

Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative

Plan of Action 2014–2020



1. Introduction

This proposed Plan of Action has been prepared by the Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative (WSFI) for presentation and adoption at the 12th Trilateral Governmental Wadden Sea Conference in 2014, along with the WSFI Flyway Vision. The plan incorporates conclusions of a regional stakeholder workshop held in Wilhelmshaven in March 2011 and results of the initial WSFI projects mainly focussing on West Africa (2012 – 2014). These project results have been achieved in close cooperation with BirdLife's Conservation of Migratory Birds (CMB) project in the same region. The WSFI and CMB project activities are well coordinated to avoid duplications and have included a number of workshops and consultations within West Africa, which have strengthened stakeholder input to the development of this Plan of Action. These activities are undertaken also as a contribution to implementation of the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds Agreement (AEWA).

2. Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative

a. Rationale

In 2009 UNESCO placed the Dutch-German Wadden Sea on the World Heritage List recognizing the crucial importance of the site for the survival of migratory birds on a global scale. On the inscription of the Wadden Sea on the World Heritage List the World Heritage Committee (WHC) requested the State Parties Germany and The Netherlands "... to strengthen cooperation on management and research activities with States Parties on the African Eurasian Flyways, which play a significant role in conserving migratory species along these flyways." The 11th Wadden Sea Ministerial Conference at Sylt in 2010 agreed to engage in a close cooperation with the African Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement (AEWA) to promote and strengthen cooperation on management and research with relevant state parties and establish cooperation for the protection and management of migratory birds relying on the Wadden Sea. Thus, both countries have now an enhanced responsibility to strengthen cooperation with other countries for the conservation of migratory birds, especially along the East Atlantic Flyway which is most important for Wadden Sea populations. Since Denmark nominated the Danish Wadden Sea also as World Heritage site in 2013 it is also participating in the WSFI.

It should be noted that besides the clear request of the WHC to strengthen cooperation on the entire flyway level, all three Wadden Sea countries have since long similar obligations not only under the EU Birds and Habitats Directives, but also under the Bern Convention, Convention on Migratory Species and especially its AEWA and Ramsar Conventions; the three Wadden Sea countries have long been party to all these treaties.

b. Wilhelmshaven workshop March 2011

As a follow up, in March 2011, the Common Wadden Sea Secretariat (CWSS) organised an international stakeholder workshop of migratory bird experts from Europe, several African countries, the U.S.A. and Russia and international NGOs, with the support of responsible government ministries. The workshop recommended specifically developing a flyway vision on the implementation of the WHC request, and an integrated monitoring and capacity building programme, as well as improving site management at the local level and developing in-depth research for gaps in knowledge.

c. Launch of the WSFI and its initial projects

On the basis of the workshop recommendations the state parties launched the Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative (WSFI) at a well-attended side event during the 5th Meeting of the Parties of AEWA in May 2012 in La Rochelle. To put the enhanced international responsibility of the Wadden Sea states into action the WSFI started with a monitoring and a capacity building project. The aims of the WSFI are to

support the conservation of migratory waterbirds in the East Atlantic Flyway, to obtain more detailed monitoring data to inform and support policy and management and to develop a long-term perspective for the cooperation of the Wadden Sea with countries along the whole flyway. The projects, which run from 2012 - 2014, are funded by the German Federal Ministry for the Environment (capacity building project) and the Dutch Ministry of Economic affairs through the programme *Rich Wadden Sea* (monitoring project) and are, in the first instance, focussing on West Africa. The projects are guided by a Steering Group and an Advisory Board. A joint WSFI/CMB communication plan, a flyway monitoring strategy, website and other planned outcomes of the projects have been drafted. The WSFI, its aims and progress, will be presented at the TGC 2014.

d. WSFI Vision

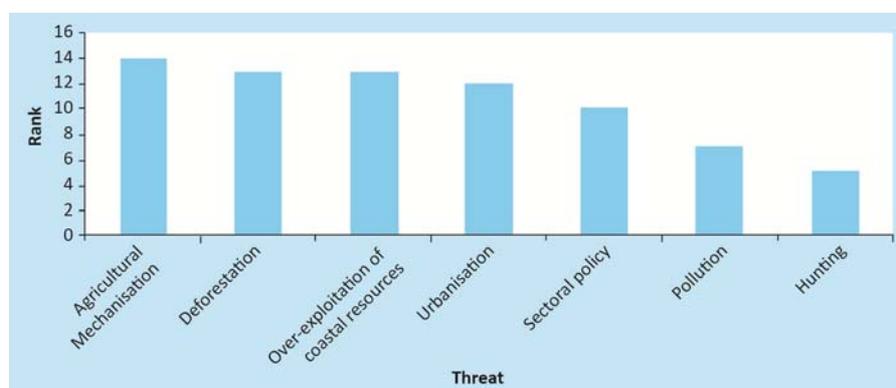
Project partners have contributed to the development of a draft WSFI Vision, which should serve as a guiding principle to strengthen cooperation across the flyway on the conservation, management and research of migratory birds that depend on the Wadden Sea. The recommended vision has been further developed and adopted by the Task Group World Heritage and the Wadden Sea Board. The Vision is awaiting full endorsement of the Trilateral Wadden Sea cooperation, other flyway states and relevant stakeholders. The vision states that "*migratory birds find lasting refuge along the East Atlantic Flyway from northern breeding areas to their key Wadden Sea stopover and to the African coastline, and inspire and connect people for future generations*".

