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Mid-Term Evaluation



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CAFF Permanent Participant Organizations:

- Aleut International Association (AIA)
- Arctic Athabaskan Council (AAC)
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Design and layout: Courtney Price

For more information please contact:

CAFF International Secretariat

Borgir, Nordurslod

600 Akureyri, Iceland

Phone: +354 462-3350

Fax: +354 462-3390

Email: caff@caff.is

Internet: www.caff.is

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— CAFF Designated Area

AMBI Midterm Review Methodology

Context - The Arctic Migratory Birds Initiative (AMBI) is administered by the Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF), Arctic Council working group. AMBI is designed to improve the conservation status and secure the long-term sustainability of declining Arctic breeding migratory bird populations. Through conservation of a shared natural and cultural resource, AMBI will have a positive impact on societies for whom migratory birds are a source of livelihood and spiritual inspiration. AMBI also provides an early implementation of Recommendation #8 of the Arctic Biodiversity Assessment (<http://arcticbiodiversity.is/>) to 'reduce stressors on migratory species range-wide, including habitat degradation and overharvesting on wintering and staging areas and along flyways and other migration routes'.

Purpose - Under the AMBI workplan a mid-term review is to be undertaken at the end of 2016 and submitted to the CAFF Board in early 2017. The purpose of this review is to gauge success, enable adjustments to the workplan to promote task completion, and identify what actions need additional resources (due to time and/or fiscal constraints).

Evaluation Method - The overall AMBI project review is led by the AMBI Chair and Coordinator supported by the AMBI Steering Group. The overall evaluation will use a mixed-methods approach, evaluating both specific objectives outlined in the approved workplan. Each item is considered within a series of four questions that address the project status, expectations, needed strategic actions and recommendations. By using this structure, the mid-point review will inform how to best achieve AMBI's goals under the second half of the project (2017 to 2019). Flyway specific objectives and actions are considered using four elements:

1. What specific contributions has AMBI made to implementing/achieving this objective/action?
2. How does the current status meet the flyway committee's expectation for progress at this time?
3. What actions/resources are needed to advance the objective/action under the current AMBI workplan (ending in 2019)?
4. Recommendations for CAFF to undertake regarding this objective (e.g., change focus, downgrade or refine objective/action to create a realistic goal for completion by 2019, and/or identify activities to follow up on resource identification, and/or prioritize AMBI workplan objectives/actions).

This methodology was approved by the CAFF Board in September 2016.

Overall AMBI Executive Summary:

Overall AMBI is making progress on many of the objectives and actions in the AMBI workplan (Table 1). AMBI is succeeding at raising awareness of Arctic-breeding migratory bird conservation within Arctic Council observer countries, and with Arctic Council observer organisations. AMBI has also facilitated partners efforts to raise more than €600,000 for work related to conserving Arctic-breeding migratory birds since AMBI was approved by the Arctic Council Ministers. This is in addition to the circa €30,000 that the Arctic Council countries have contributed to the coordination of AMBI (Table 2).

There are a number of cross-cutting issues that AMBI could foster meaningful dialogue on between the flyways. Thus, during 2017-19 AMBI should promote more cross-regional topic specific discussions that would help flyways capitalize on expertise in other regions that would help deliver on AMBI flyway objectives.

AMBI has engaged a wide number of Arctic Council observers and non-observers. Through this process it has become clear that while the AMBI workplan serves as a guiding document, there are several changes necessary that would allow more countries to engage more fully. Therefore, CAFF should consider how best to incorporate suggestions to the workplan in 2017.

The AMBI workplan includes a variety of objectives and actions that require longer term deadlines than currently included in the AMBI workplan (2015-2019). A second phase of AMBI should be considered as a tool to ensure the momentum and achievement of AMBI can be maximised.

