

## Technical proposal of the STRP on resourcing and implementing Waterbird Population Estimates

### Actions requested:

The Standing Committee is invited to:

- i. take note of the technical proposal of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) on resourcing and implementing Waterbird Population Estimates (WPE);
- ii. consider options to mobilise resources within the Convention, and potentially in collaboration with partners, for the delivery of a 2027 edition of the WPE, to address the urgent and short-term requirements for updating waterbird population estimates;
- iii. consider the proposal to develop an international partnership approach (“Waterbird Estimates Partnership”), as a mechanism to guide periodic and fully resourced future updates of the WPE (from 2027 onwards), for the benefit of the Convention on Wetlands and all other users of waterbird population estimates; and
- iv. consider and approve the six recommendations outlined in the technical proposal.

### Summary

1. The global collation and publication of Waterbird Population Estimates (WPE) is a fundamental information source to deliver multiple aspects of the Convention on Wetlands, especially in the context of the selection and designation of Ramsar Sites (see Annex 1 below), as well as providing data of relevance to anticipated outcome indicators of the Fifth Strategic Plan of the Convention on Wetlands.
2. Contemporary data and information on waterbird populations also informs multiple other international and national waterbird and wetland conservation processes (including, among others, relevant targets of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework). It will also be increasingly important information to inform decision making by investors in nature (including water-related activities) and climate. Such purposes are recognised as of high policy and strategic relevance (see Annex 3).
3. The WPE currently includes 2,340 active populations of 899 waterbird species worldwide (of which 504 are classified as long-distance migrants and 1,836 as resident or short-distance migrants).

4. There is urgency to provide an update on these data and information sources because the published 1% thresholds for about 35% of the world's waterbird populations are now more than 12 years old and, in some cases, can be up to 35 years old.
5. The current situation has arisen from the lack of timely, adequate and sustained funding to review and update the WPE for every meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP) to the Convention, as required by Resolution VIII.38 on *Waterbird Population Estimates and the identification and designation of Wetlands of International Importance*.
6. Despite this problem, there are expanding opportunities for bringing new sources of data from different monitoring efforts for several waterbird populations across different flyways and regions worldwide, to be incorporated into the future WPE updates (see Table 3 below).
7. As requested by Resolution XIV.18 on *Waterbird population estimates to support new and existing Ramsar Site designations under Ramsar Criterion 6 – use of alternative estimates*, the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) has reviewed a range of options outlined in the section on issues and options for future decision on the scope, resourcing, and mechanism for the WPE process produced for this technical proposal.
8. The STRP's recommended proposal (see the technical proposal options and their resource implications below) is for an immediate short-term process to produce a sixth edition of Waterbird Population Estimates (WPE6, hereinafter referred to as WPE 2027) during the next triennium, with publication in advance of COP16 (see Table 6).
9. Delivery of WPE 2027 should include any necessary updates to existing population estimates (where information is out of date) and should prioritise adding in new population estimates which were previously not included in earlier WPEs (WPE 1 to 5) which are now available (potentially including those in the Americas, European resident species, and island endemics/populations, including in Australia and New Zealand). It will also incorporate updates from the latest Conservation Status Reports of the African Eurasian Waterbird Agreement and East Asian – Australasian Flyway Partnership. The final scope of the update will depend on data availability and the resources available to undertake the assessment.
10. In parallel to this immediate work, an urgent longer-term solution which facilitates a timely and regular periodic WPE process needs to be developed. It is recommended that this is delivered through the establishment of a global "Waterbird Estimates Partnership" (WEP), in collaboration with other actors (data suppliers and users). This type of partnership has been previously proposed (refer to Annex 2 of the present document) and will facilitate new and strengthen existing synergies between actors, enable the development of a cost-effective mechanism to deliver the estimates in a timely manner for multiple purposes and users, and establish a process which integrates new data sources of population estimates. The future WPE process, delivered through a WEP, aims to reduce the overall resourcing burden but will be dependent on a long-term financing and wider resourcing solution (see Table 5 and Annex 4).
11. The partnership approach is recommended given the broad range of data and information inputs that need to be maintained to ensure accurate reporting on WPE. The partnership will also enable a forum to resolve the multiple technical and procedural issues that relate to updating WPE. Annex 4 illustrates the partnership arrangements that may be necessary to implement technical recommendations for updating WPE across multiple flyways and geographic regions.

12. With relevant endorsements from the Convention on Wetlands and others (see Annex 2), there is scope for exploring options for innovative financing solutions for the work of the Partnership and the WPE process, including from corporate and other sources (see Annex 3).
13. A new Waterbird Estimates Partnership could also have an important role in encouraging strengthened monitoring in all countries for all waterbird populations, in leveraging resources that are needed for enhanced local capacity building, and in enhancing the resources to implement monitoring to improve data flows and enable regular reviews.
14. This technical proposal results in six STRP Recommendations as summarised in the section on key STRP Recommendations.

## Background

### WPE process to date, other bird population estimates, and need for a coordinated global approach

15. An evidence-based approach to the conservation of species and management of their habitats and species requires up to date information and sound monitoring. This requirement is formally recognised by the Convention on Biological Diversity's (CBD) Global Biodiversity Framework, the Convention on Wetlands' Strategic Plan, the Strategic Plan for Migratory Species, and other global and regional frameworks as a critical requirement for biodiversity assessment and evidence-based conservation responses and decision making.
16. The Waterbird Population Estimates (WPE), in the form of the series of five publications (WPE1-5), and currently the digital online repository of global waterbird population information on the Waterbird Populations Portal (WPP)<sup>1</sup>, are recognised as the primary source of the Convention on Wetlands' population estimates and derived 1% thresholds for use in application of Criterion 6 for Ramsar Site designation. The WPE provides an assessment of all populations of the world's waterbirds. The most recent WPE process (WPE5, 2012<sup>2</sup>) provides information on the distribution, status, trends of 2,304 populations of 871 species and the WPP (in 2024) now includes 2,340 active populations of 899 species (504 classified as long-distance migrants and 1,836 resident or short-distance migrants (see details in Table 3 of Annex 2).
17. The Convention on Wetlands has recognised that waterbird population estimates and trend updates are based on regular monitoring of populations through robust national monitoring schemes in all countries, and that the data should be submitted through the International Waterbird Census (coordinated by Wetlands International) and other sources in order to feed into the periodic WPE assessments (Resolutions [VIII.38](#), [X.22](#) and [XIV.18](#), see Annex 2 for all relevant resolutions).
18. The Convention on Wetlands has established a process of WPE updates to its COPs and the use of this information for the application of Criterion 6 by its Parties (Resolutions 5.9, VI.4 and VIII.38, see Annex 2 for all relevant resolutions) summarised as:

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<sup>1</sup> See <https://wpp.wetlands.org>, an online interactive platform (managed by Wetlands International) containing the most recent data on the status and distribution of the world's waterbird populations.

<sup>2</sup> See <https://www.wetlands.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Waterbird-Populations-Estimates-Fifth-Edition.pdf>.

*Frequency of preparation of reviews/updates:*

- a. A request to Wetlands International to work with Contracting Parties and partners to continue to bring an updated edition of Waterbird Population Estimates to each Conference of the Parties, having first undertaken international scientific consultation on its contents as the basis for the succeeding triennium;
- b. A request to review and keep up to date population size and trend estimates and 1% thresholds, in particular giving priority to the assessment of the sizes of those populations for which no reliable population estimate or 1% threshold currently exists; and
- c. An agreement that unless waterbird populations are poorly known or are known to be rapidly changing, 1% threshold levels should be revised not more frequently than every third ordinary meeting of the COP.

*Application of latest 1% threshold levels:*

- a. A call to Contracting Parties to use the latest estimates and thresholds provided by the WPE, as a basis for designation of Ramsar Sites in the succeeding three triennia (unless updates are published).
19. The first edition of the WPE was produced by the International Waterfowl and Wetlands Research Bureau (IWRB), which was shared as an Information Paper to COP5 in 1993 and published subsequently (Rose & Scott 1994).<sup>3</sup> Subsequent editions were produced by Wetlands International with ad hoc funding support.<sup>4</sup>
  20. The Convention on Wetlands through Resolution X.22 has urged its Contracting Parties and other bodies to contribute the necessary financial support to enable the production of such international assessments. However, the compilation of these population estimates and 1% thresholds, and their periodic updating, has no regular or sustainable source of funding. Without regular and fully planned long-term funding from the Convention and other bodies, the timetable anticipated at the process' outset of bringing a triennial update to each COP has not proved possible. Consequently, the production of most of these updates has been limited due to a lack of resources and the most recent full WPE update publication (WPE5) is now 12 years old, having been released in 2012 (see Annex 1 for more background).
  21. The WPE data is also used as a source of information by several other regional agreements and initiatives around the world. The 1% thresholds for waterbirds in WPE inform and/or underpin various site assessment and designation processes e.g. the European Union's (EU) Birds Directive by helping to identify some of the sites meriting designation as Special Protection Areas (part of Natura 2000 network) (and similarly for Emerald Network sites for non-EU Contracting Parties under the Bern Convention), the African Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement (AEWA) (to identify 'critical' flyway sites) and the West/Central Asian Flyway Site Network (to identify flyway network sites) under the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS), the East Asian - Australasian Flyway Partnership (EAAFP) and Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network (WHSN) (to identify flyway network sites), as well as within the assessments undertaken in the global IUCN Red List of Threatened Species and for the identification of

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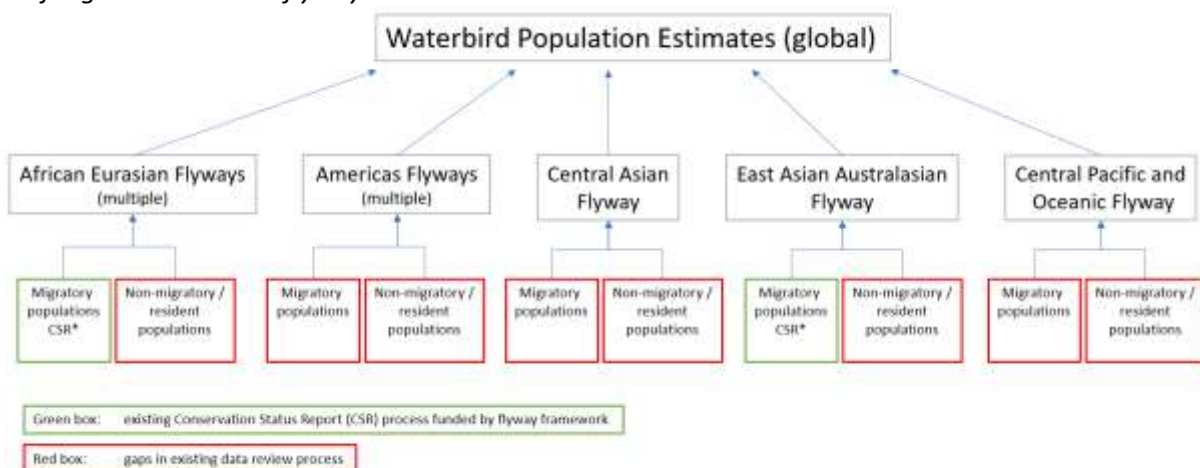
<sup>3</sup> Rose, P.M. & Scott, D.A. (1994). Waterfowl population estimates. IWRB Special Publication 29. IWRB, Slimbridge, U.K.

<sup>4</sup> *Inter alia* from Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Ireland, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Sweden and the United Kingdom (including CMS and AEWA as well as from the Convention on Wetlands Secretariat).

Important Bird Areas and Key Biodiversity Areas produced by BirdLife International, and IUCN, respectively (see Annex 3 to the present document for a list of other users).

22. Flyway initiatives, such as AEWA, have recognised the need for up-to-date information about the population sizes and trends of the populations covered by their conservation remit. In the last two decades, these regional flyway initiatives have established their own independent processes that are generating population estimates and 1% thresholds (but for migratory species only – and thus covering only part of the Convention on Wetlands’ bird population estimate ‘need’ for this region) for relevant use. This is, in part, because of the absence of a regular international WPE updating process.
23. AEWA has a three-yearly update cycle via its Conservation Status Report (CSR) process<sup>5</sup> which has been funded on each occasion through voluntary contributions from some Contracting Parties under work contracted via it’s Secretariat to Wetlands International. The EAAFP has more recently established a similar update process with its first CSR1 published in 2022 with its Secretariat similarly contracting Wetlands International. The EAAFP has not yet established a regular frequency or secured funding process for future updates.
24. Whilst the WPE assesses all populations of the world’s waterbirds<sup>6</sup>, AEWA’s CSR8 covers 560 populations of 255 migratory waterbird and seabird species in the African Eurasian Flyway, and EAAFP’s CSR covers 276 EAAF populations of 216 migratory waterbird species in the East Asian – Australasian Flyway.
25. Both WPE and CSR outputs have been available online since 2012 and are accessible in a searchable on-line interactive Waterbirds Populations Portal developed by Wetlands International in 2021 with donor funding.

