flow of a river
- schemes for the abstraction utilisation of ground or surface water for bulk supply purposes
- sewage treatment plants and associated infrastructure
- reclamation of land below the high-water mark of the sea and in inland water including wetlands

- **National Environmental Management Act (Act No. 107 of 1998)**

The Act provides for co-operative environmental governance by establishing principles for decision-making on matters affecting the environment, institutions that will promote co-operative governance and procedures for co-ordinating environmental functions exercised by organs of state. Principles relevant to wetlands conservation include:

- Sustainable development requires the consideration of all relevant factors including the following:
  (i) that the disturbance of ecosystems and loss of biodiversity are avoided, or, where they cannot be altogether avoided, are minimised and remedied;
  (ii) that the development, use and exploitation of renewable resource and the ecosystems of which they are part do not exceed the level beyond which their integrity if jeopardised
- The costs of remedying pollution, environmental degradation and consequent adverse health effects and of preventing, controlling or minimising further pollution, environmental damage or adverse health effects must be paid for by those responsible for harming the environment
- Sensitive, vulnerable, highly dynamic or stressed ecosystems, such as coastal shores, estuaries, wetlands, and similar systems require specific attention in management and planning procedures, specifically where they are subject to significant human resource usage and development pressure

o **National Water Act (Act No. 36 of 1998)**

The purpose of this Act is to ensure that the nation's water resources are protected, used, developed, conserved, managed and controlled in ways that take into account amongst other factors -

(a) meeting the basic human needs of present and future generations;
(b) promoting equitable access to water;
(c) redressing the results of past racial and gender discrimination;
(d) promoting the efficient, sustainable and beneficial use of water in the public interest;
(e) facilitating social and economic development;
(f) providing for growing demand for water use;
(g) protecting aquatic and associated ecosystems and their biological diversity;
(h) reducing and preventing pollution and degradation of water resources;
(i) meeting international obligations;
(j) promoting dam safety;
(k) managing floods and droughts,

Further more, the purpose of the Act, a wetland is defined as land which is transitional between terrestrial and aquatic systems where the water table is usually at or near the surface, or the land is periodically covered with shallow water, and which land in normal circumstances supports or would support vegetation typically adapted to life in saturated soils.

o **National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act (Act No. 10 of 2004)**

The objectives of the Act are –
(i) within the framework of the National Environmental Management Act, to provide for the:

- management and conservation of biological diversity and its components in South Africa
- use of indigenous biological resources in a sustainable manner; and
- fair and equitable sharing among stakeholders of benefits arising from bioprospecting involving indigenous biological resources

(ii) to give effect to ratified international agreements relating to biodiversity which are binding to South Africa
(iii) to provide for co-operative governance in biodiversity management and conservation in South Africa

RESEARCH AND MONITORING

Monitoring Programmes

- **Bird Ringing project coordinated by South Africa (SAFRING).**

The objective of SAFRING is to establish a database of recoveries of southern African birds that can be used to establish information about movement and survival. Every bird ringed, has the potential to contribute to the SAFRING recovery database. Since 1982, this database has been supplemented by a RETRAP database, supplied by ringers on a voluntary basis. This contains ringing and latest RETRAP details of birds recaptured at least 12 months after being ringed.

Next steps and possible projects for AFRING

SAFRING's journal and AFRING News, has been developed to facilitate communication about bird ringing through Africa.

Some of the greatest gaps in knowledge of African birds that can be answered by ringing include the following issues:

1. Intra-African migration, e.g. Diederik Cuckoo, White-throated Swallow
2. Annual survival
3. Timing and duration of primary moult

- **Coordinated Waterbirds Counts (CWAC)**

The objective of CWAC was to monitor South Africa's waterbird populations and the conditions of the wetlands, which are important for waterbirds. This was done by means of a programme of regular mid-summer and mid-winter censuses at a large number of South African wetlands and estuaries, at regular six-monthly intervals. CWAC monitors over 350 wetlands around the country.

- **Coordinated Avifaunal Roadcounts (CAR)**

CAR monitors over 20 species of large terrestrial birds (cranes, bustards, korhaans, storks, Secretarybird and Bald Ibis) along 340 fixed routes covering 19 000 km. The project revealed details of habitat use and the relationship of populations to the agricultural practices of an area.

- **Save the albatross seabird programme**

The objective of the project was to reduce the deaths of albatrosses and petrels. About 300 000 birds are drowned every year after swallowing baited hooks and being dragged underwater as a result of longline fishing industry practices.

- **Life history of the White-fronted Plover**

The project monitored the annual reproductive effort, nesting success, survival and dispersal characteristics of a population of about 100 colour-ringed pairs of White-fronted Plover

(*Charadrius marginatus)* breeding on the beaches of the Cape Peninsula. The results are used for a comparison of breeding productivity and life-history traits between south-temperate (*C. marginatus)* and two related north-temperate species, Kentish Plover (*C. alexandrinus)* and Piping Plover (*C. melodus)*.

o **The Wakkerstroom Project**

The project run by BLSA involved a 4 square kilometre wetland owned by BLSA, situated in the Grassland Biosphere Reserve in Mpumalanga Province and home to several globally threatened species. The area was the core of the global range of species such as Rudd's and Botha's Lark and as such holds the key to their survival. It is also of huge significance to species such as the Grey Crowned Crane, Bald Ibis and White-winged Flufftail. Aside from protecting habitat, the BLSA centre at Wakkerstroom is also the site of the hugely successful guide-training program. This program aims to identify local residents in rural areas that show potential for bird guiding.

EDUCATION AND INFORMATION

South Africa continues to educate and increase public awareness in relation to conservation status of AEWA species through regular communications by government departments, academic and non-governmental organization via electronic, visual and print media with scientific, conservation and fishing communities, as well as the general public.

AFRING project

Coordinated Waterbird Ringing Schemes (AFRING) coordinated by Avian Demography Unit of the University of Cape Town is running ringing projects in Africa. The first ringing course took place from 19-26 September 2004, in Mida Creek at the A Rocha Bird Observatory and Field Study Centre near Watamu on the central Kenyan coast. The area is one of the Important Bird Areas (IBAs) and eight delegates from four Africa countries (Kenya, Ghana, Tanzania and Uganda) participated in this ringing course.

Funded by the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement (AEWA), with partial funding from the Highlands Ringing Group in Scotland, the course formed part of phase one of the workplan for the project “Coordination of waterbird ringing schemes in Africa” which is listed as priority No. 20 under AEWA’s International Implementation Priorities 2000-2004. The objective is to develop an African waterbird ringing scheme (AFRING), with the focus placed on migratory species of waterbirds. To achieve this, the project aimed to kick-start waterbird ringing in Africa and through holding waterbird ringing training courses plans to build up local expertise to sustain waterbird ringing into the future. The course focused on East Africa, as the ringing scheme in the region is relatively well established providing a useful platform from which to launch waterbird ringing initiatives in Africa. An AFRING ringers network has been established to ensure constant communication between trainees and AFRING.

The Wakkerstroom Project

South Africa is running a wide range of national ringing courses and training, of which the wakkerstroom project is one of them. The Wakkerstroom is the site of the hugely successful guide-training program. This program aims to identify local residents in rural areas that show potential for bird guiding. In January 2005 a ringing training course was held in Wakkerstroom

at the BirdLife South Africa centre. There were 29 attendees (ringers and trainees), ringing over 2200 birds in one week. Previous national ringing training workshops and outings include Lamberts Bay, tern ringing, 15-23 Nov 2003 and D'Nyala ringing weekend, 9-13 July 2003.

The fisheries observer-training programme

The fisheries observer-training programme has been developed and implemented by Birdlife South Africa. The course aim at informing fisheries observers of seabird conservation issues; how and why mitigation measures work, as well as seabird identification. Development of training manual and video are underway and will be available in English, Afrikaans and Portuguese for distribution within South Africa, Namibia and Angola.

World Wetlands Day Celebration

World Wetlands Day has been celebrated every year since its inception, with visible increases in interest, profile and participation every year. The national event in 2003 was celebrated at Verloren Valei Nature Reserve, then the newest Ramsar site. The national event in 2004 was held in Ugie, Eastern Cape Province. Approximately 500 people attended from all levels of the surrounding rural communities, including local schools in the area.

1.2 Outline of planned actions for national implementation over the next three years

Implementation of the National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act. (Act No. 10 2004).

The Act provides for the consolidation of biodiversity legislation through establishing national norms and standards for the management of biodiversity across all sectors and by different management authorities. The provisions of the Act further seek to allow regulatory oversight at appropriate level whilst avoiding unnecessary duplication of functions. An important aspect of the biodiversity legislation is to facilitate both conservation and sustainable use of species through management interventions at species and ecosystems.

South African National Plan of Action for Reducing the incidental Catch of Seabirds in Longline Fisheries (NPOA-SEABIRDS) – See Appendix 1.1

The immediate aim of the NPOA-Seabirds is to reduce seabird mortality in all South African fisheries to an interim target level of less than 0.05 birds/thousand hooks.

A total of 19 species of seabirds has been recorded as being killed by longline fisheries within South Africa's territorial and EEZ waters around the sub-Antarctic Prince Edward Islands and the African Continent. Of these, nine are albatrosses (Diomedeidae) and seven are petrels (Procellaridae). Others species known to have been killed are the Macaroni Penguin-Spheniscidae (*Eudyptes chrysolophus)*, Cape Gannet-Sulidae (*Morus capensis)* and Subantarctic Skua-Stercoraridae (*Catharacta antarctica)*. Unlike in the northern hemisphere, no gulls (Laridae) have been reported killed on longlines in South African waters

1.3 Outline of priorities for international co-operation over the next three years

South Africa is participating in the development of the Maccoa Duck *Oxyura maccoa* Species Action Plan, which is an international activity funded by AEWA. The initial species action plan workshop held in Wakkerstroom, Mpumalanga, South Africa from 29 - 31 March 2005. Seven Coutries are participating in the development of this action plan. These include South Africa Botswana, Ethiopia, Namibia, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zimbabwe.

2. SPECIES CONSERVATION

Legal measures

2.1 Has a national policy/strategy or legislation to protect and conserve species covered by the Agreement (Table 1: column A; column B) and their supporting important areas been developed? If so:

a. What are the main features of the policy/legislation?

South Africa has a wide range of legislations that are being implemented at the national and provincial levels for the conservation of migratory waterbirds. Legislations listed below are the main ones that South Africa makes use of for the conservation of waterbirds listed in the Annex of the Agreement.