This Plan of Action is designed to serve as a framework for implementing the WSFI Vision, through a set of five-year priority objectives and supporting actions.

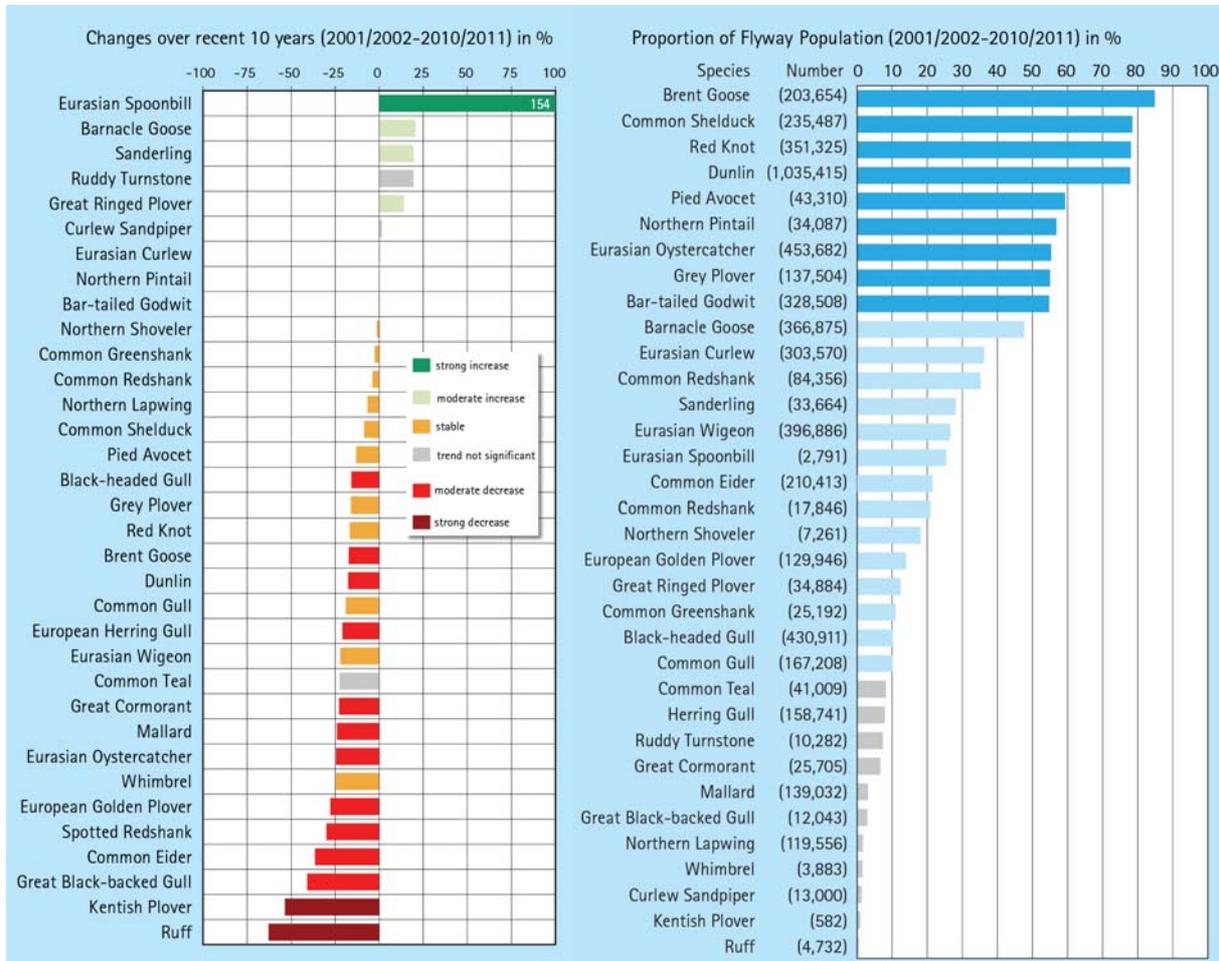
3. Key Flyway Issues

The East Atlantic Flyway is a vast zone from the Arctic tundra via western European coastal wetlands and intertidal habitats, such as the Wadden Sea, to a wide range of coastal wetlands along the western coast of Africa. As such, a myriad of issues impact on the status of migratory birds and their habitats, and on the productivity of this coastal zone for human livelihoods. Fishing is a key activity along the flyway, with over-fishing widespread. In northern parts in particular the impacts of climatic change are being widely felt, with decreasing marine productivity in some areas causing shifts in bird distribution. In such instances, coastal zone birds are strong indicators of the state of their environment.