Figure 1: Summary of existing dataflows (not necessarily complete for all populations) and remaining dataflow gaps within the Waterbird Population Estimates (WPE) ‘process’ organised against the five major global waterbird flyways.



26. However, the sum of these two CSR regional waterbird population updating processes does not equal a global WPE process, but covers only 34.5% of 2,340 waterbird populations, since: (a) not all regions/ flyways are covered; and (b) even within these two regions, only populations of

<sup>5</sup> See [https://www.unep-aewa.org/sites/default/files/document/aewa\\_mop8\\_19\\_csr8.pdf](https://www.unep-aewa.org/sites/default/files/document/aewa_mop8_19_csr8.pdf).

<sup>6</sup> WPE5 provides information on the distribution, status, trends of 2,304 populations of 871 species.

migratory waterbirds are considered, whereas the Convention on Wetlands' Criterion 6 relates to all waterbird species, including also the non-migratory and resident populations. Thus, the two flyway initiatives (AEWA and EAAFP) only cover a sub-set of waterbird species (the migratory ones) within their conservation remit. Figure 1 above provides an overview of what would be considered as a comprehensive global Waterbird Population Estimates process and the data/information sources that would need to be included.

27. In addition, a crucial driver in Europe has been the European Union's Birds Directive's Article 12 reporting process, linked with the European Red List of Birds, funded by the European Commission. This process covers all populations 'of naturally occurring birds in the wild state in the Member States' European territory', whether these are migratory or non-migratory. Similarly in north America, Partners in Flight (a network of more than 150 partner organisations distributed through the Western Hemisphere) run the Avian Conservation Assessment Database<sup>7</sup>, producing population estimates of resident and migratory species (not populations). However, these data sources for all the American populations and resident populations in Europe have yet to be reviewed for inclusion in the WPP since the publication of WPE5 and should be included in the next WPE and subsequent updates.
28. The Convention on Wetlands still refers to WPE5 as the most up to date population estimates available. However, for AEWA CSR7 (2018) and in the absence of the regular WPE updates since this time, the AEWA process has been updating relevant 1% thresholds for populations within the AEWA region where the population size has changed, for use in their own flyway processes. This is leading to uncertainty within the African-Eurasian region as to the current definitive source of 1% thresholds, since AEWA Contracting Parties have established a new process such that for some populations there are different estimates. There are also different 1% thresholds published in WPE5 (2012) and CSR7 (2018) and more recently CSR8 (2021). In 2022, EAAFP Partners also established a new process such that CSR1 provided 111 populations with new population size estimates and 1% thresholds compared to those published in WPE5 (2012).
29. For populations worldwide, other than those covered by the AEWA and the EAAFP processes, the most recent reviews are now 12 years old and the underpinning population size estimates in many cases are older (up to 35 years old).

#### How to resolve these issues

30. The issues of an ad hoc rather than regular publication schedule of the WPE updates, and the relationship with at least two international processes (AEWA and EAAFP) which have generated separate population estimates and derived thresholds, means that global work on bird population estimates is becoming increasingly inconsistent with no centralised process for global WPE updates. This situation will only become worse as time goes on, as more population data becomes available across all flyways and as more uses of the data/information present themselves, without a coordinated approach.
31. In the long-term, regular and sustainable financial support for this process is needed to avoid the need for ad hoc fund-raising, and to deliver regular WPE publications aligned with reviews by regional flyway initiatives.

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<sup>7</sup> See <https://pif.birdconservancy.org/population-estimates-database/>.

32. The STRP Chair has noted (see document SC59 Doc.25 *Report of the Chair of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel*) that “a logical and equitable means of providing the small funding needed would be through the inclusion within the Convention’s core budget”<sup>8</sup> in recognition that WPE are a critical information resource for the Convention on Wetlands.
33. We conclude that both a short-term (immediate) and longer-term approach may be necessary to deliver updated WPE, as outlined in later sections.
34. COP14 of the Convention on Wetlands through Resolution XIV.18, paragraph 16, recognised the need to identify options for resourcing WPE updates, and requested “the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) to develop a technical proposal to enable the resourcing and implementing of future timely and comprehensive Waterbird Population Estimates updates, in consultation with Contracting Parties, relevant flyway agreements and partnerships, Wetlands International and interested entities; and that this technical proposal, including, with advice from the Secretariat, an outline of funding implications, be presented to the 63rd meeting of the Standing Committee, ahead of a draft resolution for the next meeting of the Conference of the Parties, concerning the arrangements for future regular updates of the Waterbird Populations Portal”.

#### **Purpose of this technical proposal**

35. The purpose of this technical proposal is to:
  - a. Provide options for the resourcing and delivery of timely and comprehensive future WPE updates, with recommendations of a preferable approach.
  - b. Clarify the resources required to bring together all available waterbird population estimates around the world within future WPE updates in an efficient and cost-effective way, to be presented on the online WPP.
  - c. Identify the requirements for technical support to Contracting Parties in closing identified gaps in waterbird population data.

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<sup>8</sup> See <https://www.ramsar.org/document/sc59-doc25-report-chair-scientific-technical-review-panel>.

*Box 1: Wording of Task 1.1c as per the STRP Workplan 2023-2025<sup>9</sup> for reference.*

“Develop a technical proposal to set out several options for the resourcing and implementation of timely and comprehensive Waterbird Population Estimates updates.

The technical proposal should identify the requirements for technical support to Contracting Parties in closing identified gaps in waterbird population data and outline opportunities for capacity building, technical and scientific cooperation, and exchange.

The technical proposal will furthermore address:

- a. Synergies between the Convention on Wetlands and the various waterbird-related agreements and flyway initiatives in relation to obtaining the most up-to-date waterbird population estimates.
- b. Institutionalising resourcing and a partnership amongst the organisations leading relevant (regional or species-group specific) population status assessments.
- c. Opportunities and priorities for capacity building, technical and scientific cooperation, and exchange.
- d. Measures to reduce the costs of producing the WPE.”

### **Issues and options relating to the scope, resourcing and mechanism for the WPE process**

36. The long-term delivery of a sustainable mechanism to generate regular updates of the waterbird information will require several issues to be resolved in the context of establishment of priorities and timelines for the updates. These include particularly:
- a. the periodicity of updates (when WPE are produced);
  - b. WPE information update priority (which flyways);
  - c. taxonomic scope of the WPE (what species);
  - d. structural and logistical options for establishment of a partnership, or alternative mechanism, to bring together key organisations to provide strategic guidance for process planning for maintaining and updating of the WPE (how);
  - e. responsibility for undertaking the ‘stakeholder’ engagement with all parties interested in engaging in a re-energised WPE process (who); and
  - f. resourcing required to facilitate the data analysis and publication of the WPE on the WPP (how to resource).”

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<sup>9</sup> See <https://www.ramsar.org/about/bodies/scientific-and-technical-review-panel/work-strp>.



### Options for periodicity of updates

37. As outlined in the background section, the Convention on Wetlands has required a triennial report to be brought to each COP, and for populations to be reviewed and 1% thresholds to be updated every nine years i.e. not more than every third ordinary COP meeting, unless waterbird populations are poorly known or are known to be rapidly changing. AEWA initially adopted a three-year review cycle and now more recently a six-year periodicity for the updating of the 1% thresholds for the populations covered by this Agreement.
38. Consideration of an appropriate periodicity of the cycle for information updates by the WPE process is informed by the historical WPE cycles and other existing linked processes (see Table 1 below), as well as previous international consultations on this issue as reported in Resolution VI.4: *Adoption of population estimates for operation of specific criteria based on waterfowl* (1996) (see Annex 2), and may be proposed to be set in line to deliver the requirements of regional waterbird population estimate assessments and synergise with them, as outlined in Table 3 below.

Table 1: Review/update cycle of WPE linked to the Convention on Wetlands Criterion 6 requirements and other regional flyway frameworks/initiatives 2012-2023.

CSR = Conservation Status Review/Report; EUSoN = EU State of Nature; ERLoB = European Red List of Birds, with their years of (expected) release

Conservation initiative	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
WPE (Wetlands International)	WPE5											
Convention on Wetlands												
•update of pop size & trend estimates	WPE 5			Yes <sup>10</sup>			Yes			Yes		
•update of 1% thresholds	WPE 5									Yes		
AEWA CSR	CSR 5			CSR 6			CSR 7			CSR 8		
EU Birds Directive Article 12		EU MS report	EUSoN					EU MS report	EUSoN			
ERLoB (BirdLife International)				ERLoB						ERLoB		
East Asian – Australasian Flyway CSR											CSR 1	
North America/ Americas PIF updates												PIF 2023

<sup>10</sup> Timing of a WPE 6 edition should have been 2015, with subsequent editions in 2018, 2021 and 2024 to keep to the Convention on Wetlands’ Resolution VIII.38’s three-year cycle of producing a report with size and trend estimates, and with the 2021 edition with updated 1% thresholds to keep to the Convention on Wetlands’ Resolution VI.4 nine-year cycle. However, no WPE reports were produced within this timeframe (2015, 2018, 2021 and 2024).

39. There are at least three options for maintaining and updating waterbird population information globally. The pros and cons of these options are outlined in Table 2 below.

*Table 2: Options for maintaining and updating WPE information globally periodically*

Options	Pros	Cons
<p><b>1. Regular periodic updates</b> building on existing processes, complete with additional gap-filling reviews (see three options below based on different possible periodicity of WPEs):</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Medium-term stability of 1% thresholds for designation/ management of Ramsar Sites, Flyway Network Sites and other uses reflecting the dynamic nature of populations</li> <li>● Predictable review cycles and updates provided to inter-governmental international/ regional and other processes</li> <li>● Predictable cycle of funding requirements</li> <li>● Options to target regions/flyways to review populations within a triennium based on information gaps/ age of last updates</li> <li>● Benefit from links to periodic national reviews, such as in Australia and New Zealand.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Delays in reviewing/updating population size estimates and 1% thresholds if options 1b or 1c are preferred</li> </ul>
<p><b>1a. Regular periodic update:</b> WPE and 1% thresholds updated <b>every three years</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Three data points within a ten-year period to assess change in waterbird populations and also inform assessments of change through international processes such as the CBD's GBF, the UN SDGs, the Convention on Wetlands' Strategic Plan goals and targets etc, including for informing national reporting under such processes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Uncertainty for Parties and other users if 1% thresholds update change on short timescales, which should provide benchmarks for conservation assessment, designation processes and responses</li> <li>● More resources required due to short frequency of update cycle</li> </ul>
<p><b>1b. Regular periodic update:</b> WPE and 1% thresholds updated <b>every six years</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Benefits from links to AEWCA CSR, EU six-year Article 12 and EAAFP CSR cycles, and funding being raised for these</li> <li>● Provides assurance to Contracting Parties and other users of a helpfully stable set of information on biogeographic population sizes and 1% threshold information, whilst being updated regularly enough to enable appropriate conservation responses for rapidly changing populations (in terms of size, distribution etc.)</li> <li>● Potentially fewer resources required due to medium frequency of update cycle (although relatively long frequency will mean work is likely to be more intensive each six years</li> <li>● Multiple data points (approx. three) within a 20-year period to assess change in waterbird populations and also inform assessments of change through international processes such as the CBD's GBF, the UN SDGs, the Convention on Wetlands' Strategic Plan goals and targets etc, including for informing national reporting under such processes</li> </ul>	

Options	Pros	Cons
<p><b>1c. Regular periodic update:</b> WPE and 1% thresholds updated every nine years</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responds to the Convention on Wetlands Res. VI.4 for international 1% thresholds nine-year update cycle (other than for populations in rapid change)</li> <li>• Potentially fewer resources required due to long frequency of update cycle (although long frequency will mean work is more than likely to be more intensive each nine years)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Only one data point within a ten-year period to assess change in waterbird populations and also inform assessments of change through international processes such as the CBD's GBF, the UN SDGs, the Convention on Wetlands' Strategic Plan goals and targets etc, including for informing national reporting under such processes</li> </ul>
<p><b>2. Rolling updates</b> based on new information and independent single species/population size and trend assessments</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Benefit from latest research on populations sizes and trends to update 1% thresholds for designation/management of Ramsar Sites, Flyway Network Sites and other uses</li> <li>• Spread out costs might be easier to finance than periodic campaigns</li> <li>• Easier management of staff capacity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No stability of 1% thresholds for designation/management of Ramsar Sites, Flyway Network Sites and other uses</li> <li>• Uncertainty for Parties with rapidly and ad hoc changes to thresholds that should provide benchmarks for assessment</li> <li>• Out of synchrony with species and populations covered under CSRs and other regional processes</li> </ul>
<p><b>3. A combination of Options 1 and 2 (regular period and rolling updates).</b> WPE and 1% thresholds updates could still be happening every three or six years, whilst the underpinning review process can be happening continuously</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data flows with new estimate and trend information are being received and stored on an ongoing basis</li> <li>• Maintaining continuous dialogue with all flyway partners / data providers which might also encourage more efficient synergies and provision of the latest information in the most timely manner</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuous resource requirement for ongoing rolling updates, in addition to periodic WPE processes and publication</li> </ul>
<p><b>4. WPE and 1% thresholds updated asynchronously</b> – WPE published every three years as data is available (same as option 1a) but 1% thresholds reviewed and updated only every third triennium (every nine years), but where there are rapid changes in populations, maintain option of updating 1% thresholds more frequently (every three or six years)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See 1a.</li> <li>• Resources required to deliver 1% thresholds only once every nine years</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WPE published every three years - more resources required due to short frequency of update cycle (although short frequency will likely enable some resource saving as not all work will wait to happen every six or nine years as per options 1b and 1c)</li> </ul>

Table 3: Proposed review/update cycle of waterbird population estimates and trends linked to the Convention on Wetlands Criterion 6 requirements and other regional flyway frameworks/initiatives 2024-2042.