The Sea-Shore Act (Act No. 21 of 1935)
The Water Act (Act No. 54 of 1956)
The Territorial Waters Act (Act No. 87 of 1963)
The Forest Act (Act No. 72 of 1968)
The National Monuments Act (Act No. 28 of 1969)
The Mountain Catchments Areas Act (Act No. 63 of 1970)
The Sea Birds and Seals Protection Act (Act No. 46 of 1973)
The Lake Areas Development Act (Act No. 39 of 1975)
The Conservation of Agricultural Resources Act (Act No. 43 of 1983)
The Environment Conservation Act (Act No. 73 of 1989)
The Physical Planning Act (Act No. 125 of 1991)
Sea Shore Amended Act (Act No. 190 of 1993
Antarctic Treaties Act (Act No. 60 of 1996)
Marine Living Resources Act (Act No. 18 of 1998)
Maritimes Zones Act (Act No. 15, 1994)
National Water Act (Act No. 36 of 1998)
National Forest Act (Act No. 84 of 1998)
National Veld and Forest Act (Act No. 101 of 1998)
National Environmental Management Act (Act No. 107 of 1998)
World Heritage Convention Act (Act No. 49 of 1999)
National Environmental Management: Protected Areas Act (Act No. 57 of 2003)
National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act (Act No. 10 of 2004)

Sea Birds and Seals Protection Act (Act No. 46 of 1973):

Albatrosses and petrels (Diamedeidae and Procellariidae) occurring in South African territory and fishing Zone (equivalent to exclusive economic zone EEZ) waters are fully protected by the Sea Birds and Seals Protection Act (No. 46 of 1973). No commercial trade in or traditional use by indigenous people of albatrosses and petrels or their eggs (or any other products) are known to have occurred in South Africa. The Act is specifically extended to include the Prince Edward Islands and its territorial and EEZ waters, as defined by the Maritimes Zone Act of 1994.

The Act prohibits the killing, capture or willful disturbance of seabirds unless sanctioned in terms of a permit issued by the Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism. Thus in terms of this act killing seabirds during longline fishing is illegal within South African waters.

Marine Living Resources Act (Act No. 18 of 1998)

The Marine Living Resources Act, 1998 (Act No. 18 of 1998) provides for the conservation of the marine ecosystem and the long-term sustainable utilization of marine living resources, including the management of South African marine fisheries. In terms of this Act, the Minister of Environmental Affairs & Tourism may proclaim regulations pertaining to the management and control of fisheries (including conservation measures) and the establishment of measures for the protection of specified species. The Act, *inter alia*, also provides for matters such as determination of fishery catches, issuing of foreign and high-seas licenses, and the appointment of observers and fisheries control officers, the latter with powers of arrest.

The Marine Pollution (Control and Civil Liability) Act (Act No. 6 of 1981):

The Act prohibits the discharge of oil from ships, tankers and offshore installations, but provides exemptions in the case of, for example, the oil being released as a result of damage and steps being taken as soon as practicable to stop or reduce the escape of oil. The Act provides reporting procedures for discharges of any harmful substance.

The Act establishes the powers of the South African Maritime Safety Authority to take steps to prevent pollution of the sea where a harmful substance is being or is likely to be discharged. The Authority may, for example, require the master of a ship to unload a harmful substance from a ship or tanker, or to transfer the substance to another ship or tanker.

In terms of the Act, the owner of a ship, tanker or offshore installation is liable for any loss or damage caused by pollution resulting from the discharge of oil. The owner is also liable for the costs of any measures taken by the Authority to reduce damage resulting from such discharge. Tankers carrying more than 2 000 tons of oil is subject to compulsory insurance. The Authority may detain a ship if its owner fails to pay costs payable in terms of this Act.

The National Water Act (Act no 36 of 1998) (replaced Water Act 54 (1956)):

The purpose of the Act includes, *inter alia*, "protecting aquatic and associated ecosystems and their biological diversity", and "reducing and preventing pollution and degradation of water resources"

National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act (Act No. 10 of 2004).

A key provision in the Act allows for the listing of threatened and protected species and ecosystems. The provision gives the country a powerful mechanism to address biodiversity conservation effectively and efficiently. The Act also provides for the development of biodiversity management plans for threatened species and ecosystems.

Threatened and protected species in the Act

The Act makes provision for the listing of species that are threatened or in need of protection to ensure their survival in the wild, while regulating the activities, including trade, which may involve such listed species. Activities such as keeping, moving, having in possession, importing and exporting and selling listed species will be regulated by means of permits, i.e. the activities will be regulated rather than the species themselves. This means that when a person wants to sell a listed species a permit will be required. Carrying out any "restricted activity" with a listed threatened or protected species, whether nationally or internationally is equally regulated by means of a permit.

Grus carunculatus (Wattled Crane), *Anthropoides paradiseus (*Blue Crane), *Balearica regulorum* (Grey Crowned Crane), and *Ciconia nigra* (Black Stork) *Geronticus calvus* (Bald Ibis) are listed as threatened in terms of this NEM: Biodiversity Act. This means that a permit is required to carry out any restricted activity with that species or any part/derivative thereof.

Biodiversity Management Plans
The Act also allows for the development of biodiversity management plans (considered equivalent to species action or recovery plans) for any indigenous species and ecosystems, whether it has been proclaimed as threatened or protected or not.

Threatened and protected ecosystems in the Act

In addition to the listing of threatened and protected species and the provision for the development of biodiversity management plans, the Act also provides for the listing of ecosystems that are threatened or in need of protection to ensure the maintenance of ecological integrity.

National Environmental Management: Protected Area Act (Act No. 57 of 2003)

The Act establishes a streamlined set of categories for protected areas. A range of different protected area options is available, for both strict protection as well as more flexible biodiversity management. The Act provides for any lad, including private or communal land to be declared a formal protected area and allows for co-management of such a protected area by the landowner(s) or any suitable person or organization. This means that formal protected area status, with associated rates exclusion in terms of the Rates Act, is not limited to state-owned land, and the government agencies are not the only organizations that can manager protected areas.

b. Which organisations are responsible for implementation?

South African National Departments are responsible for the implementation of most of legislation responsible for the conservation of waterbirds listed in the Annex 2 of the Agreement, with Non–Governmental Organisations, listed below doing activities/research that help the conservation of AEWA in South Africa:

Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEAT)
Department of Water Affairs and Forestry

South African provincial departments:

- Gauteng Province: Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Environment
- Mpumalanga Province: Department of Economic Development and Planning
- Limpopo Province: Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism
- Free State Province: Department of Tourism, Environment and Economic Affairs
- Kwa-Zulu Natal Province: Department of Agriculture and Environ Affairs
- Northern Cape Province: Department of Economic Affairs and Tourism
- Western Cape Province: Department of Environmental and Development Planning
- Eastern Cape Province: Department of Economic Affairs, Environment and Tourism
- North-West Province: Department of Agriculture, Conservation, Environment and Tourism

The following organizations are doing work that helps in the conservation of waterbirds in South Africa:

- Avian Demography Unit (ADU) of the University of Cape town;
- Birdlife South Africa (BLSA)
- Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT)
- The African Gamebird Research and Education Trust (AGRED)
- Percy FitzPatrick Institute of African Ornithology

***c**. How does it relate to other national initiatives (e.g. national Biodiversity Action Plans)?*

2.2 What legal measures or practices has your country developed to prohibit or regulate for the following (refer also to section 4 on hunting):

a. Taking of, and trade in birds listed in Column A and B of Table 1 (where utilization or trade contravenes the provisions set out in paragraphs 2.1.1 (a) and 2.1.2 of the Action Plan)?

Regulations developed in terms of the National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act (Act No. 10 of 2004)

South Africa is currently developing regulation in terms of the NEM: Biodiversity Act in relation to listed threatened and protected species. The Act offers a variety of protection measures for some species that are listed in the Annex of the Agreement. The permit may regulate the taking of and trade in of these species. A risk assessment framework has been developed for threatened and protected species in terms of the Act. Regarding species that are listed in the Act, see above.

Seabird mortality mitigation regulations developed in terms of Marine Living Resources Act (Act No. 18 of 1998)

The conservation status of seabirds including albatrosses and petrels in South Africa is affected by the " …use and abandonment of non-selective fishing gear, and specifically by incidental mortality as a result of commercial fishing activities". These led to the development and implementation of measures to reduce or eliminate the mortality of albatrosses and petrels resulting incidentally from fishing activities. Also the seabird by-catch developed under seabird

mitigation regulations and practices was initiated in South African waters (Appendix 1.1). Outlines below are the mitigation regulations to reduce seabird mortality.

Mitigation measures for the hake longline fishery were gazetted on 2 September 1998 in terms of the Marine Living Resources Act, 1998 (No. 18 of 1998), and an observer scheme was initiated in 2000 (although no observers were deployed in the first half of 2001). During 2002 and 2003 it is intended that between 15 and 20% of voyages will be have scientific observers aboard.

Mitigation regulations to reduce seabird mortality as gazetted consist of:

- All birds caught while fishing by means of a longline shall be released if alive, or if dead be handed over to a fisheries control officer at the end of a voyage.
- Longlines may only be shot during the hours of darkness and gear deployment shall cease at least one hour before nautical dawn.
- Both the main line and the branch lines (snood) must be properly weighted and setting speed must be such that sinking rates are maximized.
- Offal dumping or discharging must be minimized; shall take place on the opposite side of the vessel from that on which lines are hauled; and may not take place during setting of the lines.
- Fishing hooks, fishing line or plastic may not be discarded, except where the removal of the hooks from live discards (e.g. sharks) may endanger the safety of the crew or be detrimental to the survival of the animal.
- Deck lighting shall be kept to a minimum without compromising safety and must be shaded in such a way that the beam is directed towards the deck.
- An approved streamer line (tori line) must be flown during setting of each longline and the said streamer must be deployed directly above the main line, unless two streamers are used, in which case they must be deployed on either side of the main line.
- No person shall discard or abandon any longlining gear at sea.

In 2000 bird-scaring lines were deployed on only 13% of 537 sets monitored by observers, who reported that the seabird mortality mitigation measures were largely disregarded. Observer reports revealed that many fishers remained unconvinced of the necessity for and practicality of bird mitigation measures, as well being concerned with the costs involved. The permit conditions make no attempt to quantify “proper” line weighting or setting speeds.

b. Methods of taking?

Methods of taking include:

In relations to waterbird species listed in the Biodiversity Act, “hunting, catching, capturing, or killing any living specimen of a listed threatened or protected species by any means, method device whatsoever, including searching, purchasing, driving, lying in wait, luring, alluring, discarding a missile or injuring with intent to hunt, catch, capturing or kill any such specimen” is regulated by means of a permit system in South Africa.

c. Setting of taking limits and monitoring these limits?
d. Sustainable hunting of species listed in Categories 2 and 3 (and marked by an asterisk) in

Column A only?
e. Exemptions to the provisions set out in paragraphs 2.1.1, 2.1.2 and 2.1.3?