The main focus area of the initial WSFI projects has been West Africa, where there is limited capacity and resources to manage and monitor coastal wetlands and waterbirds. The main threats to migratory birds in the coastal zone of West Africa identified by participants of the CMB project development workshop (held in Dakar, Senegal, November 2009) were agricultural mechanisation, deforestation (including cutting mangroves), general over-exploitation of coastal resources and urbanisation, as shown below (rank = number of 'votes'):



According to the review made by BirdLife International (in prep.) the populations of 116 of the 326 migratory bird species (36%) using West Africa are currently declining globally, whilst 24 (7%) are classified as globally threatened or Near Threatened using the IUCN criteria. Focussing on migratory waterbird populations, there is a large decline in staging (see figure below), wintering and breeding waterbird populations of the Wadden Sea, which are dependent on other sites along the East Atlantic Flyway as well.



Trend categories for the 10-year period for the International Wadden Sea on yearly estimates, ranked after trend category and value (JMNB 2013).

Proportion of flyway population with regard to estimated numbers (Wetlands International 2013).

Several of the over-arching threats given here have their main impacts at the site level, especially the conversion of coastal wetlands to development, pollution and over-exploitation of natural resources.

4. International Policies and On-going Activities

4.1 International Policies

a. World Heritage Convention

The Dutch and German parts of the Wadden Sea were designated on the list of designated World Heritage Sites in June 2009, whilst preparation for designation of the Danish part is underway. It is the formal request of the WHC to The Netherlands and Germany 'to strengthen activities in the fields of cooperation, research and management along the African-Eurasian Flyway' that strongly influences this Plan of Action. Other natural World Heritage Sites vital for migratory waterbirds along the East Atlantic Flyway include the Banc d'Arguin (Mauritania), Djoudj (Senegal), Doñana (Spain), whilst some cultural

World Heritage Sites are also important for migratory birds, e.g. Saloum (Senegal). Preparations for the designation of Bijagos Archipelago (Guinea-Bissau) are underway.

b. EU Birds Directive

The Council Directive 79/409/EEC on the conservation of wild birds (Birds Directive) was adopted in 1979 and aims at the protection of all species of naturally occurring birds in the territory of the member states. According to the Birds Directive, member states must classify the most suitable territories for the conservation of the species listed in the Annex 1 of the Directive, as 'Special Protection Areas' (SPAs). Basically, the entire Wadden Sea Area has been designated as SPA. Exceptions are the main shipping lanes and some adjacent offshore areas. The EU policy in relation to the Bird Directive also addresses the protection of migratory species outside the EU, notably Africa.

c. African–Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement (AEWA)

AEWA, an Agreement under the Convention of Migratory Species (CMS), is the principal international policy instrument focused on migratory waterbirds, and thus serves as a crucial element of any flyway-level activities. The AEWA Meeting of Parties adopted, as an implementation of the AEWA Strategic Plan in Africa, the Plan of Action for Africa in 2012 (at MoP5 in La Rochelle, France), which sets out a range of key targets and actions for the conservation of migratory waterbirds and their habitats in Africa. The Plan of Action for Africa is a key guiding document for this Plan of Action. The French government provides technical support to the AEWA African Initiative, which aims to implement the Plan of Action for Africa.

d. The Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

As one of the earliest international environmental agreements, Ramsar has great significance along the East Atlantic Flyway, and most countries are members of the Convention. Its principles for the wise use of wetlands and its resolution of 2008 on flyway conservation have strong relevance for the implementation of this Plan of Action. Several of the internationally important wetlands for migratory waterbirds along this flyway are also designated as Ramsar Sites, including Wadden Sea, Banc d'Arguin (Mauritania), Djoudj (Senegal), Doñana (Spain), Onega Bay and Berezovye islands (Russia), Vilsandi archipelago (Latvia), Falsterbo Bay (Sweden) and Porsanger fjord (Norway).

e. Bern Convention (Bern 1979).

The European Nature Conservation Convention as administered by the Council of Europe, reflects similar obligations to the EU Birds and Habitats Directive but extends to all countries of Europe (except Russia) and some countries of northern Africa (Morocco, Tunisia, Senegal and Burkina Faso).

f. Arctic activities by the Wadden Sea countries.

f.1 Background

The Wadden Sea has a strong relation with the Arctic through the millions of migratory waterbirds: waders, geese, swans and ducks. This ranges from N.E Canada towards about the Lena Delta in central Siberia. For long, researchers in Western Europe were interested to study the breeding ecology of the species well known on migration and wintering. This became possible after the political changes in the USSR and in 1989 a first joint Russian–German–Polish expedition took place to Taimyr with an active role for WWF–Germany. From that year onwards annual expeditions with The Netherlands, UK, Scandinavian countries etc. followed. The Netherlands and Germany actually established long term research and monitoring programs on the breeding ecology of Arctic species using the Wadden Sea in great numbers during migration and wintering. These activities, including supporting USSR delegations and USSR Arctic bird research programmes also lead to e.g. the Netherlands being accepted as a permanent observer to the meetings of the Working Group for Arctic Flora and Fauna Conservation (CAFF; a working group of the Arctic Council).