Table 1. Overview of progress on AMBI Workplan

Overall AMBI Workplan	Status	Notes on progress
A) Improve the conservation status of Arctic birds	No action	Too early to assess
B) Early implementation of the ABA	In progress	Too early to assess
C) Support existing conservation initiatives	On track	
Regulatory Performance Metrics		
D) Increased awareness about illegal killing	On track	
E) Increased emphasis on cross-border enforcement	On track	
F) Increased cooperation between Arctic and non-Arctic countries	In progress	Actions ongoing
G) Increased awareness in national legislation	Some progress	Actions ongoing
Habitat Performance Metrics		
H) Increased diplomatic discussions	On track	
I) Increased awareness of international agreements and conventions	Some progress	Actions ongoing
J) Increased awareness of specific sites	Some progress	Actions ongoing
Cooperation Performance Metrics		
K) Increased involvement of observer countries in Arctic-breeding migratory bird issues	On track	
L) Increased participation of observer countries at meetings focusing on Arctic-breeding migratory bird issues	On track	
M) An increased in meetings held in non-Arctic countries on Arctic-breeding migratory bird issues	On track	
N) An increased on bi-lateral and tri-lateral agreements that include Arctic-breeding migratory bird issues	Some progress	Actions ongoing
O) An increase in Ministerial and SAO involvement in Arctic-breeding migratory bird issues	Some progress	Actions ongoing

Table 2. Overview of AMBI funding confirmed to date

Source	Amount (€)	Item	Type of expense	Date	AMBI Flyway	Priority Issue
Canada	16,000	AF coordination, bycatch assessment	coordination, research	2015-16	CF, AF	Fisheries bycatch
Canada	3,600	Overall Coordination	coordination	2016	Overall	coordination
Canada	22,000	Arctic fisheries bycatch review	research	2016	CF	Fisheries bycatch
Canada	16,000	AF coordination, fisheries work	coordination, research	2016-17	CF, AF	Fisheries bycatch
Canada	16,200	Arctic fisheries, Ecosystem Services Valuation work	research	2017	CF	Habitat conservation, fisheries bycatch
CEC*	259,000	AMBI Americas Flyway work	research, site nominations	2015	AF	Habitat conservation
Netherlands	60,000 (TBC)	AEF Coordination	coordination	2017-19	AEF	coordination
Netherlands	5,000	Texel Meeting	meeting	2016	AEF, EAAF	Habitat conservation
Norway	30,000	Beijing Meeting	meeting	2014	EAAF	Habitat conservation
Norway	4,700	Overall/EAAF Coordination	coordination	2016	Overall/EAAF	coordination
Norway	12,500	Singapore Meeting	meeting	2017	EAAF	Habitat conservation, illegal hunting
Norway	5,000 (TBC)	AEF Coordination	coordination	2017	AEF	coordination
Private donation	660	AMBI Singapore meeting participation	meeting	2017	EAAF	Meeting attendance
PSI°	100,000	Support for AEF, EAAF	coordination,	2017	Overall/AEF/EAAF	coordination
Singapore	12,500	Singapore Meeting	meeting	2017	EAAF	Habitat conservation, illegal hunting
Sweden	5,000 (TBC)	AEF Coordination	coordination	2017	AEF	coordination
UNEP	65,000	Americas	Strategy plan development, consultation along flyway	2016	AF	Habitat conservation
US	4,700	EAAF Coordination	coordination	2016	EAAF	Habitat conservation, illegal hunting
Total	637,800					

*Commission for Environmental Cooperation, a funding body under the North America Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)

°Arctic Council Project Support Instrument

Specific AMBI Objectives

A. Improve the conservation status and secure the long-term sustainability of declining Arctic breeding migratory bird populations.

Too early to assess as bird populations are not likely to respond after two years of projects, but actions are being undertaken that support this goal.

B. Provide early implementation of Recommendation #8 of the Arctic Biodiversity Assessment (Reduce stressors on migratory species range-wide, including habitat degradation and overharvesting on wintering and staging areas and along flyways and other migration routes).

Too early to assess, but all the actions being undertaken by AMBI are to ensure this goal is met.

C. To build and support existing international, regional and local bird conservation initiatives which have on-the-ground capacity to make concrete progress for Arctic migratory bird conservation.

On track.

- AMBI is working with a variety of partners to implement conservation actions. This includes:
 - o Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative (WSFI)
 - o African Eurasian Waterbird Agreement (AEWA)
 - o United Nations Environment Program (UNEP)
 - o Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS)
 - o The Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network (WHSRN)
 - o Wetlands International (WI)
 - o The Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS)
 - o The East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership (EAAFP)
 - o Nunavut Wildlife Management Board (NWMB)
 - o US Parks Service
 - o Commission for Environment Cooperation (CEC; under the North American Free Trade Agreement)
 - o BirdLife International (BL)
 - o Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust (WWT)
 - o TRAFFIC (wildlife trade monitoring network)

Regulatory performance metrics:

D. Increased awareness, discussion and action at national and international levels about illegal harvest and killing.

On track (Table 3).