Single Species Action Plans

2.3 Of the species covered by the Agreement (species listed in Table 1: column A), which spend part or all of their life history in your country, which have formal international (Category 1, species marked with an asterisk) or national (column A) Single Species Action Plans:

CONSERVATION ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR SOUTHERN AFRICA COASTAL SEABIRDS (PUBLISHED IN 2003).

Currently, conservation management of southern African coastal seabirds is the responsibility of a number of government agencies at both central and provincial levels in three countries. Research and monitoring is conducted by these agencies and by universities (notably the University of Cape Town) and museums. Active seabird conservation efforts are funded and undertaken by several environmental NGOs, especially SANCCOB. Collaboration among these bodies within South Africa, and between South Africa and Namibia, has occurred for many years, but has been largely undertaken on an *ad hoc* basis. Very little communication has yet taken place with Angola, where four southern African coastal seabirds have recently been proven to breed. Conservation research and monitoring efforts need to be standardized across countries, and collaboration improved.

All South African coastal seabirds are currently protected under the Seabirds and Seals Protection Act of 1973; in Namibia the Namibian Marine Resources Act of 2000 protects coastal seabirds to some extent. Most South Africa (but none of the Namibian) islands are legally protected as nature reserves or national parks. The conservation status of the single known Angolan seabird breeding site at Ilha dos Tigres is uncertain but it seems to lie outside the Iona National Park boundary. Only one breeding site, Dassen Island in South Africa has a formally adopted and publicly available management plan. Most mainland breeding sites are not formally protected. Currently, however, action or recovery plans do not yet exist for any of the 17 species of southern African breeding coastal seabirds in any of the three breeding range states**.**

SOUTH AFRICAN NATIONAL PLAN OF ACTION FOR REDUCING THE INCIDENTAL CATCH OF SEABIRDS IN LONGLINE FISHERIES

A draft national plan was developed in 2002 for stakeholder consultation and is to be submitted to South Africa's Cabinet and Environmental Portfolio Committee for approval and adoption. The immediate aim of the NPOA-Seabirds is to reduce seabird mortality in all South African fisheries to an interim target level of less than 0.05 birds/thousand hooks. It was desired that all fisheries attain the target by the process of every individual longline vessel on each of its fishing trips adopting such mitigation methods as would result in a mortality of less than 0.05 birds/thousand hooks set. See Appendix 1.1 for the full action plan report.

Seabirds at risk from longlining in South African Waters

A total of 19 species of seabirds has been recorded as being killed by longline fisheries within South Africa's territorial and EEZ waters around the sub-Antarctic Prince Edward Islands and the African Continent. Of these, nine are albatrosses (Family Diomedeidae) and seven are petrels (Procellaridae). Others species known to have been killed are the Macaroni Penguin *Eudyptes chrysolophus* (Spheniscidae), Cape Gannet *Morus capensis* (Sulidae) and Subantarctic Skua *Catharacta antarctica* (Stercoraridae). Unlike in the northern hemisphere, no gulls (Laridae) have been reported killed on longlines in South African waters.

PENGUIN CONSERVATION ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT PLAN (PENGUIN CAMP)

In South Africa, African Penguin *Spheniscus demersus* endangered in terms of the Nature and Environmental Conservation Ordinance, No. 19 of 1974 of the Province of the Cape of Good Hope. This now applies to the Northern Cape, Western Cape and Eastern Cape Provinces. In Namibia, there is no official legal status. Listed as Near Threatened in Birds to Watch. Listed as Vulnerable in the *Red Data Book for South Africa, Lesotho and Swaziland*. Listed in Appendix II of the Convention for the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (Bonn Convention). See Appendix 1.2 for full report. See Appendix 1.2.

SOUTH AFRICAN WHITE-WINGED FLUFFTAIL *(SAROTHRURA AYRESI)* ACTION PLAN

An Action Plan to conserve the White-winged Flufftail is a flexible working strategy that identifies and prioritises the problems, and proposes practical solutions and specifies certain actions and responsibilities within agreed timeframes, based on specific objectives, which are regularly monitored and revised.

The White-winged Flufftail *Sarothrura ayresi* is considered globally Endangered with fewer than 700 individuals remaining in suitable wetland habitats in South Africa and Ethiopia. The South African White-winged Flufftail population is considered to be Critically Endangered as it has a very small population and is only known from 10 wetland sites in the Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and Mpumalanga. A conservation plan compiled by all relevant stakeholders outlining the priority actions needed to conserve this species was therefore urgently needed. For more Information see appendix 1.3.

OYSTERCATCHER CONSERVATION PROGRAMME (OCP) COORDINATED BY PERCY FITZPATRICK INSTITUTE OF AFRICAN ORNITHOLOGY

The African Black Oystercatcher *Haematopus moquini,* which is listed in table 1B Column Ac of the AEWA species action plan breeds only on the coasts of South Africa and Namibia. The species is globally rare, with a world population of approximately 5000, of which 75% are in South Africa. It breeds on the open coast during the height of the summer holiday season and, as a result, incurs substantial losses of eggs and young. The OCP is a national programme, involving researchers, conservation organisations and the general public. Its aims are to produce a population dynamics model for the species (we have nearly 20 years of reproduction data), integrate this with observed population changes and produce a scientifically defensible strategy for the species' future conservation

a. Proposed?

b. In preparation?

South Africa is participating in the development of the Maccoa Duck *Oxyura maccoa* Species Action Plan, which is an international activity funded by AEWA. The initial species action plan workshop held in Wakkerstroom, Mpumalanga, South Africa from 29 - 31 March 2005. Seven Coutries are participating in the development of this action plan. These include South Africa Botswana, Ethiopia, Namibia, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zimbabwe. The Species Action Plan is in its fourth draft and will be submitted to the Technical Committee of AEWA for comment before being submitted for approval

c. Being implemented?

- African Penguin – Population & Habitat Viability Assessment published in 1999 (Penguin Conservation Assessment And Management Plan (Penguin Camp).
- South African National Plan of Action for Reducing the Incidental Catch of Seabirds in Longline Fisheries publised in 2002.
- Conservation Assessment and Management Plan for Southern Africa Coastal Seabirds published 2003.
- Oystercatcher Conservation Programme (OCP) coordinated by Percy Fitzpatrick Institute of African Ornithology.
- South African White-winged Flufftail *(Sarothrura ayresi)* Action Plan.

Please append a list of species and their action plan status. (For international plans indicate which other countries are involved in plan development/implementation.)

2.4 Describe any bilateral or multilateral co-operative action that your country has undertaken to develop and implement emergency measures to conserve species in response to unfavourable or endangering conditions occurring in the Agreement area

Emergency measures

Oil spill contingency plans developed

Oil spills have major impact on African Penguins, especially when the oil washes ashore at breeding localities. Oil kills penguins by impairing the insulative capacity of their feathers, so that they die of hypothermia in water or of starvation on land because hypothermia makes it impossible for them to feed at sea. Ingested oil may produce a range of physiological abnormalities and is associated with a greater diversity of potentially pathogenic bacteria.

Standard practice during oil spills is to catch and treat oiled birds as soon as possible. In the *Treasure* spill, this ideal was tempered by the realisation that, if measures were not taken to prevent uncontaminated penguins from becoming oiled, the quantity of oiled birds might rapidly increase to an unmanageable number. Accordingly, for penguins, strategies were adopted that aimed to attain the twin objectives of minimizing the numbers of birds becoming oiled and providing those that became oiled with rapid care.

A total of about 19000 oiled African Penguins was collected, of which 14825 were caught at Robben Island, 3516 at Dassen Island and about 500 at other localities, including Vondeling Island (23) and West Coast National Park (194 - Jutten Island 65, Malgas Island 49, Marcus Island 4, 16-mile Beach 76). Oiled birds were caught as far north as St Helena Bay. Most of the oiled penguins were in adult plumage although some immature birds were also affected. At Dassen Island, 2744 of those oiled were adults and 772 were immature birds. dditionally, 7161 unoiled birds were removed from Robben Island and 12345 from Dassen Island. Therefore, excluding chicks, 21986 birds were taken from Robben Island and 15861 from Dassen Island. By 18 August 2000, about 1900 penguins (other than chicks) had died after being caught.

Other oiled birds caught included 22 Cape Cormorants, of which 16 died in captivity; five Crowned Cormorants, all of which died; two Great Cormorants, both of which were released; 30 Cape Gannets from West Coast National Park; and one Hartlaub's Gull that died. Additionally, two Cape Cormorants and one Crowned Cormorant died after capture at Dassen Island. For both Hartlaub's and Kelp Gulls, small numbers were observed to be lightly oiled on Dassen and Robben islands, in Cape Town Harbour and at several places along the shoreline of the Cape Peninsula. Hartlaub's Gulls with oil on their plumage were also observed at an inland gathering area on the Liesbeek River in Observatory.

In spite of oiling of the intertidal feeding areas of African Black Oystercatchers, only one dead oystercatcher was found at Dassen Island and none at Robben Island. The single mortality observed was probably as a result of ingesting oil. The absorbent peat used to clean oil off the shores was non-toxic to intertidal invertebrates, and probably did little additional damage to potential food for oystercatchers. The impact of the spill on African Black Oystercatchers was probably minimal. No other species that feed in the intertidal zone were recorded to be harmed by the spill.

Other Chemicals

Residues of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) and the organochlorine pesticides DDE and Dieldrin have been found in penguin eggs. In all cases the residue levels were low and unlikely to cause reproductive impairment.

Fire management plans developed for some sites

At Robben Island and Boulders, the two new colonies where African Penguins breed under wooded vegetation, fire could cause extensive loss of breeding habitat and mortality of birds, eggs and chicks. Clearing old wood should minimize the risk of fire.

Re-establishments

2.5 Has a policy on species re-establishments been developed in your country? If yes, please outline the main features of the policy and give details of any re-establishment programmes for species covered by the Agreement.

Introductions

2.6 Has your country developed and implemented legal measures to prohibit the

introduction of nonnative species? Please provide details, particularly describing measures to control the release or introduction of non-native species (please indicate which species and their status).