A first overview of all the work was for instance published in: Ebbinge B.S. et al (eds.) 2000. 'Heritage of the Russian Arctic: Research, Conservation and International Cooperation' (Moscow Ecopros Publication; 640 pp.).

These rather intensive activities continued until about 2004-2006 but thereafter were reduced considerably for various reasons; the strong increase in transport costs being an important factor but also a reduced interest for the Russian Arctic in the Wadden Sea countries plays a role as well as political changes in the Russian Federation.

In 2013 the Arctic Council and its working groups, especially CAFF, published the 'Arctic Biodiversity Assessment'. It describes the present situation with Arctic Biodiversity, including migratory birds which are important for the Wadden Sea countries.

CWSS published in 2007 an overview of Arctic activities by the three Wadden Sea countries. This more extensive document will be updated and again published in 2014. Below are the present, most relevant activities of the Wadden Sea countries.

f.2 Present relevant activities in relation to flyways.

Germany

A final expedition to the Lena delta took place in 1997. Further activities concentrated on research on Kolguev Island (Russian Arctic) in 2011 and 2012. This focussed on Grey Plover and White-fronted Goose. Further expeditions into the Arctic are not foreseen but large scale marking of Grey Plovers, caught in the Wadden Sea, with GPS transmitters will be done to study migration routes, stopover and staging sites and migration strategies in de tail. Recently the National Park Schleswig Holstein finalised the funding of a monitoring project on Taimyr.

Denmark

With the large Arctic Station Zackenberg on Greenland, Denmark has a broad research program in that region including bird species migrating to or via the Wadden Sea. Other relevant Arctic research is done by Aarhus University including the building of a new research station in Northern Greenland.

The Netherlands

At the moment various research groups work on the ecology of Brent Goose and Barnacle Goose and some waders and gulls in the Russian Arctic also as part of METAWAD 1. The use of geo-locators to study migration and movements has increased. Present work in the Russian Arctic concentrates in the Petsjora delta and no longer on Taimyr. Above there is for instance the research on Barnacle Goose on Spitsbergen.

Conclusion

The above shows that the extensive activities in the period 1989 - 2006 in the Russian Arctic, so important to understand Wadden Sea bird migration and population ecology, have substantially been reduced. Bird monitoring projects at two sites on Taimyr have unfortunately come to an end (Medusa Bay/Willem Barentz station in 2007 and SE Taimyr in 2010) as well as the extensive long term research on the Brent Goose and some wader species. The Willem Barentz Biological Station, build with Dutch support on Taimyr, is today still being used by Russian researchers but not every year. Denmark is formally a member of the Arctic Council and its working groups and thus closely involved in Arctic conservation issues. The Netherlands continues to be an observer to CAFF (since 1991) and the Arctic Council and regularly attends the meetings.

Besides this it is important to mention that within the Russian Federation ornithological research in the Arctic continues, be it at a lower capacity. Important and essential information on status and numbers throughout the Russian/Siberian Arctic comes available in the Arctic Birds Breeding Conditions publication and website. This programme runs in different formats since 1988 thanks to external funding.

Action

Given the WHC request to be active in the whole flyway and knowing the origin of the millions of waterbirds in the Wadden Sea, it is essential to try and maintain projects in the Russian Arctic and increase again contacts with various Russian institutes working there.

An updated more extensive Arctic information paper and a specific action plan on involvement in Arctic bird research and conservation issues, is needed.

g. Wadden Sea policies

The 2010 Wadden Sea Plan (WSP) constitutes the common framework for the protection and sustainable management of the Wadden Sea as an ecological entity. The Bird Targets of the WSP are, inter-alia, consistent with the Natura 2000 conservation objectives and with the World Heritage criterion 'X', which requires the most important natural habitats for in-situ conservation of biological diversity, including threatened species of outstanding universal value. The WSP Bird Targets require among others stable and increasing numbers of birds, undisturbed and suitable breeding, feeding, moulting and roosting sites and living conditions determined by natural processes. The Joint Monitoring of Migratory Birds (JMMB) and Breeding Birds (JMBB) programme within the Trilateral Monitoring and Assessment Program (TMAP) delivers the necessary data for the Wadden Sea Quality Status Report (QSR) to assess the Targets. Results of the assessments have influence on further management measures.