Note: only Options **1b** and **1c** outlined in Table 2 are provided in this table

Conservation Initiative	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036	2037	2038	2039	2040	2041	2042
WPE updates Wetlands International <sup>11</sup>				WPE 2027			WPE 2030			WPE 2033			WPE 2036			WPE 2039			WPE 2042
Convention on Wetlands		COP 15			COP 16			COP 17			COP 18			COP 19			COP 20		
• Update pop size & trend estimates				Yes <sup>12</sup>			Yes			Yes			Yes			Yes			Yes
• Update 1% thresholds (option 1b)				Yes						Yes						Yes			
• Update 1% thresholds (option 1c)				Yes									Yes						
AEWA CSR		CSR-9 (D&P) <sup>13</sup>			CSR-10 (PST)			CSR-11 (D&P)			CSR-12 (PST)			CSR-13 (D&P)			CSR-14 (PST)		
EU Birds Directive Article 12		EU MS report	EUSo N					EU MS report	EUSo N					EU MS report	EUSo N				

<sup>11</sup> The proposal is for a future edition of the WPE to be identified by the year in which it is produced (rather than an edition number as is currently practiced).

<sup>12</sup> The proposal is for a WPE to be prepared in 2025-2026 (version 2027) - with a focus on filling geographic information gaps as a high priority and use existing latest AEWA CSR8 and EAAFP CSR1 updates and EUSoN reviews. See section 4.2 (Table 4).

<sup>13</sup>AEWA CSR: D&P - Drivers & Pressures, PST – Population size and trends. Details in [https://www.unep-awea.org/sites/default/files/document/awea\\_tc15\\_22\\_discussion\\_paper\\_on\\_format\\_and\\_content\\_of\\_8th\\_edition\\_of\\_conservation\\_status\\_report\\_en\\_0.pdf](https://www.unep-awea.org/sites/default/files/document/awea_tc15_22_discussion_paper_on_format_and_content_of_8th_edition_of_conservation_status_report_en_0.pdf)

Conservation Initiative	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036	2037	2038	2039	2040	2041	2042
ERLoB (BirdLife) <sup>14</sup>				ERLoB						ERLoB						ERLoB			
East Asian – Australasian Flyway CSR <sup>15</sup>			CSR 2?																
North America/ Americas PIF updates <sup>16</sup>				x					x					x					x
Other Flyway Updates																			

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<sup>14</sup> Future ERLoB updates are funding dependent. BirdLife International has won the last two EC tenders to assess the status of birds for EUSoN and to collate equivalent data from non-EU countries to produce ERLoB.

<sup>15</sup> Future EAAF CSRs are funding dependent.

<sup>16</sup> Updates of the Partners in Flight and Avian Conservation Assessment Database are planned every 1-5 years.

*Box 2: STRP Recommendation 1: Future WPE and 1% thresholds periodicity.*

Based on a careful consideration of these options, it would appear that the Convention on Wetlands and other major users of waterbird population estimates information would benefit from an appropriate stability in the regularity of population size estimates and trends information and the subsequent derived 1% thresholds, which also meets the functional needs of users and delivers timely estimates for conservation approaches for waterbird populations globally.

Therefore, **options 1b or 1c** (Table 2) seem to be the most appropriate and resource efficient, rather than a continuous, or too rapid a process, where changes to this derived information on a too rapid basis would be unhelpful for a number of practical and policy reasons. There may be exceptions to this rule in a small number of cases where more frequent updates are necessary, especially for rapidly changing (declining) populations.

WPE information update priority

40. As outlined in the sub-section on options for periodicity of updates, there is a need for a periodic review and update of waterbird population information to provide users with up to date and yet consistent population information and 1% thresholds which effectively support conservation action and related decision making.
41. Against the need for up-to-date information, the current situation is one where the most up-to-date information in the WPP is for the migratory populations of the AEWA and EAAFP regions, which has benefited from the CSR processes (produced outside the Convention on Wetlands) summarized in Annex 1 below. Information on migratory waterbird populations in other flyways and resident waterbird populations worldwide in the WPP is largely outdated, some by up to 30 years, and there is an urgent need to update these.
42. This technical proposal aims at providing the basis for the development of a sustainable, long-term solution to create a periodic waterbird populations update based on several review processes operating across the globe by a range of international actors, including the Convention on Wetlands, EU, AEWA and EAAFP processes and other flyway initiatives and partnerships. Relevant linkages to these will need to be established.
43. However, in the short term (with outdated information for many populations) there is an immediate requirement for an update focussing on a number of priority geographic (flyway) regions and specific priority species groups (where there is already available data, and this is needed for priority conservation actions).
44. Funding permitting, any update should start as soon as possible for delivery by COP16 and ahead of any new full WPE process cycle. Table 4 describes an initial list of species groups and regions identified as a priority for updating through the proposed interim update, established for the reasons given above. Such an interim review could take advantage of the existing information available for some of these regions/groups, including resident and non-migratory populations within Europe covered by the EU Article 12 process and linked with the EU-funded ERLoB; in North America by the Avian Conservation Assessment Database run by Partners In Flight<sup>17</sup>; non-migratory populations globally, and for populations confined to a country (e.g. Australia, New Zealand) or island endemics (e.g. Okinawa Rail *Hypotaenidia okinawae* in Japan).

<sup>17</sup> See <https://pif.birdconservancy.org/population-estimates-database/>.

Table 4: Current review processes and priority for review of waterbird populations

<b>Populations</b> (with estimated no. of populations as per region/flyway in WPP)	<b>Current review process/mechanism and resourcing assessment</b>	<b>Priority for a proposed WPE 2027 update</b>	<b>Resources implications</b>
<b>Resident or locally dispersing</b>			
Africa (226)	Outdated information with no process in place	High priority	Collate, review and update to Portal
Nearctic (North America) (91)	National processes in North America exist	High priority	Assess compatibility of available information and update to Portal
Neotropics (Central and South America and Caribbean) (200)	Outdated information with no process in place	High priority	Collate, review and update to Portal
Asia (Indo Malay & Eastern Palearctic ) (132)	Outdated information with no process in place	High priority	Collate, review and update to Portal
Oceania (incl. Australasia) (337)	National updates in Australia, New Zealand	High priority	Assess compatibility of available information and update to Portal
Europe	EU Art 12 process, linked with ERLoB, collation funded by EC/EEA	High priority	Assess compatibility of available information and update to Portal
<b>Migratory</b>			
Central Asian Flyway (264)	Included in the CAF Waterbird Action Plan <sup>18</sup> . (264 populations, of which >140 populations are covered by AEWA CSRs) Outdated information for >124 populations with no funding or process in place is a priority	High priority	Collate, review and update to Portal
Central Pacific Flyway (& Antarctica), including residents (60)	Outdated information with no process in place	High priority	Collate, review and update to Portal
Americas Flyways (379)	Review processes exist for waterbirds in North America (to Central America) and 79 migratory shorebird populations across the Americas	High priority	Assess compatibility of available information and update to Portal
East Asian - Australasian Flyway (276)	EAAFP CSRs process funded by EAAFP (276 populations)	Medium priority, to address pop gaps for many families and species not included in CSR1	None
African-Eurasian Flyways (532)	AEWA CSRs process funded by AEWA (CSR8 - 560 waterbird and seabird populations)	Low priority, plan in place for 2029 update	None
Total indicative costs:			366,000 CHF <sup>19</sup>

<sup>18</sup> See <https://www.cms.int/en/document/central-asian-flyway-action-plan-conservation-migratory-waterbirds-and-their-habitats>.

<sup>19</sup> A preliminary cost estimate is based on the tasks foreseen for each region/flyway depending on expected available information and anticipated work. A unit population estimate cost is based on costs of the AEWA CSR8 and EAAFP CSR1. The main tasks anticipated for population size assessments include: reviewing of



45. After the outdated estimates are reviewed and updated in the next publication of the WPE (WPE 2027), a regular cycle of updates could be undertaken in the future through the full WPE updating process (as proposed in Options 1b or 1c in Table 2 above).

*Box 3: STRP Recommendation 2: The delivery of an urgent WPE updating process to be delivered by COP16, covering species groups and regions prioritised for updating*

The following steps are proposed:

1. A global review of the current status of information to be undertaken to identify priority populations for review/update (as Table 4 above), including consideration of the threat implied by species Red List status.
2. The high priority populations are updated in a review undertaken within the next two to three years as WPE2027 (by COP16), such that the information of the WPP are brought to a comparable recency and quality, and thus creating a more robust baseline of information for future WPE updates.

Information on different flyways and regions are updated into the future, as per an agreed schedule (to be agreed).

#### Options of taxonomic expansion

46. The current taxonomic coverage of the WPE in 2024 is 2,340 biogeographic populations of 899 species within 33 families of waterbirds.
47. The Convention on Wetlands Resolution VIII.38 states: “WELCOMES the intention of Wetlands International to enhance the scope and coverage of future editions of Waterbird Population Estimates so as to include all waterbird taxa listed in the glossary to the Strategic Framework and guidelines for the future development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance”.
48. Such a global taxonomic expansion has not been undertaken by Wetlands International to date, for reasons of lack of resources and because the focus has been on securing updates for existing taxa in response to the need of the Convention on Wetlands.
49. The current taxonomic coverage of AEWA and EAAFP includes a limited number of populations of selected largely coastal seabird families (many of which are important qualifiers of Ramsar Site designation). AEWA currently includes 36 populations of 16 species in five families that are included in the WPP. For the EAAFP CSR, seabird populations with size and trend estimates and 1% thresholds are still to be defined and have been prioritized for inclusion with its CSR2 to be

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current definition of populations and revising them based on latest taxonomy (as per BirdLife International/Handbook of the Birds of the World); collating and reviewing existing literature for population size estimate data (for some regions, review of literature in different languages requires additional effort); aligning information with WPE definition of population estimates and boundaries; updating of population size estimates and finalising them in consultation with experts; and generating updated derived 1% thresholds (changes to the 1% threshold of a population estimate will only be proposed when a change of the 1% threshold equals or exceeds 20%). Proposed actions for population trend assessments include: reviewing literature for new population trend estimates; proposing of updated population trend estimates, based on review of new trends and trend analysis and finalising population trends in consultation with experts. Trend analyses using IWC data for limited number of CAF populations not currently covered by the AEWA CSR8 will be undertaken.

produced by 2026 and could also be included in the WPP in the future.

50. It may therefore be an option to consider (a) whether or not to expand the taxonomic scope of WPE to include (a limited number of) seabird families as well, and (b) when such an expansion may be appropriate. This should be considered against the current situation that the WPP currently includes a significant number of waterbird populations for which there is currently outdated population size that affects the quality of 1% population thresholds, and that the priority should be to improve this information first.
  - a. Option 1. **The WPE continues with the current taxonomic coverage** as currently provided to the Convention on Wetlands, limited to 33 waterbird families.
  - b. Option 2. **The taxonomic coverage in the WPE is extended to include seabird families covered by the two regional flyway instruments.** Their inclusion in the WPP will be contingent on the flyway instruments providing the resources to review and maintain the updates.
  - c. Option 3. **The taxonomic coverage in the WPE is extended to include all seabird families covered by regional flyway agreements and other frameworks.**
51. Decisions on the inclusion of all seabird families will need to be considered in a future phase, after the process and resources for review and update of the existing taxonomic groups is secured and functioning effectively and efficiently.
52. The inclusion of additional families would require identifying groups with the information and ability to take on periodic reviews. Relevant bodies may include the World Seabird Union, Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP), regional seas conventions (Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic (OSPAR), Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission (HELCOM), etc.), BirdLife International Marine Programme, regional seabird groups (Atlantic, Pacific, etc.) and others (see [https://www.seabirds.net/member\\_organisations/](https://www.seabirds.net/member_organisations/)).