The Biodiversity Act (Act 10 of 2004) provides for the management of alien and invasive species through the control of their introduction and spread, as well as the control or eradication of those already established. The Act also provide for a compulsory risk assessment for import of alien and invasive species. Alien species can have exempted list, no permit is required and prohibited lists which are species not allowed to be imported, translocated or any other restricted activity relating to alien and invasive species mentioned in the act. Duty of care on persons who carry out restricted activities with alien and listed invasive species, or who own land on which listed invasive species occur has been established. Restricted activities involving alien species or listed invasive species are regulated by means of a permitting system. Before a person can carry out a restricted activity with an alien species or a listed invasive species, that person will have to apply for the necessary permits. The Act further establishes obligations for the control and eradication of invasive species and provides for invasive species control plans and regular reporting on invasive species status and efficacy of control measures.

3. HABITAT CONSERVATION

Habitat inventories

3.1 Has your country developed and published inventories of important habitats for species covered by the Agreement? If yes, please provide details, including any provisions to maintain or update these inventories.

South Africa Wetland of International Importance

South Africa has designated 17 wetlands to the Ramsar List (see appendix 8 for the list of Ramsar Sites in South Africa with a brief description) Of these 17 wetlands, two are protected within National Parks, 12 are within proclaimed Provincial Nature Reserves or State Forests and two are on state land under the jurisdiction of a provincial nature conservation agency. The remaining wetland is partially in a proclaimed Provincial Nature Reserve and partially on privately owned land.

Marine Protected Areas (MPAs)

Several Marine Protected Areas are located along South Africa's extensive coastline, representing most marine bio-geographic regions, and including two of the largest "no-take" reserves in the world. However, as is the case for terrestrial protected areas, there has been no overall planned development of marine reserves, a large number being either poorly positioned or inadequately policed. Furthermore, existing marine protected areas do not protect the full range of coastal and marine habitats, such as sandy beaches, estuaries, dunes, and different types of rocky shore.

The government has proclaimed four new Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) in terms of the protected Area Act (Ac no. 57 of 2003) bringing the total to 23 MPAs and offering enhanced protection to 18% of the total coastline, but these does not extend far enough out to sea to have any significant effect on the conservation of albatrosses and petrels. Robben and Dassen islands have a map available depicting habitat types none for other islands.

List of Marine Protected Areas

There are several types of areas in the marine and coastal environment where special regulations apply for conservation, fishery management and the promotion of tourism. These include:

Marine Protected Areas, which are declared under Section 43 of the Marine Living Resources Act. In general no fishing, construction work, pollution, or any form of disturbance is allowed here unless written permission has been granted by the Minister.

Closed Areas, which are declared under Section 77 of the Marine Living Resources Act. Fishing is restricted or prohibited entirely in these areas as indicated below.

National Parks, which are declared under the National Parks Act. Regulations that apply in these areas are not listed here, except in those cases where the National Park has also been declared as a Marine Protected Area.

Greater St. Lucia Wetland Park, which is declared under the World Heritage Convention Act and is managed by the Greater St. Lucia Wetland Park Authority. Fishing in this area is subject to the provisions described here for the St. Lucia and Maputaland Marine Protected Areas.

MARINE PROTECTED AREAS

Langebaan Lagoon Marine Protected Area

Langebaan Lagoon is divided into three zones. Recreational fishing is allowed in the northern-most zone (Zone A), north of a line joining Beacons LB4, in Kraal Bay, and LB3, at Oesterwal.

Sixteen Mile Beach Marine Protected Area

No fishing from the shore is allowed in the area between Plankies and Rooipan se Klippe (near Yzerfontein).

Malgas Island, Jutten Island and Marcus Island Marine Protected Areas

No fishing is allowed along the shores of these islands.

Table Mountain National Park Marine Protected Area

No fishing is allowed in this area.

St James Restricted Zone: between the tidal pool at St James and the tidal pool at Kalk Bay.

Boulders Restricted Zone: in the area between the eastern end of Simonstown harbour and Oatlands.

Castle Rock Restricted Zone: between the beacon VB1 at Millers Point and VB2 at Partridge Point, extending approximately one nautical mile seawards. **Paulsberg Restricted Zone**: between Smitswinkel Point and Venus Pool, and extending approximately one nautical mile seawards.**Cape of Good Hope Restricted Zone**: between Hoek van die Bobbejaan and the fence at Scarborough, and extending approximately one nautical mile seawards.**Karbonkelberg Restricted Zone**: between the Sentinal and Hout Bay and Oudekraal, and extending 3.3 nautical miles offshore at the widest point.

Helderberg Marine Protected Area

No fishing is allowed between the mouth of the Eerste River and the mouth of the Lourens River in False Bay, extending 500m seawards from the high-water mark.

Betty's Bay Marine Protected Area

Only shore angling is allowed between beacon B1 at Stoney Point and beacon B4, to the east of Jock-se-baai, extending two nautical miles seawards from the high-water mark.

De Hoop Marine Protected Area

No fishing is allowed between beacon DH1 at Still Bay Point and beacon DH2 between Rys Point and Skipskop, extending three nautical miles seawards from the high-water mark.

Goukamma Marine Protected Area

Only shore angling is allowed between Portion 1 of the farm Walker's Point at Buffels Bay and the western boundary of the Goukamma Nature Reserve, extending two nautical miles seawards from the high-water mark.

Robberg Marine Protected Area

No fishing is allowed in a rectangular area surrounding the Robberg Peninsula between the latitudes 34°04'.916S and 34°07'.633S and the longitudes 023°22'.300E and 023°25'.967E, although shore angling is allowed.

Tsitsikamma National Park (includes the Tsitsikamma Marine Protected Area)

No fishing is allowed between Groot River at Oubos to Groot River at Nature's Valley, extending three nautical miles sea-wards from the high-water mark.

Sardinia Bay Marine Protected Area

No fishing is allowed between beacon PECR1 near Schoenmakerskop and beacon PECR2 near Bushy Park, extending one nautical mile seawards from the high-water mark.

Bird Island MPA

No fishing is allowed around Bird island in Algoa Bay within a rectangle.

Dwesa-Cwebe Marine Protected Area

No fishing is allowed between the western bank of the mouth of the Suku River (in the District of Elliotdale) and Human's Rock (in the district of Willowvale), including the tidal portion of the Mbashe River, extending six nautical miles seawards of the high-water mark.

Hluleka Marine Protected Area

No fishing is allowed adjacent to the Hluleka Nature Reserve (in the Ngqeleni District), extending six nautical miles seawards from the high-water mark.

Pondoland MPA

No offshore fishing is allowed in the area bounded by a line running 128° from the southern head of the Sikombe River, a line running 128° from the northern head of the Mboyti River and the 1000-m isobath. No shore-based fishing is allowed along the following four sections of coast:

No fishing is allowed in the Mtentu and Sikaba estuaries.

Trafalgar Marine Protected Area

Only shore angling and fishing for certain pelagic fish is allowed between beacon N1 south of Centre Rocks and beacon N2 opposite the southern boundary of the Mpenjati Resort, extending 500 m seawards from the high-water mark.

Aliwal Shoal MPA

No fishing is allowed on Aliwal Shoal, near Umkomaas, nor around the wreck of the Produce.

The Greater St Lucia Wetland Park (includes St Lucia and Maputaland Marine Protected Areas)

St Lucia Marine Protected Area extends from beacon N3 north of Ngoboseleni Stream to beacon N4 south of Cap Vidal, and extends three nautical miles seawards from the high-water mark. No fishing is allowed in the **Sanctuary Zone** between beacon N5 at Red Cliffs and beacon N6 at Leven Point, extending three nautical miles due east from the high-water mark. In the **Restricted Zones** which lie to the north of beacon N5 at Red Cliffs and to the south of beacon N6 at Leven Point, respectively, shore anglers may catch fish, and skiboat anglers and spearfishers may catch certain species of pelagic fish.

Maputaland Marine Protected Area extends from beacon N7 at the Moçambique border to beacon N3 north of Ngoboseleni Stream, extending three nautical miles seawards from the high-water mark.

3.2 Has your country undertaken a strategic review of sites to develop a national network of important sites or areas for species covered by the Agreement? Please append a list of identified sites of international importance.

Conservation of areas

3.3 Describe the legal frameworks and other measures through which sites (including transfrontier sites) including of international importance gain practical protection. (Please append a list of internationally important protected sites.)

Protected areas Categories are assigned in accordance with the 1994 IUCN Protected Area Management Categories. These sites are proclaimed in the Government Gazette as protected areas in terms of the Protected Areas Act No. 57 of 2003.

The Management of Protected Areas in South Africa

TYPE OF PROTECTED AREA	LEGISLATION	ADMINISTRATION
National Park	National Parks Act 57 of 1976	National Parks Board
Lake Area	Lake Areas Development Act 139 of 1975	National Parks Board
Mountain Catchment Area	Mountain Catchment Areas Act 63 of 1970	DWAF: delegated to provinces
Protected Natural Environment	Environment Conservation Act 73 of 1989	DEAT: delegated to provinces
Limited Development Area	Environment Conservation Act 73 of 1989	DEAT: delegated to local authority / government institution
National Botanical Garden	Forest Act 122 of 1984	DEAT: National Botanical Institute
State Forest	Forest Act 122 of 1984	DWAF: assigned to provinces

Forest Nature Reserve and Wilderness Area	Forest Act 122 of 1984	DWAF assigned to provinces
Ramsar Site	Ramsar Convention	DEAT
National Monument	National Monuments Act 28 of 1969	National Monuments Council and provinces
Conservation Area	National Monuments Act 28 of 1969	National Monuments Council and provinces
Defence Area	Defence Act 44 of 1957	South African Defence Force
Marine Reserve	Sea Fishery Act 12 of 1988	DEAT : Directorate of Sea Fisheries, and provinces in respect of coastal zone and specified resources
Sea-Shore	Sea-Shore Act 21 of 1935	DEAT: assigned to provinces
Most South African islands	Sea Birds and Seals Protection Act 46 of 1973	DEAT: assigned to provinces in respect of sea birds
Provincial, Local and Private Nature Reserves	Various provincial ordinances	9 provincial administrations, numerous local authorities, private landowners
Private Conservancies	No legal status	Farmers
Biosphere Reserves	No legal status	Conservation authority / neighbours
Natural Heritage Sites	Not legally enforceable	Private landowners

3.4 Has your country developed a management planning process for protected sites? If yes, please outline the types of management plans and organisations responsible for development and implementation.

3.5 How many protected sites have formal management plans (please append a list of sites and their management planning status):
a. Proposed?
b. In preparation?

c. Being implemented?