- AMBI Chair (Russia) on behalf of CAFF has engaged with Arctic Council observer countries and international organisations active in the region on possible ways of creating an international group tasked with working on mitigation of illegal bird hunting in Eastern and Southern Asia.
- With support from the Singapore government and Royal Norwegian Embassy in Singapore, CAFF hosted an AMBI workshop in Singapore (Jan. 2017) that discussed illegal harvest and killing of shorebirds in the EAAF (EAAF Objective 3). A result of the meeting was a recommendation from the workshop participants to the EAAFP to form an international task force on illegal killing to address this issue in the EAAF. Part of this recommendation from the

workshop was for the EAAFP task force to align with CMS to ensure coverage of illegal hunting of all birds is considered in the region.

- Following the above meeting in Singapore, there are plans to discuss this next step during the CMS Conference of the Parties (CoP) in Philippines in September 2017.
- AMBI Chair on behalf of CAFF is discussing with various partners the need and possible ways of preparation and publication of a Situation Analysis on illegal hunting in Asia. This item will be suggested as an addition to the AMBI workplan as part of the upcoming revision of the objectives and actions based on the findings of this evaluation.
- AMBI Americas is supporting an active group in the Americas Flyway that is assessing the current illegal harvest levels of shorebirds in the region (AF Objective 3).
- AMBI is supporting the AEWA through international exposure on this subject at AMBI meetings (i.e. Texel, Singapore; AEF Objective 2);

E. Increased emphasis on cross-border cooperation on enforcement, hunting, etc.

On track.

- AMBI is engaging with the international community involved in cross-border cooperation on studying and enforcing hunting activities related to migratory birds through the involvement of TRAFFIC at the AMBI meeting in Singapore in January 2017.
- The Chair of the Senior Arctic Officials (SAO) has sent letters to Greece and Myanmar raising concerns about specific hunting pressures on Arctic species in their jurisdictions.

F. Increased cooperation between Arctic and non-Arctic countries on regulations to support Arctic breeding migratory birds.

Too early to assess, but there are first positive steps.

- AMBI has engaged with several non-Arctic countries on conservation actions including:
 - o Arctic Council observer countries (China, France, Germany, Republic of Korea, the Netherlands, India, Japan, Singapore, Spain, and the UK); and
 - o Other countries not engaged in the Arctic Council (Guinea-Bissau, Greece, Mauritania, Mexico, and Myanmar).
- To date too little time has elapsed for regulations to be put into place due to AMBI.

G. Increased awareness within national legislation of threatened Arctic migratory bird species.

Too early to assess, but there are first positive steps.

- Russia is revising the status of AMBI focal species. These are currently in the process of changing from game species to national protected species (Russia Red Data Book).
- Several Arctic Council countries are actively engaged with AMBI, but there has been too little time for regulations to be put into place that are attributable to AMBI.

Habitat performance metrics:

H. Increased awareness and discussion on a diplomatic level of sites of importance to Arctic breeding migratory birds

On track (Table 3).

- AMBI has led to an increased awareness and discussion, on a diplomatic level, of sites of importance to Arctic breeding migratory birds. This has largely been done through the

engagement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs offices of both Arctic Council Observer and non-observer states as well as through visits of AMBI Chair (Russia) to three Asian observer countries during 2016 (China, India and Singapore).

- CAFF has worked with the SAO Chair to deliver letters to the following countries to raise concerns about habitat and/or hunting pressures in their jurisdictions, and to encourage partnership/involvement with AMBI: China, France, Guinea-Bissau, Germany, Greece, Republic of Korea, Mauritania, the Netherlands, India, Japan, Singapore, Spain, and the UK.
- Responses have been received from many of these countries (China, Guinea-Bissau, Mauritania, Singapore, and the UK) with discussions on how each can support AMBI and CAFF ongoing. Other countries have continued talks/discussions/involvement without an official response to the SAO Chair letter
- See Table 3 for a summary of these actions.
- Further communication on diplomatic level is planned to be continued in 2017.

I. Increased international awareness in biodiversity and migratory bird agreements, conventions and/or partnerships of specific sites of importance to Arctic breeding migratory birds.

Some progress made (Table 4).