h. Regional Marine and Coastal Conservation Programme for West Africa (PRCM)

The PRCM is an initiative of four international NGOs active in West Africa – the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), Wetlands International and the International Foundation of the Banc d'Arguin (FIBA), in partnership with the Sub-regional Fisheries Commission (SRFC). Geographically, the Programme covers seven countries – Cape Verde, The Gambia, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Mauritania, Senegal, and Sierra Leone – with which IUCN has signed contracts on behalf of PRCM founding NGOs. The goal of the PRCM is to coordinate the efforts made by institutions and private individuals to preserve the littoral of coastal countries in the sub-region. The coastal zone activities of IUCN, WWF, Wetlands International and FIBA are largely coordinated through the PRCM, and together cover a range of significant actions, including the establishment of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), capacity-building and monitoring of breeding birds.

i. Abidjan Convention

The Convention for Co-operation in the Protection and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the West and Central and Southern African Region (also known as the Abidjan Convention), and its protocol concerning cooperating in combating pollution in cases of emergency – came into force in 1984, covering 22 coastal states from Mauritania to South Africa. The leading decision-making organ of the Abidjan Convention is the Conference of Parties (COP). The Convention is a comprehensive umbrella agreement for the protection and management of the marine and coastal area, and aims to address pollution, overfishing, control of fish stocks, coastal-based tourism, coastal erosion, specially protected areas and environmental impact assessment. As the focal area of the Abidjan Convention matches closely the East Atlantic Flyway in Africa, it is of direct relevance for the implementation of the WSFI Plan of Action.

j. Other agreements and activities

Other international agreements also have influence on the WSFI, and these are described elsewhere, as well as their relationship to the Wadden Sea (e.g. in: Boere C. G. 2010. Programme Plan 'Towards a healthy Wadden Sea ecosystem for nature and man').

4.2 On-going Activities

a. WSFI West Africa projects

Two WSFI projects are underway focused on monitoring (start 12.2011) and capacity-building (start 02.2012):

- WSFI monitoring project:

The project objective is informing policy and management with timely and accurate information about the status of waterbird populations along the East Atlantic Flyway. Through integrated monitoring of population sizes, demographic trends and environmental conditions, information relevant to management at flyway and site level is generated. Methods and framework are largely based on the existing International Waterbird Census (Wetlands International) and Important Bird Areas Programme (BirdLife International). For the monitoring of demographic parameters several methods are available but a framework for cooperation needs to be developed.

The geographic regions of importance to get sufficient monitoring data for reliable assessment are the Arctic, Western Europe, West Africa and Africa further south. In 2012 - 2014 the project is focussed on preparing plans and strategies, but also on concrete furthering of the development of monitoring in coastal West Africa.

To date, jointly with the CMB project, a regional workshop in June 2012 (Dakar) was organized with the development of a monitoring strategy for the region as output, a successful training course on field techniques and monitoring skills was held in Mauritania in December 2012 and in January 2013 counts were conducted at a selection of sites. Currently preparations are well underway for a simultaneous count of all key sites in West Africa in January 2014. It is the first time that such a large scale coordinated count has taken place. It will collect important data on the total population of many species and thus contribute to e.g. a better underpinning of the 1% criterion as applied for Ramsar sites.

- WSFI capacity building project:

The project objective is to intensify cooperation for the protection of waterbirds along the East Atlantic Flyway, with a special focus on capacity-building, improvement of area management and sustainable development in Western Africa. The need for building capacity in the coastal zone of Africa is well established, supported by training needs analyses, including those carried out under development of the WOW and CMB projects (see below). The main focus areas of the project are to deliver national and regional training courses, develop capacity-building materials, establish site management guidelines for migratory waterbird conservation and carry out small-scale awareness and pilot management events. To date, two national courses have been held in Guinea-Bissau and Sierra Leone (including participants from Liberia), whilst support was also provided to the WSFI monitoring project / CMB regional course in Mauritania. Future planned activities include a national training course in Angola, a regional management and Training of Trainers workshop (jointly with CMB) and development of an East Atlantic Flyway waterbird guide; the latter project is in progress.

Both projects aim to support each other through intensive collaborative activities and in full partnership with the Conservation of Migratory Birds (CMB) project (see below).