IMPORTANT BIRD AREAS CONSERVATION PROGRAMME IN SOUTH AFRICA

The Important Bird Areas (IBA) project is an important project that has identified and aims to protect a number of sites in South Africa that are important to globally threatened species, range restricted species, biome restricted species or which regularly hold massive concentrations of specific birds. The concept is part of the broader Birdlife International Global IBA Conservation Program and has revolutionised the focus for conserving areas important to bird (and other organism) conservation. BLSA and Birdlife International have published guides

to IBAs in South Africa and Africa respectively. The Global Seabird Project is another Birdlife International Initiative that has been implemented in South Africa by BLSA and aims to reduce, through public and corporate awareness, the plight of the more than 300 000 albatrosses that drown as a result of long-line fishing every year.

Selection of the important bird areas

This work has already been completed. The IBA selection process began in 1996 with surveys and the compilation of information using bird species to identify the IBAs of international importance for biodiversity conservation. The Avian Demography Unit based at the University of Cape Town undertook this process. One hundred and twenty two internationally important sites have been identified: 30 are unprotected, 36 are partially protected and 56 are protected (Provincial Nature Reserve or National Park). An IBA directory was published in December 1998.

Protection of the important bird areas

The unprotected and partially protected IBAs indicate where the gaps are in the current protected areas network in South Africa. These IBAs therefore represent the priority areas in which to initiate conservation. The vast majority of these areas are privately owned and located within the agricultural areas of South Africa. In order to work towards integrating agricultural development of the land and conservation aims, the involvement and participation of the private land-owners is essential. BirdLife South Africa (BLSA), in conjunction with its members, Branch and Affiliate Clubs, is in the process of initiating conservation action, advocacy (support) and monitoring within each of the 122 IBAs. Informing the private landowners within the IBAs of the international importance of their land and obtaining their support is vital to the conservation of the IBAs. One measurable outcome of this is private landowners registering their farms or a portion of their farms as a Natural Heritage Site. The private land-owner gains the satisfaction of voluntary participation in a national and international conservation programme. A further gain is the strengthening in the partnership between BLSA, a non-governmental, membership based conservation organisation, and government (National Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, other national and provincial government departments and the Provincial Conservation Authorities

Important Bird Areas include Grassland Biosphere Reserve (SA020), Blue Swallow Natural Heritage Site – SA014, Soutpansberg – SA003 and Steenkamsberg – SA016. Grassland Biosphere and Steenkamsberg are the ones discussed in the report as they give high level of protection to a large number of migratory waterbirds.

Grassland Biosphere Reserve - SA020

Grassland Biosphere Reserve covers Mpumalanga, Free State and KwaZulu-Natal and is partially protected. The area is centered on the towns of Volksrust and Wakkerstroom. The proposed Biosphere Reserve comprises some 800 private farms, several municipalities and conservancies and a considerable amount of State-owned land. The area covers several catchments and holds many perennial rivers and wetlands. The following wetlands are of international importance and deserve the highest possible conservation attention:

1. Wakkerstroom Vlei

2. Seekoeivlei
3. Heyshope Dam
4. Vanger Natural Heritage Site
5. Blood River Vlei

Birds conservation in the Grassland Biosphere Reserve

The grassland biosphere reserve holds a significant proportion of South Africa's small known population of the globally endangered White-winged Flufftail (*Sarothrura ayresi)*. Corncrake (*Crex crex)* is also regular at some of the reserve's wetlands. The various wetland systems also hold large numbers of Baillon's Crake (*Porzana pusilla)* and several breeding populations of Crowned Crane (*Balearica regulorum).*

The largest Bald Ibis (*Geronticus calvus)* breeding colonies in the world occur within the proposed Biosphere Reserve. Large numbers also forage and roost throughout the area. Blue Crane (*Anthropoides paradiseus)*, Stanley's Bustard (*Neotis denhami)*, Whitebellied Korhaan (*Eupodotis cafra)*, Shorttailed Pipit (*Anthus brachyurus)* and Blackwinged Plover (*Vanellus melanopterus)* are widespread at low densities. Blackwinged Pratincole (*Glareola nordmanni)* and White Stork (*Ciconia ciconia)* occasionally occur in very large numbers during the austral summer.

- **Seekoeivlei**

Seekoeivlei supports large numbers of a rich diversity of resident and migratory waterbirds. The site also holds all three of South Africa's crane species, including important numbers of Wattled Crane (*Bugeranus carunculatus)*. Globally significant numbers of Yellow billed Duck (*Anas undulata)* and Spurwinged Goose (*Plectropterus gambensis)* also occur at Seekoeivlei. The area also holds several active heronries holding breeding egrets, Spoonbill (*Platalea alba)* and Blackcrowned Night Heron (*Nycticorax nycticorax)*. Glossy Ibis (*Plegadis falcinellus)*, Little Egret (*Egretta garzetta)*, Yellowbilled Egret (*E. intermedia)*, Squacco Heron (*Ardeola ralloides)*, Redbilled Teal (*Anas erythrorhyncha)* and Hottentot Teal (*A. hottentota)* are also usually present in good numbers.

- **Heyshope Dam**

Heyshope Dam is known to hold extremely large numbers of at least 52 species of resident, migratory and nomadic waterbirds. Small portions of the dam, which are regularly counted, hold up to 45 000 waterbirds, suggesting that the entire system may hold an extrapolated total of some 100 000 individuals. The waterbirds tend to concentrate at the 17 bays where rivers enter the Dam.

Steenkampsberg SA016

Steenkampsberg is situated in Mpumalanga and is partially protected. The area lies on the central South African plateau, and it consists primarily of rolling high-altitude (1 700-2 100 m a.s.l.) grassland interspersed with rocky outcrops. The Steenkampsberg area consist two wetland systems are particularly important:

1. Lakensvleispruit
2. Verloren Valei

Birds conservation in Steenkampsberg SA016

Lakensvleispruit is a very important wetland, and the northern portion, known as Middelpunt Vlei, is one of the few sites in the world where the threatened and highly specialised White-winged Flufftail (*Sarothrura ayresi)* is regularly recorded. The Corncrake (*Crex crex)* has been recorded in this site occasionally. Redchested Flufftail (*Sarothrura rufa)* are numerous in the sedgebeds. African Rail (*Rallus caerulescens)* occur alongside the flufftails in the fringing vegetation. Several pairs of Wattled Crane (*Bugeranus carunculatus)* frequent the Steenkampsberg area, especially the wetland patches at Verloren Valei. Blue Crane (*Anthropoides paradiseus)* and Crowned Crane (*Balearica regulorum)* are widespread at low densities, although populations are greatly reduced compared to the mid-1980s. The grassland in the surrounding area, especially at Verloren Valei Nature Reserve, Bald Ibis (*Geronticus calvus)* breed at two colonies within the IBA, and they roost and forage throughout the area.

3.6 What measures does your country have in place to ensure the wise use of wetland habitats and to prevent habitat degradation e.g. pollution control and managing water resources? Please provide examples of best practice initiatives particularly involving cross-sectoral co-operation or public participation

South Africa does not have a stand-alone wetland policy, but wetland issues are explicitly addressed in a range of water, biodiversity and environment policy instruments. Wetlands management is a shared responsibility between DEAT, Department of Water Affairs and Forestry and National Department of Agriculture. Since Ramsar COP8 wetlands have been further entrenched in policy through the enactment of the National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act (2004), National Environmental Management: Protected Areas Act (2003) and the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, which is nearing completion and which will be given legal recognition through the Biodiversity Act. The National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan will have clear targets, timeframes and role players with regard to biodiversity.

A White Paper on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of South Africa's Biological Diversity has been in place since 1997. It addresses wetlands specifically, with 11 policy and strategy measures in place to protect wetlands.

The wetland conservation policy for South Africa complements and strengthens a number of other national policies and draft policies or White Papers, including the following:

- The national policy on the conservation and sustainable use of South Africa's biological diversity;
- Environmental management policy for South Africa;
- National water policy;
- Integrated pollution and waste management policy;
- Coastal zone management policy;
- Marine fisheries policy for South Africa**.**

o **Environment Conservation Act (Act No. 73 of 1989)**

The primary purpose of this Act is to provide for the protection of the environment against disturbance, deterioration, defacement, poisoning, pollution, or destruction as a result of man-made structures, installations, processes or products of human activities. The act calls for the

Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism to identify activities that in his pinion may have detrimental effect on the environment, whether in general or in respect of certain areas, and to make regulations with regard to these activities. Activities identified, that will have detrimental effect on wetlands, include the construction or upgrading of:

- transportation routes and structure, and manufacturing, storage, handling or processing facilities for any substance which is dangerous or hazardous and is controlled by national legislation;
- canals and channels, including diversions of normal flow of water in a riverbed and water transfer schemes between water catchments and impoundments;
- dams, levees or weirs affecting the flow of a river
- schemes for the abstraction utilisation of ground or surface water for bulk supply purposes
- sewage treatment plants and associated infrastructure
- reclamation of land below the high-water mark of the sea and in inland water including wetlands

Notice must also be given in terms of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) regulations in accordance with Environment Conservation Act (Act No. 73 of 1989). The regulations are being emended.
EIA regulations regulates activities such as:

- canals and channels, including diversions of the normal flow of water in a river bed and water transfer schemes between water catchments and impoundments;
- dams, levees or weirs affecting the flow of a river;
- schemes for the abstraction or utilisation of ground or surface water for bulk supply purposes;
- sewage treatment plants and associated infrastructure; and
- reclamation of land below the high-water mark of the sea and in inland water including wetlands

o **National Environmental Management Act (Act No. 107 of 1998)**

The act provides for co-operative environmental governance by establishing principles for decision-making on matters affecting the environment, institutions that will promote co-operative governance and procedures for co-ordinating environmental functions exercised by organs of state. Principles relevant to wetlands conservation include that:

- Sustainable development requires the consideration of all relevant factors including the following:
  (iii) that the disturbance of ecosystems and loss of biodiversity are avoided, or, where they cannot be altogether avoided, are minimised and remedied;
  (iv) that the development, use and exploitation of renewable resource and the ecosystems of which they are part do not exceed the level beyond which their integrity if jeopardised
- The costs of remedying pollution, environmental degradation and consequent adverse health effects and of preventing, controlling or minimising further pollution, environmental damage or adverse health effects must be paid for by those responsible for harming the environment
- Sensitive, vulnerable, highly dynamic or stressed ecosystems, such as coastal shores, estuaries, wetlands, and similar systems require specific attention in management and planning procedures, specifically where they are subject to significant human resource usage and development pressure

- **National Water Act (Act No. 36 of 1998)**

The purpose of this Act is to ensure that the nation's water resources are protected, used, developed, conserved, managed and controlled in ways that take into account amongst other factors -

(a) meeting the basic human needs of present and future generations;
(b) promoting equitable access to water;
(c) redressing the results of past racial and gender discrimination;
(d) promoting the efficient, sustainable and beneficial use of water in the public interest;
(e) facilitating social and economic development;
(f) providing for growing demand for water use;
(g) protecting aquatic and associated ecosystems and their biological diversity;
(h) reducing and preventing pollution and degradation of water resources;
(i) meeting international obligations;
(j) promoting dam safety;
(k) managing floods and droughts,

and for achieving this purpose, to establish suitable institutions and to ensure that they have appropriate community, racial and gender representation. Furthermore, for the purpose of the act, a wetland is defined as land which is transitional between terrestrial and aquatic systems where the water table is usually at or near the surface, or the land is periodically covered with shallow water, and which land in normal circumstances supports or would support vegetation typically adapted to life in saturated soils. A licence is required where the water flow in a watercourse is diverted or impeded, or where the bed, banks, course or characteristic of a watercourse are altered (in terms of the National Water Act, 36 of 1998).