*Box 4: STRP Recommendation 3: Taxonomic coverage of future WPE updates*

Any decisions on the inclusion of seabird families will need to be considered in a future phase, after the process and resources for the review and updating of population and 1% thresholds information for the existing taxonomic waterbird groups covered by the WPE process, is secured and functioning effectively and efficiently. It is proposed to continue with Option 1 in the interim.

Option to establish a Waterbird Estimates Partnership (WEP)

53. This option outlines a proposal to move the WPE process in the longer term to a more coordinated and stable approach which provides the necessary information for other related global and international processes requiring timely and accurate waterbird population information, consistent across multiple WPE cycles.
54. This proposed solution derives from discussions with relevant actors over the five past years, and reports of the STRP Chair to the 58th meeting of the Standing Committee (see document SC58 Doc.19<sup>20</sup>) and SC59 (see document SC59 Doc.25<sup>21</sup>).

<sup>20</sup> See [https://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/library/sc58-19\\_strp\\_chair\\_report\\_e.pdf](https://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/library/sc58-19_strp_chair_report_e.pdf).

<sup>21</sup> See [https://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/library/sc59\\_2022\\_25\\_strp\\_chair\\_report\\_e.pdf](https://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/library/sc59_2022_25_strp_chair_report_e.pdf).

55. The proposed partnership approach for ongoing updates of WPE recognises that:
- a. WPE have been a fundamental information need for the Convention on Wetlands for over 30 years, but there is inadequate structural support and global processes for updating population estimates.
  - b. There is increasing population assessment activity occurring now at flyway scale, stimulated by flyway initiatives for migratory populations, but aspects of these assessments are not well integrated with WPE causing uncertainty for Contracting Parties (a risk already foreseen in 1996 – see paragraph 5 of the Convention on Wetlands Resolution VI.4 (*Adoption of population estimates for operation of the specific criteria based on waterfowl*)).
  - c. The WPE covers a large number of resident/non-migratory populations, as well as migratory populations, however there is no mechanism or resources available to review and update population information of resident waterbirds around the world. As a consequence, many of their population estimates are outdated by more than 30 years.
  - d. The WPE process benefits a range of international and regional processes (see Annex 3) and there is an opportunity to explore whether other entities may be willing to partner with the Convention on Wetlands to strengthen the coordination and delivery of the work, and jointly resource the work.
  - e. Inviting key organisations to establish a “Waterbird Estimates Partnership” presents a mechanism to provide strategic guidance and support for a long-term solution for the regular and timely update of WPE, as short-term responses may become increasingly difficult to resource.
  - f. The work and outputs of such a Partnership would directly contribute to the fulfilment of Targets 6, 8, 14 and 18 of the existing Convention on Wetlands Strategic Plan for 2016-2024, and would also be directed to facilitate the necessary information required for other global, regional and national processes.
  - g. A partnership approach offers an opportunity for new synergies with other multilateral environmental agreements (including AEWA and EAAFP) and other international institutions as called for through Convention on Wetlands Resolution XIV.6 (*Enhancing the Convention’s visibility and synergies with other multilateral environmental agreements and other international institutions*).

*Box 5: STRP Recommendation 4: Establishment of a Waterbird Estimates Partnership.*

It is proposed to invite key organisations to establish a new Waterbird Estimates Partnership that would meet on a regular basis to provide strategic guidance for WPE process planning and to find a long-term solution to providing definitive population estimates for the Convention on Wetlands and multiple other users.

56. Annex 4 illustrates the partnership arrangements that may be necessary to implement technical recommendations for updating WPE across multiple flyways and geographic regions, with an anticipated scope of work for the proposed Partnership outlined in Table 5 below.

Table 5: Anticipated work of the proposed Waterbird Estimates Partnership

NOTE: this anticipated work (and associated resourcing (cost) considerations) is based on the expectation of a full WPE update every six years and will need to be reviewed and revised based on the decision(s) taken on the periodicity of future WPE updates.

Module	Frequency <sup>22</sup>	Potential cost coverage	Cost elements
<b>a. Maintenance and update of WPE information</b>			
1. Global collation of Waterbird Population Estimates from regional processes for migratory species or other sources (this includes work to bring together the data and undertake the data analysis from 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 in this table)	Annual	Convention on Wetlands? Others contributing financial support?	Staff time (Wetlands International) and subcontracts for specific regions/populations.
2. Regional assessment process (CSR) for the African Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement (AEWA) <sup>23</sup>	Six-year intervals	AEWA Secretariat	CSR8 cost 95,187 CHF in 2021. Costs for subsequent editions will depend on scope of work of alternate reports.
3. Regional assessment process (CSR) for East Asian – Australasian Flyway (EAAFP) <sup>24</sup>	Three-four year intervals	EAAFP Secretariat	CSR1 cost 83,290 CHF in 2022. Costs for subsequent editions will depend on scope of work of alternate reports.
4. Regional Central Asian Flyway (CAF) Initiative (including the CAF Waterbird Action Plan <sup>25</sup> ) adopted at CMS COP14 in February 2024, Samarkand	To be determined, ideally six-year intervals	CMS CAF Initiative? Convention on Wetlands?	Staff time (Wetlands International) and subcontracts for specific regions/populations.
5. Regional assessment process for Central Pacific flyway (no existing framework)	To be determined, ideally at six-year intervals <sup>26</sup>	Convention on Wetlands?	Staff time (Wetlands International) and subcontracts for specific regions/populations.
6. Regional assessment process for Americas <sup>27</sup> (Americas flyways framework; CMS Americas)	To be determined, ideally at six-year intervals	CMS or Convention on Wetlands?	Staff time (Wetlands International) and subcontracts for specific regions/populations.

<sup>22</sup> As proposed in this proposal, a change is required from the existing nine-year cycle as per the Convention on Wetlands Resolution to a six-year cycle as a preferred option for global reviews of the 1% thresholds.

<sup>23</sup> Starting from AEWA CSR9 in 2025, the scope of the CSR will alternate at each next MOP. CSR9 will focus on drivers and pressures and while retaining the trend analysis, it will not update the pop size estimates and the 1% thresholds. This will be done by CSR10 in 2028. Details in [https://www.unep-aewa.org/sites/default/files/document/aewa\\_tc15\\_22\\_discussion\\_paper\\_on\\_format\\_and\\_content\\_of\\_8th\\_edition\\_of\\_conservation\\_status\\_report\\_en\\_0.pdf](https://www.unep-aewa.org/sites/default/files/document/aewa_tc15_22_discussion_paper_on_format_and_content_of_8th_edition_of_conservation_status_report_en_0.pdf).

<sup>24</sup> EAAFP Decision 11.8 states: Produce CSR updates in a regular reporting cycle (every three years, or “at least every alternate MOP or not more than four yearly” as called for by MOP Decision 10.12) that ensures familiarity and establishes a routine, both for data reporting from monitoring programmes and for experts contributing to the consultation process.

<sup>25</sup> The CMS Central Asian Waterbirds Flyway Action Plan 2005 refers to the need to improve measurement of trends and share information with international organisations to enable review. Links to CMS\_COP14\_Doc.28.4.2. CAF Initiative.

<sup>26</sup> Linked to the non-migratory waterbird review for the Asia-Pacific or Americas.

<sup>27</sup> CMS Resolution 12.11, Annex 3, Action Plan for the Americas Flyway 2018-2023 refers to the need to promote a review before 2023 (and CMS COP14).

Module	Frequency <sup>22</sup>	Potential cost coverage	Cost elements
Flyways Framework under development)			
7. Global assessment of resident/non-migratory waterbirds for inclusion in <i>Waterbird Population Estimates</i>	Staggered triennial update covering each different global flyway region or as agreed by partnership	Convention on Wetlands? Others contributing financial support?	Staff time (Wetlands International) and subcontracts for specific regions/populations.
8. To maintain the Waterbirds Populations Portal to deliver WPE information and update in response to annual IUCN Red List updates, periodic taxonomic and population information updates.	Annual	Convention on Wetlands? Others contributing financial support?	Staff time (Wetlands International) and subcontracts for specific developments.
<b>b. Reporting on WPE updates/major outputs</b>			
9. Publication of an online “State of the World’s Waterbirds” Report to each Convention on Wetlands COP of overview of Waterbird Population Estimates and WEP activities	Triennial	Convention on Wetlands	Staff time (Wetlands International) and subcontracts for specific report components.
10. Periodic publication of global Waterbird Population Estimates (report on behalf of the Convention on Wetlands and other partners) containing a summary of population sizes, trend estimates and 1% thresholds	Six-year intervals	Convention on Wetlands	Cost elements to include: Online report, associated webpages on WI website, press releases, web-hosting hosts, printed copies costs. Staff time to collate and produce information bring all this together, including external consultants and peer reviewers if needed.
11. Reports to other Partner processes	To be decided in agreement with partners	Partners, working with Convention on Wetlands?	
<b>c. Coordination</b>			
12. Co-ordination of the Waterbird Estimates Partnership through a ‘Global Coordination Committee’	Annual	Convention on Wetlands and partners? Others contributing financial support?	Staff time (Wetlands International). Annual meeting costs (travel and related costs if linked to other meeting).

**Box 6: STRP Recommendation 5: Modus operandi of the Waterbird Estimates Partnership.**

It is proposed to develop a clear modus operandi for the WEP based on the information outlined in Table 5 and Annex 4, that includes a modular, costed programme of work to run a formal Partnership after COP16 (2028), that ensures the delivery of regular future WPE updates.

## Technical proposal resource implications

57. The short-term resource implications for the immediate update of WPE during 2025 - 2027 (for publication of WPE 2027) are summarised in Table 6.
58. In addition, the 2025-2028 resource implications for maintenance of the WPP and to facilitate the establishment of the Waterbird Estimates Partnership are presented in Table 6.

*Table 6: Short term priority costed options to develop a WPE2027 by the Convention on Wetlands during the 2025-2028 triennium (in CHF).*

Priority short term action to enable WPE6	Resources anticipated to deliver action
1. Undertake review and updates of selected 1,600 populations to be included as the WPE2027 (via the urgent WPE update in 2025-2027 and delivery to COP16 <sup>28</sup> (See Table 4 for details)	366,000
2. Maintain the Waterbirds Populations Portal to deliver WPE information and update in response to annual Red List updates and periodic taxonomic and population information updates (including ensuring enhanced functionalities <sup>29</sup> for enhanced ease of use by Parties), 2025-2028	61,000
3. Establish a “Waterbird Estimates Partnership” for launch at COP16 - initiate consultation and get agreement of potential partners to establish a Partnership, development of a triennial work plan and budget, including agreement of cofunding (2026-2027)	38,000
<b>Total indicative costs (early estimate):</b>	<b>465,000</b>

<sup>28</sup> 1,600 populations, including all populations, other than those covered by AEWA and EAAFP CSRs (resident populations in Africa, Asia, Europe, Nearctic, Neotropics, and Oceania and migratory populations of Americas Flyways, Central Asian Flyway and Central Pacific Flyway and oceanic flyways).

<sup>29</sup> WPP enhancements, including, production and downloading of a list of populations with size and trend estimates and 1% thresholds per country, download functionality for single locations for supporting designation of potential Ramsar Sites, inclusion of species distribution maps overlays from BirdLife International.

*Box 7: STRP Recommendation 6: Resourcing of future Waterbird Populations Estimates (WPE) process, including through the Waterbird Estimates Partnership (WEP).*

Key actions required are:

- a. Resource an immediate WPE2027 process in 2025-2027 for delivery to COP16.
- b. Establish and resource the Waterbird Estimates Partnership for the long term, to be formally established for launch at COP16, which will provide strategic guidance and support for regular WEP updates.
- c. Develop a modular costed programme of work for delivery of WPEs post COP15.
- d. Agreement on cost-sharing responsibilities to support regular production of future WPEs between all entities involved in the WEP.