- AMBI is working with the relevant stakeholders in each flyway to coordinate conservation actions. As a result, joint meetings where multiple Flyways are focused on allow national contact points to learn about important habitat sites in other regions. The meeting in the Netherlands in April 2016 was a good opportunity to exchange knowledge on what agreements and conventions are found in the African Eurasian and East Asian Australasian Flyways, and how these lessons can be applied across the different flyways.
- CAFF/AMBI to become a member of the Task Force on Migratory Birds and Flyways of the Americas which aims to increase cooperation in the region at the flyway level. The inclusion of Arctic-breeding migratory bird representation through existing programs under with Arctic Council observers represents an increased awareness of the issues around conservation of this group.
- See Overall Goal C for additional detail.

J. Increased national awareness, discussion and/or actions on specific sites of importance mentioned in the AMBI workplan.

Some progress made.

- AMBI has brought increased awareness on the importance of the Bijagos region through a stakeholder meeting in the Netherlands, April 2016, where the importance of this site was presented in detail and reinforced.
- Similarly, the meeting in the Netherlands also highlighted the important of the Yellow Sea to Arctic-breeding shorebirds to a variety of European and African audience members.
- The AMBI Americas committee is working with the national government and local community organisations in Mexico to support increased protection in Bahía Todos Santos through the WHRSN.
- New WHSRN nominations are also under development for AMBI focal species in Brazil, French Guiana and Venezuela, which involve local and regional governments.

- China has indicated via communications with AMBI, and during the visit of AMBI Chair (Russia) to China, they have increased the support of Jiangsu habitat conservation activities in 2016 and illegal killing of Arctic shorebirds in Fujian in December 2016.
- In India the level of awareness and urgency of Arctic bird habitat conservation and illegal hunting issues was raised among key national level decision makers (e.g. Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change) after the visit of AMBI Chair (Russia), which helped to develop constructive suggestions of India's involvement in the AMBI workplan.
- The level of awareness on AMBI priority issues has been raised among Singaporean decision makers through their participation in the Texel meeting, and through two visits of AMBI Chair (Russia) to Singapore, and in their hosting of a Singapore workshop on these issues.

Cooperation performance metrics:

K. An increase in observer countries participating in Arctic migratory bird conservation programs.

On track.

- AMBI has increased the number of observer countries participating in Arctic migratory bird conservation programs with CAFF, including active participation from China, France, Guinea-Bissau, Germany, South Korea, Mauritania, Mexico, the Netherlands, India, Japan, Singapore, Spain, and the UK.
- While not an observer, the UNEP/CMS Secretariat has invited CAFF/AMBI to become a member of the Task Force on Migratory Birds and Flyways of the Americas, which aims to increase cooperation in the region at the flyway level.

L. An increase in observed country participation at CAFF supported meetings

On track (Table 4).

- AMBI has increased the number of observer countries participating in Arctic migratory bird conservation programs with CAFF, including active participation from China, France, Germany, Republic of Korea, the Netherlands, India, Japan, Singapore, Spain, and the UK.
- Non-Arctic Council observers involved in the work include: Guinea-Bissau, Mauritania, Mexico, and Myanmar.
- AMBI is undergoing work to engage Australia, Brazil, Colombia, French Guiana (via France), Malaysia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Suriname, Thailand, Venezuela, and Vietnam.
- The Netherlands hosted an AMBI workshop (April 2016) and played an important role in ensuring the success of this meeting in cooperation with the CAFF Secretariat.
- The Netherlands has agreed to commit funding to support a flyway coordinator in the region.
- Singapore is an important connection to other countries in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) region, and is developing connections of AMBI with other countries in Southeast Asia. The first outputs would be visible at AMBI workshop in January.
- The Singapore Ministry of Foreign Affairs office is co-supporting (with the Norwegian Embassy in Singapore) and hosted the January 2017 AMBI EAAF meeting.

M. An increase in meetings held in non-Arctic countries with a focus on Arctic migratory bird conservation issues

On track (Table 4).

- Two workshops have been hosted in non-Arctic countries with a focus on Arctic migratory bird conservation: The Netherlands (April 2016) and Singapore (January 2017). Both meetings were logistically and financially co-supported by the host country and were important steps in advancing progress towards achieving AMBI issues.
- In AMBI Americas, there have been a series of community meetings in Mexico focused on Arctic migratory bird conservation issues as part of the work linking important shorebird sites.