- **National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act (Act No. 10 of 2004)**

The objectives of the Act are:
(i) within the framework of the National Environmental Management Act, to provide for the:

- management and conservation of biological diversity and its components in South Africa
- use of indigenous biological resources in a sustainable manner; and
- fair and equitable sharing among stakeholders of benefits arising from bioprospecting involving indigenous biological resources

(ii) to give effect to ratified international agreements relating to biodiversity which are binding to South Africa
(iii) to provide for co-operative governance in biodiversity management and conservation in South Africa

Rehabilitation and restoration

3.7 Does your country have a policy for the identification, rehabilitation and restoration of wetlands important for species covered by the Agreement? Please provide examples of rehabilitation and restoration projects and initiatives undertaken.

The theme of restoration runs strongly through existing policy instruments in the environment, biodiversity, water and agriculture sectors. The content of Resolution VIII.16 is being used in the implementation of these policy instruments, and will contribute to the development of a strategic framework for wetland restoration, currently being developed by Working for Wetlands.

Since Ramsar COP8, a national initiative for wetland rehabilitation, Working for Wetlands, has been established as a discrete programme, housed within the South African National Biodiversity Institute. Since Ramsar COP8 the programme has implemented 37 rehabilitation projects, covering in excess of 90 wetlands across the country. The programme simultaneously contributes to the objectives of the Expanded Public Works Programme, through a labour intensive focus that resulted in over 4000 people being employed and equipped with vocational and life skills over the preceding triennium.

Wetlands have been identified as priority for restoration through the development of criteria that include ecological, hydrological and social elements. In December 2004 a GIS-based tool for systematic prioritisation of tertiary catchments within which to concentrate restoration interventions was completed. This model utilises 13 criteria, which can be switched on or off and weighted according to their relative importance, in order to arrive at a spatial prioritisation of catchments. The criteria are based on the following spatial datasets:

1. areas identified through the National Biodiversity Spatial Assessment as being priorities for biodiversity conservation
2. protected areas
3. peatland ecoregions
4. Ramsar sites
5. water stressed catchments, in terms of supply relative to demand
6. catchment scale water quality indicators
7. Spatial Development Initiatives
8. catchments with Catchment Management Agencies in place
9. index of conservation status
10. soil erodibility index
11. priority areas for the invasive alien plant control activities of the Working for Water programme
12. poverty gap index
13. nodes identified under the Integrated Sustainable Rural Development and Urban Renewal programmes

Development of a final list of priority tertiary catchments within which Working for Wetlands will concentrate its interventions will take place between February and June 2005, as part of the consultative strategy development process being undertaken by the programme.

Land Based Conservation

The only breeding locality for albatrosses and petrels within South Africa is the Prince Edward Islands (PEIs) in the southern Indian Ocean. The PEIs above low-water mark were declared a Special Nature Reserve in 1995 in terms of the then Environmental Conservation Act (Act No.

73 of 1989). The Prince Edward Islands Management Committee (PEIMC) has proposed that the PEIs be nominated as both World Heritage Natural Site and as a Ramsar Wetland on international Importance. A document for the former nomination is under revision before submission to the World Heritage Convention and the latter proposal is accepted by DEAT.

4. MANAGEMENT OF HUMAN ACTIVITIES

Hunting

4.1 Outline the main features of legislation or legal measures in your country to control hunting of the species covered by the Agreement (e.g. use of lead shot and poisoned baits, and to eliminate illegal taking).

4.2 Does your country monitor hunting levels? If so, how is this information collated and reported?

4.3 Describe action undertaken by hunting clubs and organisations to manage hunting activity e.g. cooperative action, issuing of licences and proficiency testing of individual members.

Eco-tourism

4.4 What is the status of eco-tourism programmes or initiatives in your country? Please provide examples of projects with an indication of the significant outcomes.

Avitourism Development

BirdLife South Africa is developing avitourism through the implementation of community-based BirdLife Birding Routes. The birding routes will combine existing resources into exciting avitourism destinations that will conform to standards agreed with the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism. These will ensure not only high standards of service and product quality, but also the mechanisms to drive community participation and transformation. The Richards Bay Rio Tinto initiative forms part of the foundation of this programme.

More tourism activities taking place in South Africa:

- Regular at Bird Island, Lambert's Bay
- Limited at Malgas, Dassen, Dyer and Bird Island, Algoa Bay.Robben Island is a major tourist attraction
- Boulders (Stony Point to a much lesser extent) major tourist attractions

4.5 What social and economic benefits accrue to the local communities from the conservation of important waterbird sites?

Other human activities

Human Disturbance impact on southern African seabirds

Activities such as guided tours, infrastructure development close to breeding sites, jetskis, 4x4 vehicles and walking of dog on beaches have a negative impact on seabirds. South Africa initiated the legislation to regulate driving on the beaches. Regulations on 4x4 use on beaches have been developed in terms of the National Environmental Management Act (Act No. 107 of 1998). These regulations provide for the general prohibition on the recreational use of vehicles

in the costal zone, to provide for approving the use of vehicles in the coastal zone under specific circumstances, to provide measures for the enforcement of regulations and to provide penalties in respect of contraventions.

Other human activities include:
Lighthouses at Marcus, Dassen, Robben and Bird (Algoa Bay) island necessitate visits to service them (minimum 6 week intervals);
Recreational activities (kite surfing –Schaapen); Limited shore and boat angling at Schaapen, Robben, Dyer, Dassen, St Croix and Bird (Algoa Bay);
Limited gill net fishery at Schaapen Island;
Aircraft (helicopter) at Robben, Dassen and Bird (Algoa Bay) islands (mostly to service lighthouses, to a lesser extent to attend to tourism);
Abelone poaching at Dassen, Robben, Dyer and Bird (Algoa Bay);
Coega Harbour development near St. Croix group.

4.6 Does your country carry out Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) of activities potentially affecting protected sites or areas important for species covered by the Agreement? If yes, briefly describe the main features of your EIA policy and procedures.

Legislation relating to EIAs in South Africa is structured in such a way that it regulates activities that may have a substantial detrimental effect on the environment, rather than regulating impacts of any activity on particular areas such as wetlands. This has resulted in certain unlisted activities, which may take place in wetlands, falling outside the scope of the EIA legislation. However, experience has shown that the majority of activities that have the potential to significantly impact upon wetlands are covered by this legislation.

As an example an environmental impact assessment (EIA) has been undertaken of commercial tourism at the Prince Edward Islands (PEIs). The assessment concluded that tourism (Which does not currently take place) should not be allowed without further study, which would disturbance to seabirds caused by eco-tourism.

4.7 Please describe the main features of your planning policy and provide examples of practical implementation (e.g. activities to minimising disturbance of species populations or limit the impact of species populations on crops or fisheries). Please summarize any land-use conflicts especially emphasising successful solutions to problems encountered in promoting the wise-use of waterbirds and their habitats.

5. RESEARCH AND MONITORING

Status of research and monitoring programmes for species

5.1 How are priorities for research identified in your country? Please briefly describe your country's research programmes, including any bilateral or multilateral co-operative action, for wetland habitats and for species covered by the Agreement (e.g. studies into species population, ecology and migratory patterns). Please append a list of research activities initiated, ongoing or completed in the last three years.

AFRING project

Coordinated Waterbird Ringing Schemes (AFRING) coordinated by Avian Demography Unit of the University of Cape Town is running ringing projects in Africa (See Appendix 4 for more information regarding the project). The first ringing course took place from 19-26 September 2004, in Mida Creek at the A Rocha Bird Observatory and Field Study Centre near Watamu on the central Kenyan coast. The area is one of the Important Bird Areas (IBAs) and eight delegates from four Africa countries (Kenya, Ghana, Tanzania and Uganda) participated in this ringing course.

Funded by the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement (AEWA), with partial funding from the Highlands Ringing Group in Scotland, the course formed part of phase one of the workplan for the project "Coordination of waterbird ringing schemes in Africa" which is listed as priority No. 20 under AEWA's International Implementation Priorities 2000-2004. The objective is to develop an African waterbird ringing scheme (AFRING), with the focus placed on migratory species of waterbirds. To achieve this, the project aimed to kick-start waterbird ringing in Africa and through holding waterbird ringing training courses plans to build up local expertise to sustain waterbird ringing into the future. The course focussed on East Africa, as the ringing scheme in the region is relatively well established providing a useful platform from which to launch waterbird ringing initiatives in Africa. An AFRING ringers network has been established to ensure constant communication between trainees and AFRING.

5.2 What monitoring activities does your country undertake, including any bilateral or multilateral cooperative action, of wetland areas and species covered by the Agreement (e.g. national monitoring schemes, International Waterfowl Census)? Please append a list of monitoring activities or programmes initiated, ongoing or completed in the last three years

South African Bird Ringing Unit (SAFRING)

The African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement (AEWA) funded the project, African Waterbird Ringing Scheme, a bird-ringing project coordinated by South Africa. With a lack of information on migration and ecology of waterbirds in Africa, AEWA identified the need to improve coordination between ringing schemes within Africa and provided funding to establish AFRING (African Waterbird Ringing Scheme). Spearheaded by the Avian Demography Unit, at the University of Cape Town, the initial focus of the five-year project will be to kick-start waterbird ringing in Africa with the goal to sustain and coordinate waterbird ringing programmes in the long-term. A large component of this includes training waterbird ringers throughout Africa, including South and southern Africa.

The project completed Phase 1 during 2004 and is now in its second phase, which is planned to run from 2005 - 2007. Phase 1 dealt with setting up AFRING in terms of human resources, developing an integrated ringing information system covering all African waterbird species, arranging stakeholder and role player meetings to discuss the AFRING concept and initiating the first African waterbird ringing training course. Tasks identified for phase 2 include further stakeholder meetings to discuss progress of the project, identifying and implementing species-specific projects (e.g. look at movements of Great White Pelicans and African Sacred Ibis) and arranging additional waterbird ringing training courses. The AEWA secretariat has committed itself to financing the project for the phases 1 & 2. Following this, it is the eventual goal of AFRING to make it financially self-sustainable in the long-term.