Anticipated resourcing implications are:

- a. Undertake review and updates of selected priority populations to be included as WPE2027 to be undertaken between 2025-2027 (CHF 366,000).
- b. Maintain the Waterbirds Populations Portal to deliver WPE information, update in response to annual Red List updates and periodic taxonomic and population information updates (including ensuring additional functionalities for enhanced ease of use by Parties) to be undertaken between 2025-2028 (CHF 61,000).
- c. Establish a Waterbird Estimates Partnership for launch at COP16, to be undertaken between 2026-2027 (CHF 38,000).

## **Summary of STRP Recommendations**

### Recommendation 1: Future WPE and 1% thresholds periodicity

- The Convention on Wetlands and other major users of waterbird population estimates information would benefit from an appropriate stability in the regularity of population size estimates and trends information and the subsequent derived 1% thresholds, which also meets the functional needs of users and delivers timely estimates for conservation approaches for waterbird populations globally.
- Therefore, WPE updates every 6 years (option 1b) or 9 years (option 1c) (Table 2) seem to be the most appropriate and resource efficient, rather than a continuous, or too rapid a process, where changes to this derived information on a too rapid basis would be unhelpful for a number of practical and policy reasons. There may be exceptions to this rule in a small number of cases where more frequent updates are necessary, especially for rapidly changing (declining) populations.

### Recommendation 2: The delivery of an interim WPE updating process to be delivered by COP16, covering species groups and regions prioritised for updating<sup>30</sup>

- The following steps are proposed:

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<sup>30</sup> Complementary and additional to STRP conclusion 1 above.

- a. A global review of the current status of information to be undertaken to identify priority populations for review/update (as Table 4), including consideration of the threat implied by species Red List status.
- b. The high priority populations are updated in a review undertaken within the next two to three years in a WPE2027 (by COP16), such that the information of the WPP are brought to a comparable recency and quality, and thus creating a more robust baseline of information for future WPE updates.
- c. Information on different flyways and regions are updated into the future, as per an agreed schedule (to be agreed).

#### Recommendation 3: Taxonomic coverage of future WPE updates

- Any decisions on the inclusion of seabird families will need to be considered in a future phase, after the process and resources for the review and updating of population and 1% thresholds information for the existing taxonomic waterbird groups covered by the WPE process, is secured and functioning effectively and efficiently. The WPE continues with the current taxonomic coverage in the interim.

#### Recommendation 4: Establishment of a Waterbird Estimates Partnership

- Invite key organisations to establish a new “Waterbird Estimates Partnership” to provide strategic guidance and implement a long-term solution for providing regular and timely updates of population estimates for the Convention on Wetlands and multiple other users.

#### Recommendation 5: Modus operandi of Waterbird Estimates Partnership (WEP)

- It is proposed to develop a clear modus operandi for the WEP based on the information outlined in Table 5 and Annex 4, that includes a modular, costed programme of work to run a formal Partnership after COP16 (2028), that ensures the delivery of regular future WPE updates.

#### Recommendation 6: Resourcing of future Waterbird Populations Estimates process, including through the Waterbird Estimates Partnership

- Key actions required are:
  - a. Resource an immediate WPE2027 process in 2025-2027 for delivery to COP16.
  - b. Establish and resource the Waterbird Estimates Partnership for the long term, to be formally established for launch at COP16, which will provide strategic guidance and support for regular WEP updates.
  - c. Develop a modular costed programme of work for delivery of WPEs post COP15.
  - d. Agreement on cost-sharing responsibilities to support regular production of future WPEs between all entities involved in the WEP.
- Anticipated resourcing implications are:
  - a. Undertake review and updates of selected priority populations to be included as WPE2027 to be undertaken between 2025-2027 (CHF 366,000).
  - b. Maintain the Waterbirds Populations Portal to deliver WPE information, update in response to annual Red List updates and periodic taxonomic and population information updates (including ensuring additional functionalities for enhanced ease of use by Parties) to be undertaken between 2025-2028 (CHF 61,000).
  - c. Establish a Waterbird Estimates Partnership for launch at COP16, to be undertaken between 2026-2028 (CHF 38,000).



## Annex 1

### Convention on Wetlands' quantitative criteria on waterbirds – history and current status of WPE populations

1. There are two quantitative Criteria for the selection of Ramsar Sites based on waterbirds<sup>31</sup>: Criterion 5 (>greater than 20,000 waterbirds regularly occurring), and Criterion 6 (1% of a waterbird biogeographic population regularly occurring).
2. The history of the two criteria related to waterbirds (currently Criteria 5 and 6) is described by Matthews (1993)<sup>32</sup>. Given the initial motivation of the Convention as a policy tool for the conservation of the habitats of waterbirds, it is not surprising that these criteria received much early attention. Essentially, they capture two related, but different attributes of importance of a wetland: absolute numbers present (Criterion 5) and proportionate importance for a single population (Criterion 6).
3. Criterion 6 has been an effective and widely adopted means of identifying wetlands of international importance for waterbirds (Atkinson-Willes *et al.* 1982)<sup>33</sup>. It works only for those waterbirds that tend to congregate, a desirable feature because such species will, by definition, be those dependent on a relatively small proportion of total territory and therefore be vulnerable to changes on that limited area.
4. Application of Criterion 6 depends on contemporary information on population sizes both at individual sites but importantly at biogeographic-scale for the calculation of 1% thresholds. Such data needs have proved highly stimulating to waterbird monitoring worldwide, notably through the International Waterbird Census (IWC).
5. A first comprehensive list of population sizes and formal thresholds for all waterbirds was presented by the International Waterfowl and Wetlands Research Institute (IWRB), as an Information Paper to Convention on Wetlands COP 5 in 1993 and published subsequently (Rose & Scott 1994<sup>34</sup>). Convention on Wetlands Resolution 5.9 established the application by Parties of standardised waterbird population estimates as the basis for the use of the 1% criterion and requested IWRB to prepare further updates to WPE. This was undertaken and WPE is now in its fifth edition and exists as a searchable on-line database maintained by Wetlands International (Table 1). However, without funding from the Convention, the timetable anticipated at the process' outset of bringing a triennial update to each COP has not proved possible, and *ad hoc* editions have been produced as donor funding has permitted.
6. The most recent WPE process ([WPES, 2012](#)) provides information on the distribution, status, trends of 2,304 populations of 871 species (see Table 2 below) and the WPP (in 2024) now

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<sup>31</sup> Waterbird families in the WPE include: Anatidae, Anhimidae, Anhingidae, Anseranatidae, Aramidae, Ardeidae, Balaenicipitidae, Burhinidae, Charadriidae, Chionidae, Ciconiidae, Dromadidae, Eurypygidae, Gaviidae, Glareolidae, Gruidae, Haematopodidae, Heliornithidae, Ibidorhynchidae, Jacanidae, Laridae, Pedionomidae, Pelecanidae, Phalacrocoracidae, Phoenicopteridae, Podicipedidae, Rallidae, Recurvirostridae, Rostratulidae, Scolopacidae, Scopidae, Thinocoridae and Threskiornithidae

<sup>32</sup> Matthews, G.V.T. (1993). The Ramsar Convention on wetlands: its history and development. Ramsar Convention Bureau, Switzerland. <https://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/lib/Matthews-history.pdf>.

<sup>33</sup> Atkinson-Willes, G.L., Scott, D.A. & Prater, A.J. (1982). Criteria for selecting wetlands of international importance. In Proceedings of the conference on the conservation of wetlands of international importance especially as waterfowl habitat. Cagliari, Italy, 24-29 November 1980, pp. 1017-1042. Supplemento alle Ricerche di Biologia della Selvaggina, 81(1).

<sup>34</sup> Rose, P.M. & Scott, D.A. (1994). *Waterfowl population estimates*. IWRB Special Publication 29. IWRB, Slimbridge, U.K.

includes 2,340 active populations of 899 species (504 classified as long-distance migrants and 1,836 resident or short-distance migrants (see Table 3).

*Table 1: The publication of Waterbird Population Estimates*

Edition	Citation	Format
WPE 1	Rose & Scott 1994	Hard copy, 102 pp
WPE 2	Rose & Scott 1997	Hard copy, 106 pp
WPE 3	Delany & Scott 2002	Hard copy, 226 pp
WPE 4	Delany & Scott 2006	Hard copy, 239 pp
WPE 5	Mundkur & Nagy 2012	Online searchable database <a href="http://wpp.wetlands.org/">http://wpp.wetlands.org/</a> ; 24 pp summary report

*Table 2: The growth in knowledge of the world's waterbird numbers and population trends over 18 years, as represented by the content of Waterbird Population Estimates series*

	WPE1	WPE2	WPE3	WPE4	WPE5
	1994	1997	2002	2006	2012
Number of waterbird species	833	840	868	878	871
Number of biogeographic populations	1,824	1,924	2,271	2,305	2,304
Number of population estimates	1,186	1,342	1,725	1,816	1,908
% of populations with estimates	65%	70%	76%	79%	83%
Number of population trends	727	792	1,138	1,200	1,422
% of populations with trends	40%	41%	50%	52%	62%

7. Accessibility of increasingly good data for WPE stimulated international discussion about how frequently 1% thresholds should be updated. Conclusions of a 1994 international workshop on this topic co-convened UK and Denmark (Rose & Stroud 1994<sup>35</sup>) were presented to Convention on Wetlands COP6 (Stroud 1996<sup>36</sup>) and adopted by Convention on Wetlands Resolution VI.4, which established a schedule of updates for 1% thresholds and “CALLS ON Contracting Parties to use these estimates and thresholds, upon their publication, as a basis for designation of sites for the List of Wetlands of International Importance”.
8. Subsequently, Convention on Wetlands Resolution VIII.38 further recognised WPE as the definitive source of 1% thresholds and “URGES all Contracting Parties to use appropriate 1% thresholds contained in the third edition of *Waterbird Population Estimates* as the official and consistent basis for their application of Criterion 6 of the *Strategic Framework and guidelines for the future development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance* for the designation of Ramsar sites during the 2003-2005 triennium”. It also encouraged the taxonomic scope of WPE to be expanded to include seabirds.

<sup>35</sup> Rose, P. & Stroud, D.A. (1994). Estimating international waterfowl populations: current activity and future directions. *Wader Study Group Bulletin* 73, 19-26.

<https://sora.unm.edu/sites/default/files/journals/iwsgb/n073/p00019-p00026.pdf>

<sup>36</sup> Stroud, D.A. (1996). Estimating international waterbird populations: use of Criterion 3(c). Pp. 37-44. In *Proceedings of the 6th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Convention on Wetlands, Brisbane, Australia, 19-27 March 1996. Technical Sessions E and F*. Ramsar Bureau, Switzerland.

Table 3: Recency of WPE population size estimates (information extracted from the WPE database in February 2024)

Flyway/region	Group <sup>1</sup>	Recency of population size estimates (number of species' populations)					Total pops	% with outdated/lack of info <sup>2</sup>
		1990s	2000s	2010s	2020s	No date		
African-Eurasian flyway	Long distance migrants	0	16	167	3	2	188	<b>10</b>
Western Eurasia	Residents / short distance migrants	16	22	162	5	21	226	<b>26</b>
Africa	Residents / short distance migrants	36	188	69	0	86	379	82
Americas	Long distance migrants	0	10	25	0	56	91	73
Nearctic	Residents / short distance migrants	8	36	74	0	82	200	63
Neotropics	Residents / short distance migrants	24	111	105	0	188	428	75
Central Asian Flyway	Long distance migrants	45	9	11	5	7	77	79
East Asian-Australasian Flyway	Long distance migrants	17	45	33	32	3	130	<b>50</b>
Asia (Indo Malay & Eastern Palearctic)	Residents / short distance migrants	63	43	15	47	87	255	76
Australasia	Residents / short distance migrants	31	116	52	5	89	293	81
Oceania	Residents / short distance migrants	11	16	5	0	12	44	89
Central Pacific Flyway <sup>37</sup>	Long distance migrants	5	2	8	1	0	16	<b>44</b>
Indian and Pacific Ocean	Long distance migrants	0	1	1	0	0	2	<b>50</b>
Antarctica	Residents / short-distance migrants	0	3	0	0	8	11	100
<b>Total number of populations</b>		<b>256</b>	<b>618</b>	<b>727</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>641</b>	<b>2,340</b>	<b>898</b>
<b>Percentage</b>		<b>10.9</b>	<b>26.4</b>	<b>31.1</b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>27.4</b>		<b>38.4</b>

1. As per the WPP (see <http://wpp.wetlands.org/background/WAF>), a population is classified as either a long-distance migrant as being one that crosses more than one biogeographic realm or a resident or short distant migrant if it is restricted to one biogeographic realm.
2. Outdated and lack of info refers to populations with pre 2010's size estimates or with no date assigned (as is the case for estimates for populations pre-WPE3).