N. An increase in migratory bird conservation mentioned in bi-lateral and tri-lateral agreements.

Some progress made

- Following the AMBI presentation to the Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative (WSFI) workshop in Bonn in November 2015, Mauritania and the Common Wadden Sea Secretariat invited Guinea Bissau to join their (bilateral) Memorandum of Understanding. Consequently, support for the Bijagós World Heritage resubmission is to be included in the CWSS/PNBA MoU 2017-2019 action plan, which is to be submitted to the Wadden Sea Board for approval in 2017. This action plan is currently awaiting further higher level input and approval within the WSFI system.
- Likely, further mention of Arctic species and conservation in agreements is possible, but resources/additional languages are required to do this research. Many of these could also be internal/non-public working documents, or in the process of becoming finalized/public and thus hard to determine
- A bilateral agreement between Russia-China on migratory bird species (including important Arctic-breeding birds) is also being considered in part due to AMBI, as AMBI.

O. An increase in Arctic Council Ministerial and Senior Arctic Official Involvement in Arctic-breeding migratory bird

Some progress made (Table 3).

- CAFF has worked with the SAO Chair to deliver letters related to AMBI to China, France, Guinea-Bissau, Germany, Greece, Republic of Korea, Mauritania, Myanmar, the Netherlands, India, Japan, Singapore, Spain, and the UK. These letters were delivered to the relevant Officials, raised specific habitat and/or harvest issues within their jurisdictions, encouraged partnership/involvement in AMBI, and invited them to consider how they could support Arctic-breeding migratory bird conservation.
- While these high-level letters are an excellent start there is a clear need to follow-up with each country. For example, increased engagement from Singapore (which has been critical to carrying out actions in the Southeast Asian region) is the result of discussions between high-level Norwegian and Singaporean officials. Additionally, the active participation of India and China in AMBI has been fostered through continued and directed conversations led by Russia (AMBI Chair), including meetings with senior ministry officials in the relevant departments.

Table 3. Overview of diplomatic level interventions and actions developed by AMBI

Contact Point	Country	Year	Event	Flyway
SAO Chair	China	2016	Diplomatic letter	EAAF
SAO Chair	France	2016	Diplomatic letter	AEF
SAO Chair	Germany	2016	Diplomatic letter	AEF
SAO Chair	Greece	2016	Diplomatic letter	AEF
SAO Chair	Guinea-Bissau	2016	Diplomatic letter	AEF
SAO Chair	India	2016	Diplomatic letter	AEF/EAAF
SAO Chair	Mauritania	2016	Diplomatic letter	AEF
SAO Chair	Republic of Korea	2016	Diplomatic letter	EAAF
SAO Chair	Singapore	2016	Diplomatic letter	EAAF
SAO Chair	Spain	2016	Diplomatic letter	AEF
SAO Chair	The Netherlands	2016	Diplomatic letter	AEF
SAO Chair	UK	2016	Diplomatic letter	AEF
CAFF Chair	Mexico	2016	Diplomatic letter	AF
AMBI Chair	China	2016	Presentation to partners	EAAF
AMBI Chair	India	2016	Presentation to Indian Ministry of Environment	EAAF
AMBI Chair	Singapore	2016	Presentation to partners	EAAF
AMBI Steering Group member	USA	2016	Presentation about AMBI for development under CAFF Chairmanship	Overall

Table 4. Overview of AMBI events

Country	Year	Event	Type of Event	Flyway	Priority Issue
Brazil	2015	Brazilian National Migratory Shorebird Action Plan	Talk and poster	AF	Habitat conservation
Canada	2015	ArcticNet Annual Science Meeting	Conference session	Overall, AF, CF	Habitat conservation
Uruguay	2015	12th Conference of the Parties to the Ramsar Convention	Side event, presentation	AF	Habitat conservation
French Guiana	2016	Workshop on shorebirds	Talk and poster	AF	Habitat conservation
Mexico	2016	CBD	Side event, presentation	AF	Habitat conservation
Suriname	2016	Local Seminar	Talk	AF	Habitat conservation
The Netherlands	2016	AMBI Implementation Meeting	AMBI Workshop	AEF, EAAF	Habitat conservation
USA	2016	IUCN	Side Event	Overall, EAAF	Habitat conservation
Venezuela	2016	Workshop on shorebirds	Talk and poster	AF	Habitat conservation
Singapore	2017	AMBI EAAF Meeting at the East Asian Australasian Partnership MOP9	AMBI Workshop, MOP presentation	EAAF	Habitat conservation, illegal hunting

AMBI African-Eurasian Flyway (AEF) Midpoint Evaluation

Executive Summary

The AMBI African-Eurasian Flyway has a diverse set of ambitious objectives: 1) Secure intertidal non-breeding habitat of arctic waders in Bijagós Archipelago, Guinea-Bissau, 2) Prevent unsustainable harvest of the Lesser White-fronted Goose, and 3) Secure breeding habitat of waders in Iceland by ensuring that national afforestation, and other land use policies and practices are sustainable.