b. Conservation of Migratory Birds (CMB) project

CMB project coordinated by BirdLife International and Wetlands International is an NGO-government partnership for migratory bird conservation along the coast of West Africa. The project is about strengthening networks to improve the knowledge and conservation status of migratory birds through comprehensive programmes of integrated research, monitoring and conservation action. It is participatory, and engages relevant stakeholders through site-based projects and an overarching policy and advocacy programme. It also builds technical capacity in the region for migratory bird conservation through training and exchange programmes, in which local community groups are engaged. To date, a scientific review of migratory birds and their habitats was produced; it is a baseline for monitoring of migratory birds and their habitats, and gives recommendations for research in the region. A number of trainings on monitoring at regional and national level were organised including the regional field training in Mauritania jointly with WSFI projects, national training courses on migratory birds in Guinea and Senegal. National NGO's affiliated with BirdLife International, in the 7 countries covered by the project are implementing small grants at key sites for migratory birds and its activities are mainly focused on monitoring, habitat restoration, awareness and capacity building of local communities. Vogelbescherming Nederland (VBN), the BirdLife partner in the Netherlands, contributed to co-finance of CMB activities and support of the development of the joint communication plan WSFI-CMB. Development of national species action plans (Black-tailed Godwit, Eurasian Spoonbill, Lesser Flamingo and Black Crown Crane) are underway and the one on Cape Verde Shearwater planned.

- A WSFI/CMB Communication Plan has been developed, which aims to:
 - inform stakeholders, partners and donors about migratory birds and their urgent conservation needs, and to inspire them to support conservation action;

- consolidate the achievements of WSFI and CMB for migratory bird conservation along the East Atlantic Flyway, especially in west Africa and to create momentum for continuation;
- raise the profile of WSFI and CMB, its leading organisations and partners;
- promote the World Heritage status of the Wadden Sea and its linkages with other World Heritage Sites along the flyway.

c. International Waterbird Census (IWC) and Important Bird Areas (IBA) programme

The IWC is a global monitoring programme coordinated by Wetlands International. In Africa – Eurasia it is part of the African –Eurasian Waterbird Monitoring partnership. It has run since 1967 and today covers over 25,000 sites in more than 100 countries. In each country national coordinators work with a network of professional and amateur counters to provide waterbird counts to the IWC. In total, more than 15,000 people submit their data annually, making this one of the largest monitoring schemes largely based on citizen science. Most countries of the East Atlantic Flyway participate in the IWC, which serves as a central repository for waterbird count data – essential in estimating population sizes and trends and the determination of the well known Ramsar 1% criterion. The main period for coordinated counts is in January each year. In Sub-Saharan Africa a July count is also organized.

The IBA programme is coordinated by BirdLife International and aims to identify according to a set of standardized criteria and protect a network of sites critical for the long-term viability of wild bird populations, across the range of those bird species for which a sites-based approach is appropriate. Many of the sites identified qualify also as Ramsar site, Special Protected Area under the EU Birds Directive or under other site protection schemes. Worldwide more than 11,000 IBAs have been identified. Especially in countries with a national BirdLife partner, monitoring of IBAs is conducted following a systematic approach describing developments at the sites related to state, pressures and conservation responses. A selection of countries of the East-Atlantic Flyway is participating in this programme but improvements in coverage are desirable. Further activities within the WSFI could contribute to this.

d. Wings Over Wetlands

The Wings Over Wetlands (WOW) project was the first international, flyway-scale wetland and waterbird conservation initiative of the African-Eurasian region implemented by Wetlands International, BirdLife International, AEWA and Ramsar Secretariats. Funding came from UNEP/GEF and substantial contributions from some governments such as Germany and various NGOs. The four year project (2006 – 2010) was a partnership among international conservation organizations and national governments, which aimed to improve and conserve healthy and viable populations of African-Eurasian migratory waterbirds through basically mind-changing of e.g. site managers, local, regional and national policy authorities. It also included 11 wetland areas in Europe, Asia and Africa which were used as example areas for various themes in wetlands management, research public awareness and education. Two key outputs still serve as useful resources for implementing flyway activities under the WSFI, notably the Flyway Training Kit (<http://www.wetlands.org/?TabId=56&mod=1570&articleType=ArticleView&articleId=2636>) and the Critical Site Network Tool (<http://csntool.wingsoverwetlands.org/csn/default.html#state=home>)

e. New initiatives

Other initiatives and actions also take place all along the East Atlantic Flyway, between the Arctic and Southern Africa, and at the Wadden Sea itself; many of these are covered by Boere (2010). New developments relevant to the coastal zone in West Africa include:

- The Wetlands International project 'From the Arctic to Africa: migratory birds connecting wetlands and people', which aims to improve the conservation of waterbirds through bringing together site managers across the flyway from Africa, the EU and Russia through facilitating networking and through provision of training on flyway issues building on the WOW project. This project also aims to improve the management of two critically important areas – the Senegal River Delta and the Nenets Autonomous Okrug in Northwest Russia; which includes the important large delta of the Pechora river