South African Bird Ringing Unit (SAFRING) administers bird ringing in southern Africa, supplying rings, ringing equipment and services to volunteer and professional ringers in South Africa and neighbouring countries. All ringing records are curated by SAFRING, which is an essential arm of the Avian Demography Unit. Contact is maintained by the SAFRING Project Coordinator with all ringers (banders in North American or Australian terminology).

The Bird Ringing Scheme in South Africa was initiated in 1948. During the period between 1948 and 1998, over 1.7 million birds of 852 species were ringed. There have been a total of 16 800 ring recoveries since the inception of the scheme. This gives an overall recovery rate for rings in southern Africa of marginally less than 1%, averaged across all species. This probability varies enormously across species.

The traditional objective of SAFRING is to establish a database of recoveries of southern African birds that can be used to establish information about movement and survival. Every bird ringed, no matter what species or where it was ringed has the potential to contribute to the SAFRING recovery database. Since 1982, this database has been supplemented by a retrap database, supplied by ringers on a voluntary basis. This contains ringing and latest retrap details of birds recaptured at least 12 months after being ringed.

The database as a whole is a resource which may be used by researchers, conservation biologists and managers, and primarily provides answers to questions related to movement and survival. Research into bird populations of importance to fisheries, agriculture, conservation and water management authorities involves bird ringing. Ringing provides a cost-effective tool for monitoring our environment and commonly draws attention to pollution, poisoning, powerline incidents, longline fishing fatalities and other hazards.

There are currently 130 active ringers operating in South Africa and neighbouring countries such as Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Zambia and Malawi. About 70 000 birds are ringed annually. Ringers, both amateur and professional, have to pay for all rings used. Exceptions are those rings used on Redbilled Quelea, which are paid for by the Department of Agriculture. Recoveries of ringed quelea provide data on movements and mortality and contribute to a better understanding of the population dynamics of this explosive species.

Next steps and possible projects

SAFRING's journal and SAFRING News, has been changed to AFRING News, to facilitate communication about bird ringing through Africa.

Some of the greatest gaps in knowledge of African birds, that can be answered by ringing, include the following issues:

1. Intra-African migration, e.g. Diederik Cuckoo, Whitethroated Swallow
2. Annual survival
3. Timing and duration of primary moult

Table of potential ringing projects in Africa by species

Species	Latin	Purpose	Project
White Pelican	*Pelecanus onocrotalus*	Movements, survival	Engraved; satellite
Cattle Egret	*Bubulcus ibis*	Dispersal movements	Engraved rings
White Stork	*Ciconia ciconia*	Movements	Satellite, new German rings
Abdim's Stork	*Ciconia abdimii*	Movements	Engraved rings
Sacred Ibis	*Threskiornis aethiopicus*	Movements, survival	Engraved rings
African Spoonbill	*Platalea alba*	Movements	Engraved rings
Greater Flamingo	*Phoenicopterus ruber*	Movements	Engraved rings
Egyptian Goose	*Alopochen aegyptiacus*	Movements, survival	Ringing
Southern Pochard	*Netta erythrophthalma*	Movements	Ringing
Knob-billed Duck	*Sarkidiornis melanotos*	Movements	Ringing
White-fronted Plover	*Charadrius marginatus*	Movements, ecology	Colour rings
Kittlitz's Plover	*Charadrius pecuarius*	Movements	Colour rings
Crowned Plover	*Vanellus coronatus*	Movements, survival	Colour rings
Blacksmith Plover	*Vanellus armatus*	Movements, survival	Colour rings
Turnstone	*Arenaria interpres*	Migration	Colour rings
Black-winged stilt	*Himantopus himantopus*	Movements, survival	Colour rings
Grey-headed Gull	*Larus cirrocephalus*	Local movements, survival	Engraved rings
Hartlaub's Gull	*Larus hartlaubii*	Local movements, survival	Engraved rings
Caspian Tern	*Hydroprogne caspia*	Local movements	Engraved rings
Swift Tern	*Sterna bergii*	Movements, ecology	Engraved rings
Common Tern	*Sterna hirundo*	Migration	Counts; search for recoveries
European Swallow	*Hirundo rustica*	Migration, wintering	EURING Swallow project
Red-billed Quelea	*Quelea quelea*	Movements	Ringing

Bird Monitoring Projects

BirdLife South Africa members participate in the following bird monitoring projects that are run by The Avian Demography Unit (ADU) at the University of Cape Town.

Coordinated Waterbird Counts
The Coordinated Waterbird Counts (CWAC) was launched in 1992. The objective of CWAC is to monitor South Africa's waterbird populations and the conditions of the wetlands which are important for waterbirds. This is being done by means of a programme of regular mid-summer and mid-winter censuses at a large number of South African wetlands and estuaries, at regular six-monthly intervals. CWAC currently monitors over 350 wetlands around the country.

This project was initiated by the then Ramsar Working Group of the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism in part-fulfilment of South Africa's commitment to the Ramsar Convention. CWAC also contributes its data to the African Waterbird Census, a programme coordinated by Wetlands International and based at the African headquarters of Wetlands International in Senegal.

In February 1995 a CWAC workshop was held in Wakkerstroom in the province of Mpumalanga. On this occassion professional conservators from the conservation agencies and dedicated amateurs from the ranks of BirdLife South Africa came together to plan the future direction and expansion of the CWAC programme. One of the concrete products to emerge from this valuable collaboration is a list of priority wetlands which CWAC will aim to survey.

In 1999, the *TOTAL CWAC Report* was published. It provides a useful summary of all counts made between the start of the project and 1997. A summary of the main findings of this report was published in Bird Numbers. The report can be ordered from Horizon Book Services, via this website.

Comparisons of counts from different wetlands gives indications of seasonal movements and the relative importance of sites for the conservation of different species. Once the project expands to include all of South Africa's major wetlands, the information for all sites together will enable us to produce annual population indices to trace the fluctuations, increases and declines of populations

Progress Report: April 2000 – March 2001

Counts

Winter 2000

A total of 243 873 waterbirds was counted from 262 sites during July 2000. This figure is nearly 30% lower than the previous winter count of 331 159 birds from 245 sites. This decrease in numbers is due mainly to notably lower counts from some of the larger, more significant sites (e.g. Spitskop Dam, Kamfers Dam, Barberspan, Wilderness Lakes, and Botriviervlei). The high winter 1999 counts at the above sites were boosted by certain high species counts (e.g. Redknobbed Coot at Barberspan and flamingos at Kamfers Dam) which were absent or lower in 2000. Some wetlands, which are known to hold large numbers of birds (e.g. De Hoop Vlei, Rietvlei) were not surveyed during this count and this also contributed to a lower total, and highlights the need to get these sites counted regularly.

The following 25 sites recorded more than 2000 birds:

Name	Province	Total count
Bloemhof Dam	Free State	12042
Erfenis Dam	Free State	11627
Lower Berg River	Western Cape	10942
Orange River Estuary	Northern Cape	9240
Barberspan	North West	8647
Lake St Lucia	KwaZulu-Natal	8538
Krugersdrift Dam	Free State	8478
Spitskop Dam	Northern Cape	7790
Wilderness Lakes - Swartvlei System	Western Cape	7364
Langebaan Lagoon	Western Cape	7316
Strandfontein Sewage Works	Western Cape	6622
Kamfers Dam	Northern Cape	6426
Wilderness Lakes - Touw System	Western Cape	5963
Allemanskraal Dam	Free State	5716
Botriviervlei (Bot River Estuary)	Western Cape	5310
Chelmsford Dam	KwaZulu-Natal	4042
Kalkfontein Dam	Free State	3627
Marievale Bird Sanctuary	Gauteng	3566
Knellpoort Dam	Free State	3374
Kabeljous River Estuary	Eastern Cape	3032
Rusfontein Dam	Free State	2979
Pongolapoort Dam	KwaZulu-Natal	2576

Bonaero Park Pan	Gauteng	2518
Knysna Lagoon	Western Cape	2470
Leeuwpan	Mpumalanga	2150

New sites for coordinated waterbird counts

A total of 19 new sites were registered with CWAC after this count and included **six from Mpumalanga** (Arnot Vlei, Loskop Dam (IBA), Masibekela Wetland, Rustig Dam, Rustig North Pan and Swadini Dam), **four from the Free State** (Deelpan, Leeupan 3, Mooispruit Farm Dam and Moutloasi Setlogelo–Groothoek Dam), **three from the Northern Province** (Olifants River–Olifants River North Shareblock, PMC Wetlands and Namakgale Sewage Works), **two each from the Eastern Cape** (PE Power Station Pans and Perseverance Vleis) **and Western Cape** (Berg 13: Springersbaai Floodplain and Great Brak River Estuary), and **one each from Gauteng** (Marievale Bird Sanctuary - Area B) **and KwaZulu-Natal** (Due Donne Farm Dam).

It is encouraging to see some more farm dams included in CWAC. These sites are probably playing a more important role than is realised. The site along a section of the Olifants River is another welcome addition to the CWAC database, especially since CWAC has little data for riverine species. Rivers are under-counted at present and although rivers may be one of the more difficult types of sites to count, they do provide a challenge and a new facet to the project.

CAR - Coordinated Avifaunal Roadcounts

Large and conspicuous birds offer the opportunity to monitor their populations by means of relatively simple techniques. One of these techniques is the"road count", in which observations are made from vehicles covering fixed routes.

CAR has since spread rapidly to other provinces and now monitors over 20 species of large terrestrial birds (cranes, bustards, korhaans, storks, Secretarybird and Bald Ibis) along 340 fixed routes covering 19 000 km. Fourteen of these species appear in the Red Data Book. Twice a year, in midsummer (the last Saturday in January) and midwinter (the last Saturday in July), roadcounts are carried out using this standardised method. A standardised method allows one to make comparisons between counts. Even though the project does not attempt to count the entire population of a species, the area covered is so large that CAR is statistically capable of demonstrating trends in population size. The project also reveals details of habitat use and the relationship of populations to the agricultural practices of an area.

Save the Albatross Seabird Programme

The Global Seabird programme, founded in 1997, is managed by BirdLife South Africa on behalf of BirdLife International. The programme, is involved by many countries, focusing on international action. Funded initially by the RSPB, then the British Birdwatching Fair, the primary objective is to reduce the deaths of albatrosses and petrels. About 300 000 birds are drowned every year after swallowing baited hooks and being dragged underwater as a result of longline fishing industry practices. This is viewed as a long-term programme that will evolve to tackle other conservation issues in the course of time.