<sup>37</sup> In Table 3 of the technical proposal, the small number of populations of the Indian and Pacific Ocean and Antarctica are presented together with the Central Pacific Flyway.

Table 4: Recency of WPE population size estimates (information extracted from the WPE database in February 2024).

Flyway/region	Group <sup>1</sup>	Quality of population size estimates					Total pops	% Poor quality of estimates
		Best guess	Census based	Expert opinion	No estimate	No quality assessment		
African-Eurasian flyway	Long distance migrants	44	29	25	1	5	188	25
Western Eurasia	Residents / short distance migrants	39	53	21	1	39	226	21
Africa	Residents / short distance migrants	168	20	68	4	126	379	68
Americas	Long distance migrants	26	16	50	0	39	91	50
Nearctic	Residents / short distance migrants	17	21	17	1	91	200	17
Neotropics	Residents / short distance migrants	180	13	85	4	211	428	85
Central Asian Flyway	Long distance migrants	30	2	73	2	33	77	73
East Asian-Australasian Flyway	Long distance migrants	50	13	50	14	1	130	50
Asia (Indo Malay & Eastern Palearctic)	Residents / short distance migrants	78	28	64	13	112	255	64
Australasia	Residents / short distance migrants	98	22	69	15	129	293	69
Oceania	Residents / short distance migrants	8	8	50	2	24	44	50
Central Pacific Flyway	Long distance migrants	10	4	63	0	0	16	63
Indian and Pacific Ocean	Long distance migrants	1	0	50	0	0	2	50
Antarctica	Residents / short-distance migrants	1	1	50	0	9	11	50
<b>Total number of populations</b>		<b>750</b>	<b>230</b>	<b>484</b>	<b>735</b>	<b>819</b>	<b>2,340</b>	<b>735</b>
<b>Percentage</b>		<b>32.1</b>	<b>9.8</b>	<b>20.7</b>	<b>31.4</b>	<b>35.0</b>		<b>31.4</b>

1. As per the WPP (see <http://wpp.wetlands.org/background/WAF>), a population is classified as either a long-distance migrant as being one that crosses more than one biogeographic realm or a resident or short distant migrant if it is restricted to one biogeographic realm.
2. Outdated and lack of info refers to the percentage of populations categorised as “Best guess” and “No estimate” (Census based and Expert opinion are the two higher quality estimate categories). No quality estimate indicates that no one assessed the quality, so it could be any of the other 4. This is usually from older editions of WPE before we started assessing size and trend quality.

9. From the outset of the WPE process established under the Convention on Wetlands, it was recognised that it was desirable to publish official 1% thresholds only periodically<sup>38</sup>. This gave clarity for government and other decision-makers as to which data to use at any one time. It also facilitated the administrative process as to the generation of new editions of WPE. The recommended basic nine-year update cycle for international 1% thresholds recommended by Rose & Stroud (1994) (other than for populations in rapid change) was subsequently endorsed by Convention on Wetlands Resolution VI.4.
10. Realistically, prior to internet publishing, it would have been difficult to publish updated estimates and thresholds other than at periodic intervals, but with internet publishing it is more conceivable that new estimates, as they become available, could be added to an online database in a rolling-update process.
11. Since then, essentially the same recommendations drawn from previous Resolutions have been incorporated into the Convention on Wetlands' guidance related to the selection and designation of wetlands of international importance—The *Strategic Framework and guidelines for the future development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance of the Convention on Wetlands*, first adopted at COP7 (Resolution VII.11) in 1999, and substantively revised and updated by COP11 in 2012 (Resolution XI.8, Annex 2) and most recently updated by COP14 (Resolution XI.8, Annex 2, Rev.COP14) in 2022.

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<sup>38</sup> The issues were outlined by Rose & Stroud (1994).

## **Annex 2**

### **Recognition of Waterbird Population Estimates by the Convention on Wetlands and other international frameworks**

#### **Convention on Wetlands**

##### **Resolution 5.9: Application of the Ramsar Criteria for Identifying Wetlands of International Importance (1993)**

RECALLING that Recommendation 4.2 of the Fourth Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties, held at Montreux, Switzerland in 1990, adopted "Criteria for identifying wetlands of international importance";

FURTHER RECALLING that Section 2 of these Criteria is entitled "General criteria based on plants or animals", while Section 3 is headed "Specific criteria based on waterfowl" and includes Subsection 3 (c) which indicates that a wetland should be considered internationally important if, "where data on populations are available, it regularly supports 1% of the individuals in a population of one species or subspecies of waterfowl";

TAKING NOTE of the presentation in Workshop D of the present Meeting by the Species Survival Programme of IUCN - The World Conservation Union on populations of wetland species other than waterfowl;

FURTHER NOTING the presentation in Workshop D of the present Meeting by the International Wetlands and Waterfowl Research Bureau (IWRB) on "Global priorities for waterbird conservation";

RECALLING that, while the Ramsar Criteria identify a wetland as a candidate for designation for the Ramsar List, any decision on designation remains the prerogative of the Contracting Party in whose territory the wetland is situated;

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EXPRESSES its thanks to IUCN and IWRB for their presentations;

CALLS ON Contracting Parties to use the concept and examples provided in IUCN's presentation as a basis for application of Section 2 of the Ramsar Criteria;

FURTHER CALLS ON Contracting Parties to use the figures submitted to the present meeting by IWRB as a basis for application of Section 3, and in particular Subsection 3 (c), of the Ramsar Criteria, and encourages them to provide IWRB with comments and regular updates of the figures; and

REQUESTS IUCN and IWRB to update their figures and data in the light of future research and survey findings, and to submit them to future meetings of the Conference of the Contracting Parties.

**Resolution VI.4: Adoption of population estimates for operation of specific criteria based on waterfowl (1996)**

1. REAFFIRMING the particular ecological values of waterfowl in the identification of internationally important wetlands, as expressed by both the Convention and subsequent resolutions and recommendations of the Conference of the Parties;
2. RECOGNIZING the many Ramsar sites which are of importance to waterfowl, and the continuing need for reliable information to underpin the application of Criterion 3 (c) [now Criterion 6];
3. RECALLING Resolution 5.9 which, *inter alia*, called for the regular updating of international population estimates for waterfowl as the basis of the application of Criterion 3 (c) [now Criterion 6], and which further requested IWRB (now Wetlands International) to bring revised estimates to each future meeting of the Conference of the Parties;
4. AWARE of Technical Workshops coordinated by the Joint Nature Conservation Committee in the UK, the National Environmental Research Institute in Denmark, and Wetlands International to agree timetables for the revision of waterfowl population estimates in the Western Palearctic and East Atlantic Flyway, the conclusions of which were submitted to Technical Session E of the present meeting, and in particular aware of the need to avoid short-term changes in standard 1% thresholds given their value as “bench-marks”, against which sites of possible international importance can be assessed;
5. CONSCIOUS of the need for close technical coordination between the Ramsar Convention and the Bonn Convention’s Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds, and also with other international treaties and agreements, to ensure consistency in the use of international waterfowl population estimates and 1% thresholds; and
6. NOTING Wetlands International’s draft report summarizing revised population estimates and 1% thresholds prepared for the present meeting of the Conference of the Parties in response to Resolution 5.9;

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7. URGES Wetlands International to continue to develop the International Waterfowl Census and to enhance its global coverage as an important basis for the application of Ramsar Criterion 3 (c) [now Criterion 6];
8. ENCOURAGES Wetlands International, using its network of Waterbird Specialist Groups, to work with the Ramsar Bureau, Contracting Parties, and other international treaties in order to review and keep up to date waterfowl population estimates and 1% thresholds, in particular giving priority to the assessment of the sizes of those populations for which no reliable population estimate or 1% threshold currently exists, and to report back the results of such activity to the 7th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties;
9. AGREES that unless waterfowl populations are poorly known or are known to be rapidly changing, 1% threshold levels should be revised not more frequently than every third ordinary meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties; and

10. CALLS ON Contracting Parties to use these estimates and thresholds, upon their publication, as a basis for designation of sites for the List of Wetlands of International Importance in the succeeding three triennia.

**Resolution VIII.38 Waterbird population estimates and the identification and designation of Wetlands of International Importance (2002)**

1. RECOGNIZING that the regular review and updating of estimates of waterbird population sizes is necessary to track the efficacy of measures for the conservation and wise use of waterbird populations, including the establishment of national and international networks of protected sites on migratory waterbird flyways, as called for in the *Strategic Framework and guidelines for the future development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance* (Resolution VII.11);
2. RECALLING Resolution 5.9, in which the Contracting Parties requested IWRB (now Wetlands International) to provide information on the sizes of waterbird populations as a basis for the application of the Convention's site-selection Criterion 3 include (now Criterion 6), and ALSO RECALLING Resolution VI.4, in which they outlined the desired timetable for such updates and requested Wetlands International to bring updated information to each future meeting of the Conference of the Parties;
3. REAFFIRMING the importance of data collected by Wetlands International through its International Waterbird Census for the assessment of wetlands against Criteria 2, 4, 5 and 6 of the *Strategic Framework and guidelines for the future development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance* (Resolution VII.11);
5. AWARE of the wide international consultation undertaken by Wetlands International to collate data and information for the third edition of its publication *Waterbird Population Estimates*, prepared for this meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties, which brings together the most recent information on the population sizes of waterbirds, as envisaged by Resolution VI.4, and which identifies 1% population thresholds for 1,138 (50%) biogeographic populations of waterbirds, but also AWARE that, despite this, there remain 1,133 populations of waterbirds for which there is no reliable population estimate from which to establish a 1% threshold for the application of Ramsar Criterion 6;
8. RECOGNIZING the role of the international Specialist Groups of the Species Survival Commission of IUCN – The World Conservation Union as well as those of Wetlands International in collecting, analysing and interpreting waterbird population data;
11. DESIRING to promote the application of a consistent global source of information on 1% thresholds for the application of Criterion 6 for designation of Wetlands of International Importance;

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12. WELCOMES the publication of the third edition of *Waterbird Population Estimates* prepared for this meeting of the Conference of the Parties, and CONGRATULATES Wetlands International on the work undertaken to further develop this global and consistent source of data and information of importance for wetland and waterbird conservation and wise use, and for increasing the number of biogeographic populations for which population estimates and 1% thresholds are now available;



13. URGES all Contracting Parties to use appropriate 1% thresholds contained in the third edition of *Waterbird Population Estimates* as the official and consistent basis for their application of Criterion 6 of the *Strategic Framework and guidelines for the future development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance* for the designation of Ramsar sites during the 2003-2005 triennium;
14. ALSO URGES Contracting Parties to work together to identify and designate coherent flyway-scale networks of Ramsar sites for migratory waterbirds, in line with Action 12.2.2 of the Convention's Strategic Plan 2003-2008, including working cooperatively with the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) and African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement (AEWA) through the Joint Work Plan between the Ramsar Convention, CMS and AEWA;
15. FURTHER URGES Contracting Parties to select Ramsar sites for globally threatened waterbirds in implementation of Action 12.2.1 of the Convention's Strategic Plan 2003- 2008, noting also the value of selecting Ramsar sites to support conservation strategies for nationally or regionally threatened waterbirds;
16. REQUESTS Wetlands International, with the assistance of the Ramsar Bureau, to make widely available, including in electronic formats, the 3rd edition of *Waterbird Population Estimates* to all Contracting Parties, non-Parties and other organizations involved in the identification and designation of Ramsar sites;
17. REQUESTS Wetlands International to continue to bring an updated edition of *Waterbird Population Estimates* to each future Conference of the Parties, having first undertaken international scientific consultation on its contents, so that the population estimates and 1% thresholds it contains may be used as the basis for the application of Criterion 6 in the succeeding triennium;
18. WELCOMES the intention of Wetlands International to enhance the scope and coverage of future editions of *Waterbird Population Estimates* so as to include all waterbird taxa listed in the glossary to the Strategic Framework and guidelines for the future development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance;
19. ALSO WELCOMES the proposed establishment by Wetlands International of a Global Waterbird Monitoring Steering Committee as a means of focusing the future development of the International Waterbird Census, and in particular its contribution to the strategic development of the Ramsar List, and REQUESTS this Committee, once established, to identify ways and means of increasing the availability of data and information from the IWC to Contracting Parties and others in support of their identification and designation of Ramsar sites;
20. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties and others with relevant data and information to assist Wetlands International and BirdLife International through the continued collection and supply of population data on waterbirds, including globally threatened species and those species identified by BirdLife International in *Threatened Birds of the World* as being data deficient;
21. ENCOURAGES the Species Survival Commission of IUCN and Wetlands International to facilitate the establishment of further Specialist Groups for waterbird taxa where no such expert networks currently exist, so as to assist in the collation and critical interpretation of waterbird population data of value for the application of Criterion 6;

24. URGES Contracting Parties to apply waterbird monitoring data, and analyses drawn from them, when appropriate, as a means of providing objective information for site management planning and the evaluation of national or regional wetland policies.