- The Zones Humides et Oiseaux Migrateurs en Afrique Sub-Saharienne / Sahélienne (ZHOMASS) project is under development, coordinated by the French National Agency for Hunting and Wildlife (ONCFS). It aims to strengthen capacity for the monitoring and wise use of wetlands and waterbirds in the Sahel zone.
- "Migratory Birds for People Initiative" coordinated by Wetlands Link International, Wetlands International and Staatsbosbeheer which aims to develop an effective network of visitor centres across the East Atlantic flyway connecting people to birds and promoting the conservation of migratory birds and their habitats. More information (wli.wwt.org.uk/regions/europe/europe-regional-initiatives/migratory-birds-for-people-programme/)
- "Enhancing the protection of birds and their habitats in marine and coastal environments of the Abidjan Convention region" is a joint initiative in development of BirdLife International and Abidjan Convention with an objective of developing a regional synthesis report on the status of birds and their habitats in the ABC Region.
- 'Living on the Edge' programme implemented by Vogelbescherming Nederland and BirdLife International is based on the ground breaking book, with the same title, from a team of Dutch ornithologists; they worked over 15 years in the wetlands of the Sub-Saharan region. There are many similar conservation, research and management problems in the Sub-Saharan wetlands as with the coastal wetlands and 'our Wadden Sea' birds. Where possible training, capacity building and monitoring are coordinated and jointly implemented. The programme is funded through a grant of the Dutch 'Postcodeloterij'.

5. Objectives

a. Wilhelmshaven 2011 workshop recommendations

The Wilhelmshaven 2011 workshop report 'Strengthening management and research along the African Eurasian Flyway' provides the following practical recommendations for the Wadden Sea countries to implement the WHC request:

1. Develop a vision on the interpretation and implementation of the WHC request.
2. Arrange a clear leadership for and coordination of the implementation of the WHC request.
3. Recruit more AEWA parties along the East Atlantic Flyway and support AEWA implementation.
4. Develop an integrated Training and Capacity Building Programme based on the flyway approach
5. Improve site management and wise use focussing on working with local communities
6. Develop an integrated Monitoring Programme
7. Develop further in-depth research for gaps in knowledge

The first two recommendations have been taken on board already during implementation of the WSFI projects (2012-2014), whilst implementing recommendations 4 and 6 has also begun with the CMB project in the coastal zone of West Africa. Recommendation 7 has started to be implemented with the METAWAD 1 research programme, coordinated by Prof. Piersma c.s. (NIOZ and University of Groningen) and funded by the Dutch 'Waddenfonds'.

b. WSFI objectives

Taking account the key flyway issues, the workshop recommendations and the results of initial projects, the following WSFI objectives are proposed:

1. Strengthen cooperation, coordination and communication along the East Atlantic Flyway
2. Establish an integrated flyway monitoring programme for the sustainable long-term monitoring of migratory waterbirds and critical sites
3. Strengthen capacity along the East Atlantic Flyway in conservation, management and monitoring of migratory waterbirds and their critical sites

4. Promote conservation and wise use management of coastal resources and migratory waterbirds of the East Atlantic Flyway
5. Build awareness of the East Atlantic Flyway, and the value and connections of migratory waterbirds

6. Plan of Action 2014 – 2020

a. Aim of the WSFI Plan of Action

This Plan of Action aims to guide future activities of the Trilateral Cooperation and WSFI partners along the East Atlantic Flyway (EAF) in fulfilment of the WSFI flyway vision through identifying priorities for action, highlighting proposed timescales and approximate costs of actions.

b. Scope of area and species

- Wadden Sea, East Atlantic Flyway (South Africa to Arctic)
- Wadden Sea bird species of the Joint Monitoring Migratory Bird and Breeding Bird Programme
- Waterbirds of the East Atlantic Flyway

c. WSFI Partners

- Signatories of the vision
- The World Heritage network
- Principal implementation partners
- Open for new partners

d. WSFI Plan of Action 2014-2020 (see below)

7. Final WSFI Conference 2015

To present the preliminary results of the ongoing WSFI projects and related projects by partners, it is proposed that in spring 2015 a conference is being held. Ideas have been worked out to extend this conference and give it a broader perspective under the title: *Global Flyways: linking our World's Heritage*. These ideas have been worked out in a different document with a detailed description of substance, objectives etc. It is also meant to meet to some extent one of the issues as agreed in the so-called 'Edinburgh Declaration on Flyway Conservation'. This was a set of conclusions and tasks formulated as an outcome of the 2004 Edinburgh conference: 'Waterbirds Around the World'. This declaration has officially been accepted by the Conference of the Parties of both Ramsar and Bonn Convention through accepted Resolutions. It should therefore stimulate the Parties to undertake actions in line with these resolutions.