Life-history characteristics of the White-fronted Plover

Since 1998, this project has monitored the annual reproductive effort, nesting success, survival and dispersal characteristics of a population of about 100 colour-ringed pairs of White-fronted Plover *Charadrius marginatus* breeding on the beaches of the Cape Peninsula. The results are being used for a comparison of breeding productivity and life-history traits between south-temperate *C. marginatus* and two related north-temperate species, Kentish Plover *C. alexandrinus* and Piping Plover *C. melodus*. The project also addresses conservation issues related to the impact of coastal development and tourism disturbance on the breeding success and population dynamics of this common coastal bird.

The Wakkerstroom project

This project is run by BLSA and involves a 4 square kilometre wetland owned by BLSA, situated in the Grassland Biosphere Reserve in Mpumalanga Province and home to several globally threatened species. The area is the core of the global range of species such as Rudd's and Botha's Lark and as such holds the key to their survival. It is also of huge significance to species such as the Grey Crowned Crane, Bald Ibis and White-winged Flufftail. Aside from protecting habitat, the BLSA centre at Wakkerstroom is also the site of the hugely successful guide-training program. This program aims to identify local residents in rural areas that show potential for bird guiding. These individuals are then trained and evaluated at Wakkerstroom before returning to their homes to set up small businesses that enable visitors to see highly sought after species such as Pel's Fishing Owl, Rosy-throated Longclaw, Blue Swallow, Taita Falcon and Black-fronted Bushshrike. This guide-training program has enabled the development of community-run, nature-based tourism in areas without local economies and has given birds and natural habitats a value that they did not have before. This latter tenet is central to the development if Avi-Tourism in South Africa and BLSA is in the process of developing several community-based birding routes in the country.

6. EDUCATION AND INFORMATION

Training and development programmes

6.1 Describe the status of training and development programmes which support waterbird conservation and implement the AEWA Action Plan.

South Africa continues to educate and increase public awareness in relation to conservation status of AEWA species through regular communications by government departments, academic and non-governmental organization via electronic, visual and print media with scientific, conservation and fishing communities, as well as the general public.

6.2 What bilateral or multilateral co-operative action is your country undertaking to develop training programmes and share examples of good practice?

Marine & Coastal Management (MCM), or its contractee(s), run annual workshops at which captains and fishing crew of longline vessels, as well as representatives of fishing companies, associations and unions, are given the opportunity to attend and contribute to lectures and presentations (in more than one official language) that will, *inter alia*, cover the following subjects:

(i) Aspects of the biology and conservation requirements of affected species of birds,
(ii) Correct use and the efficacy of prescribed and non-prescribed mitigation measures,
(iii) Identification of seabirds both at-sea and in the hand,
(iv) Procedures for recording, labelling and returning to port any seabirds that come aboard dead during hauling operations,
(v) Correct and safe procedures for handling live birds, removal of ingested and imbedded hooks and entangled lines, and the release of birds caught alive during hauling, and
(vi) How correct use of mitigation measures may improve fishing efficiency and/or catch size, and therefore profits, by way of reducing bait loss and increasing soak time (by faster line sink-rates) as well as creating opportunities for “green- labelling” of seabird-friendly products through such mechanisms as assessment and certification by the Marine Stewardship Council.

Training of observers by MCM

The fisheries observer-training programme has been developed and implemented by Birdlife South Africa. The course’s aim is to inform fisheries observers of seabird conservation issues, how and why mitigation measures work, as well as seabird identification. Development of training manual and video are underway and will be available in English, Afrikaans and Portuguese for distribution within South Africa, Namibia and Angola.

Contracted observer companies should run regular training courses for both existing staff and recruits that, *inter alia*, cover the following subjects:

(i) standardised procedures for the collection of reliable data on numbers and rates of birds killed and brought aboard alive during setting and hauling operations, respectively,
(ii) aspects of the biology and conservation requirements of affected species of birds,
(iii) correct use and the efficacy of prescribed and non-prescribed mitigation measures,
(iv) identification of seabirds both at-sea and in the hand,
(v) procedures for recording, labelling and returning to port any seabirds that come aboard dead during hauling operations, and
(vi) correct and safe procedures for handling live birds, removal of ingested and imbedded hooks and entangled line, and the release of birds caught alive during hauling.

Raising public awareness

6.3 Describe activities to raise public awareness of the objectives of the AEWA Action Plan. Please outline any particular successes generating public interest in, and securing support for, waterbird and wetland conservation (e.g. campaigns, information notes or other initiatives)?

Many different activities have taken place each year for World Wetlands Day. Schools, government departments, the public and NGO's involved in wetlands issues have participated. Examples include visits to wetland rehabilitation sites for high profile politicians and industry leaders, organised by Working for Wetlands and the provincial governments; radio and television interviews, newspaper articles, school visits to a wetland etc by all those involved in wetland conservation in South Africa. World Wetlands Day has been celebrated every year since its inception, with visible increases in interest, profile and participation every year. The national event in 2003 was celebrated at Verloren Valei Nature Reserve, then the newest Ramsar site. The certificate for the site's designation was presented to the Premier of Mpumalanga Province by the Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism. The national event in 2004 was held in Ugie, Eastern Cape Province. Approximately 500 people attended from all levels of the surrounding rural communities, including local schools in the area. In 2005, the national event was held at a high profile

7. FINAL COMMENTS

7.1 General comments on the implementation of the AEWA Action Plan

7.2 Observations concerning the functions and services of the various AEWA bodies

- *a. The Agreement Secretariat*
- *b. International organisations*
- *c. AEWA NGO partners*

7.3 How might the Action Plan be further developed as a practical aid for national and international conservation of migratory waterbirds?

8. PROGRESS TO IMPLEMENT RESOLUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE MEETING OF THE PARTIES

Please summarize progress to implement decisions of previous Meetings of the Parties.

9. OPTIONAL SECTION – Planned and future actions

Contracting Parties are invited to outline below any further information regarding the aims of the Agreement, for example, planned actions or other informative examples.

1. Species conservation

Maccoa Duck Species Action Plan.

The African Eurasian Waterbird Agreement (AEWA) secretariat has provided funding to the African Gamebird Research Education and Development Trust (in conjunction with the Endangered Wildlife Trust and BirdLife South Africa) to develop a Species Action Plan for the Maccoa Duck *Oxyura maccoa* which is listed as a Priority Species (Category A, column 1c).

The Workshop was held at Wakkerstroom, Mpumalanga South Africa from 29-31 March and was attended by 18 people from seven African nations (Botswana, Ethiopia, Namibia, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zimbabwe) comprising the major range states for the Maccoa Duck with the exception of Kenya.

The Species Action Plan is in its fourth draft and will be submitted to the Technical Committee of AEWA for comment before being submitted for approval.

The Species Action Plan highlighted the need for more informational and research, and specified risks, actions in each of the major reasons. It significantly reduced the total global population estimates for the Maccoa Duck to 9500-11500, which suggests an upgrading of its threat Status to Near-threatened. AGRED has offered to act as secretariat to further actions to be undertaken as a result of the Species Action Plan when accepted.

2. Habitat conservation
3. Management of human activities
4. Research and monitoring
5. Education and information

List of abbreviations and acronyms used in the report

African-Eurasian Waterbirds Agreement	AEWA
African Gamebird Research and Education Trust	AGRED
Avian Demography Unit	ADU
Birdlife South Africa	BLSA
Convention on Migratory Species	CMS
Coordinated Waterbird Counts	CWAC
Coordinated Avifaunal Roadcounts	CAR
Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism	DEAT
Environmental Impact Assessment	EIA
Endangered Wildlife Trust	EWT
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	FAO
Marine Protected Area	MPA
National Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism	DEAT
Non -Governmental Organisation	NGO
Oystercatcher Conservation Programme	OCP
Prince Edward Islands	PEIs
South African Bird Ringing Unit	SAFRING
South African National Plan of Action for Reducing the Incidental Catch of Seabirds in Longline Fisheries	NPOA-Seabirds
Vessel Monitoring System	VMS
Waterbird Ringing Schemes in Africa	AFRING

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Ramsar Report National planning tool for the implementation of the Ramsar conservation on wetlands

Appendices

Appendix 1: Status of Single Species Action Plans

Appendix 1.1
South African National Plan Of Action For Reducing The Incidental Catch Of Seabirds In Longline Fisheries.

Appendix 1.2
African Penguin – Population & Habitat Viability Assessment (Penguin Conservation Assessment And Management Plan (Penguin Camp).

Appendix 1.3
White-winged flufftail management strategy.

Other Single species Action Plan implemented in South Africa:

- Conservation Assessment and Management Plan for Southern Africa Coastal Seabirds published 2003.
- Oystercatcher Conservation Programme (OCP) coordinated by Percy Fitzpatrick Institute of African Ornithology.

Appendix 2: List of sites of international importance

List if Ramsar sites in South Africa.

Appendix 3: Status of management plans for sites of international importance

Appendix 4: List of research and monitoring programmes and projects

First AFRING waterbird ringing course held in East Africa.

Appendix 5: List of national institutions involved in migratory waterbird conservation

South African provincial departments:

- Gauteng Province: Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Environment
- Mpumalanga Province: Department of Economic Development and Planning
- Limpopo Province: Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism
- Free State Province: Department of Tourism, Environment and Economic Affairs
- Kwa-Zulu Natal Province: Department of Agriculture and Environ Affairs
- Northern Cape Province: Department of Economic Affairs and Tourism
- Western Cape Province: Department of Environmental and Development Planning
- Eastern Cape Province: Department of Economic Affairs, Environment and Tourism
- North-West Province: Department of Agriculture, Conservation, Environment and Tourism

The following organizations are doing work that helps in the conservation of waterbirds in South Africa:

- Avian Demography Unit (ADU) of the University of Cape town;
- Birdlife South Africa (BLSA)

- Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT)
- The African Gamebird Research and Education Trust (AGRED)
- Percy FitzPatrick Institute of African Ornithology

Appendix 6: List of relevant World Wide Web addresses for national institutions involved in migratory waterbird conservation

http://www.deat.gov.za
http://www.mcm-deat.gov.za
http://web.uct.ac.za/depts/stats/adu/p_cwac.htm
http://www.birdlife.org.za
www.savethealbatross.co.za
www.zbr.co.za
www.limpopobirding.com

Appendix 7: List of relevant migratory waterbird and habitat conservation projects initiated, ongoing or completed in the last three years