**Resolution X.22. Promoting international cooperation for the conservation of waterbird flyways (2008)**

25. REQUESTS Wetlands International to draw upon status information from *Waterbird Population Estimates* to report periodically on the state of the world's waterbirds to the Contracting Parties of Ramsar, CMS, AEW and CBD, and URGES Contracting Parties and others both to contribute to the necessary financial support to enable the production of such international assessments; and to support the coordinated International Waterbird Census (IWC), which contributes to these population estimates and assessments and the provision of much other relevant knowledge.

**Resolution XIV.18: Waterbird population estimates to support new and existing Ramsar Site designations under Ramsar Criterion 6 – use of alternative estimates (2022)**

1. RECALLING:
  - i. Resolution 5.9 on *Application of the Ramsar Criteria for Identifying Wetlands of International Importance*;
  - ii. Resolution VI.4 on *Adoption of population estimates for operation of the specific criteria based on waterfowl*;
  - iii. Resolution VIII.38 on *Waterbird population estimates and the identification and designation of Wetlands of International Importance*;
  - iv. Resolution X.22 on *Promoting international co-operation for the conservation of waterbird flyways*; and
  - v. Resolution XIII.20 on *Promoting the conservation and wise use of intertidal wetlands and ecologically-associated habitats*;
2. RECOGNIZING the critical importance of waterbirds to the biodiversity and ecological character of wetlands, and that Ramsar Criterion 6 facilitates the designation of Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Sites) that are internationally important for waterbird conservation;
3. NOTING that:
  - i. the effectiveness of Criterion 6 in supporting waterbird conservation depends on availability of scientifically robust estimates of biogeographical population sizes of waterbirds; and
  - ii. the use of inaccurate or out-of-date population estimates, particularly for species in rapid decline, may undermine the intent of the 1% threshold embedded in Criterion 6;
3. RECOGNIZING that the current “Strategic Framework and guidelines for the future development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance of the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971), – 2012 Revision” (adopted as Resolution XI.8, Annex 2, Rev. COP13) provides guidance on the application of Criterion 6;
5. RECOGNIZING that measures to enhance the effectiveness of waterbird conservation are relevant to meeting the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework targets under the Convention on Biological Diversity and other international biodiversity conservation agreements;

6. ACKNOWLEDGING the important role of Wetlands International in collating and publishing, at the request of the Conference of the Parties, previous periodic Waterbird Population Estimates, and WELCOMING the new Waterbird Populations Portal launched in 2021;
7. ACKNOWLEDGING critical work being undertaken through cooperative arrangements in the world's migratory bird flyways including Conservation Status Reviews undertaken in the African, Eurasian and East Asian-Australasian flyways and the Avian Conservation Assessment and Population Estimates Databases (ACAD), from the Partners in Flight programme and Bird Conservation, and RECOGNIZING that such work contributes to the ongoing update of the Waterbird Population Estimates;
8. DEEPLY CONCERNED about ongoing global decline of waterbird populations, notably of migratory waterbird species, and the underpinning loss and degradation of intertidal wetlands as well as other habitats on which waterbirds depend that are essential for supporting them throughout their lifecycles; and
9. ALSO CONCERNED that the Waterbird Population Estimates have not been updated since 2012 due to a lack of funding and that there is currently no mechanism in place to ensure that these essential updates are completed in a timely manner;

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10. REAFFIRMS the use of Waterbird Population Estimates to underpin application of Ramsar Criterion 6 as agreed and affirmed under Resolutions VI.4 and VIII.38 and as outlined in the Strategic Framework – 2012 Revision (adopted as Resolution XI.8, Annex 2 (Rev. COP13));
11. AGREES that until the Waterbird Population Estimates are updated with accurate population estimates, alternative data sources may be used by Contracting Parties for the purposes of determining the 1% threshold in the context of applying Ramsar Criterion 6, provided:
  - i. that the biogeographical population of the species concerned is clearly stated for the species as listed in Waterbird Population Estimates available through the Waterbird Populations Portal;
  - ii. that such thresholds should be derived from estimates that are published in the Waterbird Populations Portal, for migratory species, based on Conservation Status Reviews (CSRs) produced under the auspices of flyway instruments, or other peer-reviewed assessments for other migratory populations for which CSR-type assessments do not exist as well as for non-migratory and endemic populations;
  - iii. that the reasons why a new estimate is considered more appropriate are documented with a clear audit trail to original sources, thus allowing third parties to check any derivation of the estimate;
  - iv. that the standard methodology used for the Waterbird Populations Portal to convert from a biogeographic population estimate size to a 1% population threshold should be used; and
  - v. that any alternate thresholds used by Parties for Criterion 6 purposes, and their justification, be communicated both to the Secretariat (to maintain a log of such instances), and Wetlands International;
12. INSTRUCTS the Secretariat to amend the Strategic Framework – 2012 Revision, (adopted as Resolution XI.8, Annex 2, Rev. COP13) to give effect to paragraph 11 of the present Resolution, as outlined in Annex 1;

13. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to work cooperatively with flyway agreements and partnerships to facilitate regular updates to Waterbird Population Estimates;
14. ALSO ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to use best available, scientifically robust data, through the process set out in paragraphs 10 and 11 of the present Resolution, for determining the 1% threshold for Site designations made on the basis of Criterion 6 and for future updates of the Ramsar Information Sheets;
15. REQUESTS the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) to include in its work plan for the next triennium the preparation of guidance to facilitate appropriate application of this Resolution by Contracting Parties in liaison with the technical and scientific subsidiary bodies of other relevant treaties, such as the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement (AEWA) and the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS), as well as the East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership (EAAFP) and other flyway initiatives;
16. ALSO REQUESTS the STRP to develop a technical proposal to enable the resourcing and implementing of future timely and comprehensive Waterbird Population Estimates updates, in consultation with Contracting Parties, relevant flyway agreements and partnerships, Wetlands International and interested entities; and that this technical proposal, including, with advice from the Secretariat, an outline of funding implications, be presented to the 63rd meeting of the Standing Committee, ahead of a draft resolution for the next meeting of the Conference of the Parties, concerning the arrangements for future regular updates of the Waterbird Populations Portal; and
17. FURTHER REQUESTS the STRP to also develop guidance that provides technical support to Contracting Parties in closing identified gaps in waterbird population data, and outlines opportunities for capacity building, technical and scientific cooperation and exchange to support Contracting Parties, in particular developing country Contracting Parties, in their assessment of waterbird populations.

**Strategic Framework and guidelines for the future development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance<sup>39</sup> (Ramsar COP11 Resolution XI.8, Annex 2, Rev.COP14 (2022))**

90. For waterbirds, please use Wetland International's Waterbird Population Estimates as the definitive source of information on populations and species taxonomy (see also sections 6.1.5 and 6.1.6 below). (Note that there are only a few differences between the nomenclatures adopted by Waterbird Population Estimates and CITES). The most recent reference source is Waterbird Population Estimates, 5th edition, available in the Waterbird Populations Portal.
197. Current estimates of the sizes of all waterbird species' populations and 1% thresholds for those populations for which there is a reliable population size estimate are also available in Wetland International's periodic publication Waterbird Population Estimates, available in the Waterbird Populations Portal. If this Criterion is being applied to a waterbird species or population which is either not covered in Waterbird Population Estimates or for which that publication does not provide a 1% threshold or the threshold provided is considered to be out of date, an alternative source of the population size estimate may be used and details of the source must be provided, both to the Secretariat and to Wetlands International (to maintain a log of such instances). In doing so, details of the methodology for the estimate, which should be well-founded, are to be provided.

<sup>39</sup> [https://rsis.ramsar.org/RISapp/StatDoc/strategic\\_framework\\_en.pdf](https://rsis.ramsar.org/RISapp/StatDoc/strategic_framework_en.pdf)

206. Waterbird population size. To ensure international comparability, Contracting Parties should use the international population estimates and 1% thresholds published and updated approximately every three years by Wetlands International as the basis for evaluating sites for the List using this Criterion. Most recent 1% thresholds are given in *Waterbird Population Estimates, 4th Edition (2006)*, which also provides a description of the biogeographic range of each population. Earlier editions of *Waterbird Population Estimates* are now superseded and should not be used for Criterion 6 application.

207. Note that this Criterion should be applied only to those waterbird populations for which a 1% threshold is available. However, for populations of waterbird species in taxa not presently covered by *Waterbird Population Estimates*, this Criterion may be applied if a reliable population estimate and 1% threshold is available from another source and if that information source is clearly specified. It is not sufficient simply to restate the Criterion, that the site supports >1% of a population, nor is it a correct justification to list populations with numbers in the site >1% of their national population, except when the population is endemic to that country.

207(a). An alternative source may also be used where population estimates published in the current *Waterbird Population Estimates* are considered to be out of date.

208. As urged by Resolutions VI.4 (1996) and VIII.38 (2002) for the better application of this Criterion, Contracting Parties should not only supply data for the future update and revision of international waterbird population estimates, but should also support the national implementation and development of Wetlands International's International Waterbird Census, which is the source of many of these data.

### Convention on Migratory Species

#### Resolution 12.11(Rev.COP13): Flyways (2020)

20. Recommends that Parties enhance and strengthen monitoring of migratory bird populations and the important sites upon which they rely (including surveying new sites to fill information gaps), and to increase capacity for and sustainability of such monitoring in the long term, where appropriate by institutionalizing it as an ongoing activity within government, in partnership with other organizations, including through provision of support initiatives such as the Global Waterbird Fund (established in response to the invitation of AEWA and the Ramsar Convention and managed by Wetlands International) in order to present to key stakeholders with up-to-date information on the distribution, status and trends of migratory birds and the sites and habitats that they need;

### African Eurasian Waterbird Agreement

#### Resolution 3.6: Developing an international partnership for support of waterbird population assessments (2005)

The Meeting of the Parties:

1. *Urges* the urgent development of an international partnership to provide an essential and long term funding regime for the International Waterbird Census and *Waterbird Population*

*Estimates*, involving relevant users of outputs, *inter alia* international conventions and treaties, regional economic integration organisations, international agencies, national governments, and national and international non-governmental organisations as appropriate;

2. *Requests* the Agreement Secretariat to work with Wetlands International to develop costed proposals to this end and to co-ordinate with interested parties to establish such a partnership as a matter of priority, thus facilitating the timely delivery of the Report on the status and trends of waterbird populations for future MOPs;
3. *Requests* the support of the Ramsar Convention, the Convention on Migratory Species, the Convention on Biological Diversity, regional economic integration organisations, national governments, the European Community, national and international non-governmental organisations, and donor organisations to establish such arrangements for the financial support of the International Waterbird Census and *Waterbird Population Estimates* and its derived outputs as a means of informing a wide range of national and international conservation policies and indicators.

#### **Resolution 5.2: Addressing gaps in knowledge of and conservation action for waterbird populations and sites important for them (2012)**

The Meeting of the Parties:

1. *Calls* upon Parties to ensure that all AEWA populations are covered by international monitoring schemes which are appropriate both in their scopes and methods to produce reliable international population size and trend estimates;
2. *Requests* the Secretariat and the Technical Committee, in collaboration with the relevant international organisations, to provide additional guidance to the Parties in this respect, by MOP6, including monitoring of seabirds and colonial breeding waterbirds;
3. *Urges* Parties to develop individual monitoring programmes which are appropriate in their scope and methods to obtain reliable estimates of population sizes and trends of waterbird populations breeding or wintering in their territories while striving towards a harmonised methodology in line with the new AEWA conservation guidelines to be developed by the Technical Committee;

#### **East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership**

#### **Decision 10.12: Development of a Conservation Status Review of Migratory Waterbird Populations for the EAAFP (2018)**

1. *Adopts* a systematic process to maintain up-to-date information on waterbird population estimates, trends and 1% thresholds through the preparation of a periodic EAAF Conservation Status Review;
2. *Calls* on the Partners and the Secretariat to support periodic production of the EAAF Conservation Status Review (at least every alternate MoP or not more than four yearly) as appropriate within national circumstances.

3. *Mandates* Wetlands International to coordinate preparation of the EAAF Conservation Status Review in consultation with the Technical Sub-Committee, Science Unit of the Secretariat, Partners, Working Groups, Task Forces and other experts, with a target for a first edition to be produced by end 2019 (with a draft structure provided in Annex III);
4. *Calls* on Secretariat in liaison with Wetlands International to ensure that the output of the periodic EAAF Conservation Status Reviews feed into the global WPE updates.
5. *Calls* on the Monitoring Task Force to develop standardised guidance required for development and implementation of comprehensive national waterbird monitoring programmes.