WSFI Plan of Action 2014-2020

No.	Action	When	Costs	Priority
1	Strengthen cooperation, coordination and communication along the East Atlantic Flyway			
1.1	Develop and review a framework of cooperation for implementing the WSFI vision and Plan of Action	2014	low	high
1.2	Establish working partnership with AEWA, especially the AEWA African Initiative for implementing the AEWA Plan of Action for Africa	2014-2015	low	medium
1.3	Strengthen communication and links between East Atlantic Flyway World Heritage Sites	2014-2020	low	medium
1.4	Establish working partnerships for implementation of the Plan of Action, especially BirdLife International and Wetlands International in 'post-CMB scenario'	2014-2015	low	high
1.5	Establish and maintain close cooperation with relevant MEAs, notably AEWA, CMS, Ramsar, CAFF and the Abidjan Convention	2014-2020	low	medium
1.6	Strengthen links with Wadden Sea partners for collaborate flyway research and monitoring	2014-2020	low	medium
1.7	Ensure professional guidance through WSFI Steering Group and Advisory Board	2014-2020	low	high
2	Establish an integrated flyway monitoring programme for the East Atlantic Flyway			
2.1	Strengthen and support international and national waterbird and site monitoring coordination structures	2014-2020	medium	high
2.2	Strengthen and increase capacity for monitoring, especially in coastal Western Africa and the Arctic	2014-2020	high	high
2.3	Carry out annual waterbird counts at an expanding network of selected sites along the East Atlantic Flyway, including expanding efforts in Western Africa and counts in other months than January	2014 - 2020	medium	high
2.4	Integrate monitoring of waterbird abundance with monitoring of environmental factors, threats and conservation actions	2014 - 2020	medium	high
2.5	Carry out a repeated (once in six years) total waterbird count (all key sites) of the East Atlantic Flyway in January 2019	Jan. 2019	high	high
2.6	Initiate and conduct monitoring of vital rates of coastal waterbirds in the East Atlantic Flyway, start consortium and some pilot projects	2014 - 2020	medium	medium
2.7	Ensure timely integration of data into IWC and IBA databases and support their further development and utilisation	2014 - 2020	low	medium
2.8	Carry out and publish an East Atlantic flyway quality assessment	2019	medium	high
2.9	Integration of monitoring results in QSR Wadden Sea and arrange availability of flyway trends	2014 - 2020	low	high
2.10	Strengthen and support monitoring of migratory waterbirds in Arctic breeding grounds (support the Arctic Breeding Bird Survey)	2016	medium	high
2.11	Contribute to knowledge about migration and connectivity between sites along the East Atlantic Flyway	2014 - 2020	medium	medium

No.	Action	When	Costs	Priority
3	Strengthen capacity along the East Atlantic Flyway in conservation, management of migratory waterbirds and their critical sites			
3.1	Plan the implementation of an integrated capacity building programme for the East Atlantic Flyway, especially in Africa and Russia	2014-2015	medium	high
3.2	Strengthen the network of site managers along the East Atlantic Flyway through regional training and support, especially in site management	2014, Project	medium	medium
3.3	Support the further development of NGOs through advocacy training in cooperation with BirdLife	2016 - 2019	high	high
3.4	Support site-based training for integrating communities into site management and monitoring (citizen support)	2016 - 2020	high	medium
3.5	Ensure use of existing training tools, especially the Flyway Training Kit and the ONCFS Tool Kit	2014-2020	low	medium
4	Promote conservation and wise use management of coastal resources and migratory waterbirds of the East Atlantic Flyway			
4.1	Develop management plans for selected wetlands of the East Atlantic Flyway and support their implementation	2014 - 2020	medium	high
4.2	Establish and implement practical twinning mechanisms for site exchange and management, especially between the Wadden Sea, Banc d'Arguin and Bijagos	2014 - 2020	medium	high
4.3	Support and promote important waterbird sites in Arctic, Russia, West and South Africa in becoming marine World Heritage sites.	2014 - 2020	low	high
4.4	Strengthen partnerships for building flyway conservation into sectoral management policies and plans (e.g. agriculture, hunting, mining)	2014 -2020	medium	medium
4.5	Develop sustainable tourism initiatives focused on migratory birds / coastal wetlands along the East Atlantic Flyway	2014 - 2017	medium	medium
4.6	Support procedures for impact assessments, climate change research and pollution preparedness, especially in West Africa	2014 - 2020	medium	medium
4.7	Support and implement migratory waterbird Species Action Plans	2014 - 2020	high	medium
5	Build awareness of the East Atlantic Flyway, and of the value and connections of migratory waterbirds			
5.1	Implement the WSFI / CMB Flyway Communication Plan	2014	low	high
5.2	Hold awareness raising seminars for policy makers	2014 - 2020	high	medium
5.3	Develop flyway educational material in appropriate languages for use along the flyway	2014 - 2018	medium	high
5.4	Organise / support activities linked to annual migratory bird events, e.g. WMBD, Migratory Birds and Brent Goose Days (Germany)	2014 - 2020	low	high
5.5	Establish and actively update the WSFI website and establish networking arrangements with other flyway websites	2014 - 2020	low	high
5.6	Organise special awareness campaigns with other partners	2015, 2018, 2020	high	medium
5.7	Produce awareness raising outputs focused on the East Atlantic Flyway, such as a film, flyers, atlas, posters and games, also linked to the campaigns	2014 - 2020	low-medium	high
5.8	WSFI Conference	2015	high	high