**Decision 11.8: Maintaining up-to-date Population Estimates and Trends of Migratory Waterbird Populations for the EAAFP (2023)**

*In relation to the Conservation Status Review (CSR):*

1. *Agrees* that the latest population size, trend estimates and 1% thresholds from the CSR process as available through the WPP are used by the Partnership, including for future EAAF Flyway Network Site designations;
2. *Requests* Wetlands International (as per Decision 10.12) to coordinate preparation of a proposal and budget for the CSR2 to be developed in consultation with the Technical sub-Committee, Science Unit of the Secretariat, Anatidae-, Shorebird-, Crane-, Seabird- and Black-faced Spoonbill Working Groups, Scaly-sided Merganser-, Spoon-billed Sandpiper-, Far Eastern Curlew- and Waterbird Monitoring Task Forces, other expert networks and Partners;
3. *Further requests* the Seabird Working Group as a priority to propose the delineation, size and trend estimates of biogeographic populations of 8 families of seabirds, namely Alcidae (auks, murre and puffins), Oceanitidae (Austral storm petrels), Procellariidae (shearwaters & petrels), Stercorariidae (skuas and jaegers), Phaethontidae (tropicbirds), Hydrobatidae (Northern storm petrels), Sulidae (gannets and boobies), Fregatidae (frigatebirds) in time for inclusion to CSR2;
4. *Encourages* the Secretariat to prioritise, facilitate and resource the periodic preparation of the CSRs through the Secretariat budget, starting with preparation of CSR2 for completion by 2026;
5. *Calls* on Partners and the Secretariat to contribute resources to support maintenance and updates of the Waterbird Populations Portal to improve delivery of information and support the work of the Partnership;

*In relation to improving waterbird size and trend information through development/ strengthening of comprehensive national waterbird monitoring programmes:*

6. *Instructs* inclusion in the work plan of the Technical Sub-committee oversight of the development, resources permitting, of a robust EAAF collaborative monitoring and analyses framework led by the Waterbird Monitoring Task Force jointly by the Anatidae-, Shorebird-, Crane-, Seabird- and Black-faced Spoonbill Working Groups, Scaly-sided Merganser-, Spoon-billed Sandpiper-, Far Eastern Curlew- Task Forces, the Science Unit and a number of NGOs, community organisations who are undertaking monitoring, and expert networks. This will need to include development of national guidelines, to ensure standardised monitoring to improve (a) waterbird population estimates and trends, and (b) wetland status monitoring of EAAF Network

Sites and potential network sites, building on the Asian Waterbird Census <http://www.wetlands.org/awc> and other monitoring programmes;

7. *Urges* Partners to provide technical and funding resources to progress development and implementation of the EAAF collaborative monitoring and analyses framework, including for organisation of regional workshops, training of trainer courses and mentoring;
8. *Encourages* Partners and others who are already supporting international monitoring initiatives to continue and strengthen their support and invites other Partners to contribute to the development and maintenance of waterbird and wetland monitoring and particularly to establish and support initiatives for species/populations for which there is poor or outdated estimates and in those geographic regions where monitoring is lacking or is insufficient;
9. *Urges* Partners and other donors to provide financial contributions for roll out of national waterbird and wetland monitoring and research through the Waterbird Fund or other international and national funding mechanisms, and
10. *Encourages* the Waterbird Monitoring Task Force, working with the TsC, to report to each MOP on development and implementation of the EAAF collaborative monitoring and analysis framework.



## **Annex 3**

### **Relevance of the WPE and the proposed Waterbird Estimates Partnership to international biodiversity conservation processes**

#### **Support development of global conservation conventions**

- Convention on Wetlands (in particular Ramsar Site designation, and National Reporting on the conservation of wetlands and waterbird species)
- Convention on Migratory Species and Strategic Plan
- Convention on Biological Diversity and the Global Biodiversity Framework (Targets 3, 4 and 9)
- Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)

#### **Support development of flyway/ regional agreements and treaties**

- Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (AEWA)
- Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention)
- East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership (EAAFP)
- European Union's Birds Directive
- CMS Western/ Central Asian Site Network for Siberian Cranes and other Waterbirds (WCASN)
- Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network (WHSRN)

#### **Other global/international processes**

- National reporting on Global Biodiversity Framework targets
- CBD Global Biodiversity Outlook, UNEP Global Environment Outlook (GEO), Ramsar Convention Global Wetland Outlook
- IUCN Red List of Threatened Species (coordinated for birds by BirdLife International)
- BirdLife International species fact sheets and assessments
- Identification and monitoring of Important Bird Areas (IBAs), Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) and Zero Extinction Sites
- Species management action plans, some developed under global/regional frameworks e.g. Convention on Migratory Species, Bern Convention, AEWA, EAAFP and others under IUCN.

#### **Private investors in activities related to biodiversity conservation and/or climate resilience**

- Private green financing companies and other investors
- Financial service providers
- Green investment banks
- Environmental consultancies
- Businesses and Industry
- Developers

## Annex 4

### Suggested modus for a “Waterbird Estimates Partnership”

This Annex outlines an indicative terms of agreement for a global partnership that will support provision of up to date information needs on waterbirds for the quantitative criteria related to wetlands of international importance. The purpose of Annex 4 is to illustrate the partnership arrangements that may be necessary to implement technical recommendations for updating WPE across multiple flyways and geographic regions.

#### Background

1. The Convention on Wetlands has adopted nine criteria to identify wetlands of international important for potential designation as Ramsar Sites. Criterion 6 provides a means of identifying wetlands of international importance based on quantitative approaches essentially in relation to the proportion of a biogeographical population supported by the wetland. Sites regularly supporting more than 1% of a biogeographic population of waterbirds (Criterion 6).
2. The application of Criterion 6 depends on availability of quantitative data from the wetland in question and recent information on the size of the relevant international population.
3. For waterbirds, information on international biogeographic populations is provided by the publication *Waterbird Population Estimates* available through the Waterbird Populations Portal maintained by Wetlands International.
4. Multiple Resolutions have been adopted calling for Convention on Wetlands Parties to organise regular monitoring and resource the production of regular updates to ensure the latest information is available to inform site designation, management and species conservation action (see Annex 3). In addition, multiple resolutions and decisions by the CMS, AEWA and EAAFP call for maintaining updates of populations to inform similar processes (see Appendix 3). Further, the data inform regional and globally agreed targets, for example under the Global Biodiversity Framework.

#### Parties to the Agreement

5. Each of the following potential partners plays a key role in ensuring that contemporary information is available to support the application of Convention on Wetlands Criterion 6.

[Convention on Wetlands Secretariat] [Convention on Migratory Species] [CBD Secretariat] [CITES Secretariat] [CAFF/Arctic Council] [African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement] [East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership] [Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network] <i>[Americas other mechanisms]?</i> [Wetlands International] [BirdLife International] Others to be added
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## **Aim**

6. The purpose of the Partnership is to ensure that high and up-to-date quality information on the population sizes and trends of waterbird taxa are available for governmental, international, and other users for policy and other uses in support of the collective mission to conserve and wisely use wetlands.

## **Objectives**

7. The Partnership has four objectives:
  - a. *Co-operation*: to promote closer co-operation between the various bodies responsible for gathering and reporting information on population sizes and trends of relevant waterbird taxa.
  - b. *Co-ordination*: to co-ordinate, and as far as possible harmonise, timetables of existing work to deliver processes that reinforce each other at both regional and global scales.
  - c. *Data and information standards*: to maintain high and uniform standards for the collection, collation, auditing and analysis and publication of relevant population size and trend assessments.
  - d. *Funding*: to ensure the adequate funding for the various global and regional programmes as agreed.

## **Outline of actions**

8. The primary focus of the Partnership is to establish regional processes for collating population estimates and trend information for each of the principal global migratory waterbird flyway systems (where they are lacking) or reinforce these (where they exist). These regional estimates and trends will be collated and reported at global scale, supplemented with other information as appropriate, and made accessible through the Waterbirds Populations Portal. Updated 1% criteria will be released (on WPP and in dedicated publication (?)) periodically at agreed intervals.
9. A [Global Co-ordination Committee] will be established to give effect to the Partnership. The [Committee] will:
  - a. meet, in whatever mode is appropriate, at least annually;
  - b. develop its own terms of reference and a work programme to deliver the four objectives above;
  - c. Publish an online annual report on its activities, as a way of reporting to relevant governing bodies on its activities; and
  - d. develop and maintain a wider network of interested organisations and individuals reflecting both potential data providers and data users.
10. A [Secretariat] function will be established to support the running of the Partnership, convene meetings, prepare reports, etc.

## **Funding**

11. Anticipated resource implications of the Partnership are summarised in Table 5.

## **Duration**

12. Any partner wishing to withdraw from the Partnership shall give three months' notice to the other partners.

## **Responsibilities of each Partner in the Waterbird Estimates Partnership**

NOTE: These responsibilities will need to be completed, discussed and agreed with Partners

[Convention on Wetlands Secretariat, as per its Strategic Plan, will secure resources to facilitate delivery of regular assessments of the population sizes and trends of resident and migratory waterbird populations globally and in synergy with regional flyway agreements/frameworks. And to contribute resources to organising the implementation of the Partnership.]

[Convention on Migratory Species Secretariat, as per its Strategic Plan, will secure resources to facilitate delivery of regular assessments of the population sizes and trends of migratory waterbird populations globally and in synergy with regional flyway agreements/frameworks (including AEWA, proposed CAF Initiative (including CAF Waterbird Action Plan), EAAFP Partnership, Americas Flyways Framework and Action Plan). And to contribute resources to organising the implementation of the Partnership.]

[CAFF/Arctic Council], as per its Strategic Plan, will secure resources to facilitate delivery of regular assessments of the population sizes and trends of migratory waterbird populations globally and in synergy with regional flyway agreements/frameworks (including AEWA, CAF Waterbird Action Plan, EAAFP Partnership, CMS Americas Flyways Framework and Action Plan). And to contribute resources to organising the implementation of the Partnership.]

[CBD Secretariat, as per its Strategic Plan, will secure resources to facilitate delivery of regular assessments of the population sizes and trends of resident and migratory waterbird populations globally and in synergy with regional flyway agreements/frameworks. And to contribute resources to organising the implementation of the Partnership.]

[CITES Secretariat, as per its Strategic Plan, will secure resources to facilitate delivery of regular assessments of the population sizes and trends of resident and migratory waterbird populations globally and in synergy with regional flyway agreements/frameworks. And to contribute resources to organising the implementation of the Partnership.]

[African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement] will secure resources to co-ordinate the regular assessment of population sizes and trends of those migratory waterbirds listed by the Agreement within its Agreement area and will report those to the global WPP process. And to contribute resources to organising the implementation of the Partnership.]

[East Asian - Australasian Flyway Partnership as per its Strategic Plan, will secure resources and partner with Wetlands International, to deliver regular assessments of the population sizes and trends of the migratory waterbirds of the EAAF as listed by the Partnership and will report those to the global WPP process. And to contribute resources to organising the implementation of the Partnership.]

[Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network as per its Strategic Plan, will secure resources and work with partners to deliver regular assessments of the population sizes and trends of shorebirds (waders), both migratory and resident species, within the Americas, and report these

to the global WPP process. And to contribute resources to organising the implementation of the Partnership. ....]

[Wetlands International will co-ordinate on waterbird-related databases, data management and updates, linked to Convention on Wetlands Criterion 6:

- Maintaining functionality of its global Waterbirds Populations Portal, data consolidation and 1% threshold setting.
- Maintaining the International Waterbird Census (IWC) through flyway partnerships as a major source of waterbird population information and feed the results into assessment processes.
- Coordinate/carry out the flyway level regular assessment of population sizes and trends (CSRs) for migratory waterbird taxa where needed with regional partnerships.
- Coordinate/carry out reviews for the non-migratory waterbird taxa.
- Periodically propose new 1% thresholds to the partnership for agreement on updating them.
- Collaborate on joint funding proposals.
- It will serve to coordinate and support the work as a Secretariat to the Partnership and convene meetings.]

[BirdLife International will...

- Continue to update the IUCN Red List and Important Bird & Biodiversity Area (IBA) databases with relevant information on waterbirds, and share data relevant to updating WPE.
- Continue to encourage the global BirdLife Partnership to monitor waterbirds and contribute their data, acknowledging that many national IWC coordinators are BirdLife Partners.
- Collaborate on joint funding proposals.]

[IUCN Species Survival Commission will...]

[Partners in Flight?.....]

Other partners and responsibilities to be added