There has been important progress at a high level (i.e. indications that bilateral agreements will be extended to Guinea-Bissau; Table 5). However, many of the flyway objectives have suffered from not having a dedicated flyway coordinator to ensure that actions are carried out. This situation should improve in 2017 with the Netherlands, Sweden and Norway committing funds to support a coordinator position starting in mid-2017. The CAFF Secretariat is currently putting in place the framework and contacts required.

Good progress has been made regarding some issues concerning the Lesser White-fronted Goose (LWfG) and Icelandic afforestation. This progress is due to efforts by AEWA and existing multilateral and inter-governmental frameworks within the flyway that already cover these activities. Specifically, more work is needed to bring participation from Russia into this committee to better engage on LWfG activities in Russia where the majority of the populations breeds and is hunted.

There is a need to work more closely with AEWA in order to better mobilize funds for LWfG activities on behalf of AMBI/AEWA, and to engage more with Russia on issues related to LWfG populations. The main benefit thus far has been for CAFF member countries within the flyway (such as Norway), who have been able to use AMBI as an additional argument for the provision of conservation funding for international activities – albeit not necessarily from new sources. This is slowly changing as some Arctic Council Observer countries within the flyway begin to pledge funding under the AMBI framework (e.g. Netherlands).

Table 5. Overview of AMBI AEF Workplan

AMBI AEF Workplan	Status	Notes on progress
Objective 1 – Habitat protection in the Bijagos		
1. Share experience on World Heritage nomination	Moderate progress	Will improve with AEF coordinator in place
2. International recognition of the site	Little progress to date	Will improve with AEF coordinator in place
3. Site protection from development	No action to date	Too early to assess
4. Development of site management committee and plan	No action to date	Will improve with AEF coordinator in place
5. Mangrove restoration	No action to date	Too early to assess
6. Coordination	In progress	Funding identified for coordinator
Objective 2 – Unsustainable harvest of lesser white-fronted goose		
1. Reduce mortality rates due to illegal harvest	Moderate progress	Research funding needed
2. Expand efforts to include Eastern main sub-population	Little progress to date	Need to work with AEWA and Russia
Objective 3 – Afforestation in Iceland		
1. Cooperate with Iceland to avoid risks to breeding water birds	On track	Lead by AEWA

AEF Specific Actions

Objective 1. Secure intertidal non-breeding habitat of arctic waders in Bijagós Archipelago, Guinea-Bissau.

The Bijagós Archipelago, Guinea-Bissau is one of the two most important wintering areas of AMBI species in West Africa and is threatened by unsustainable use and development. Le Parc National du Banc d'Arguin (PNBA, Mauritania) and the Common Wadden Sea Secretariat (CWSS) via the Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative WSFI are mentoring the Guinea-Bissau Institute for Biodiversity and Protected Areas (IBAP) to reapply for World Heritage Site nomination after a previous deferral.

Action 1. Share experience on World Heritage nomination between international partners.

1. Current status

- AMBI has been invited to participate in the Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative (WSFI) Steering Group in order to increase cross-linkages.
- Following the AMBI presentation to the WSFI (Nov 2015), Mauritania and the Common Wadden Sea Secretariat (CWSS) invited Guinea Bissau to join their (bilateral) Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). Consequently, support for the Bijagós World Heritage resubmission is to be included in the CWSS/PNBA MoU 2017-2019 action plan, which is to be submitted to the Wadden Sea Board for approval in 2017.

2. How does the current status meet the flyway committee's expectation for progress at this time?

Extending the existing Wadden Sea and Mauritania MoU to Guinea Bissau is a crucial step towards sharing World Heritage nomination experience between the Wadden Sea and Banc d'Arguin sites, and Bijagós. The participation of AMBI in showing the international importance of the Bijagós region was a critical component that helped move this action forward. Beyond this, AMBI has had insufficient capacity to do more. However, the establishment of an African-Eurasian flyway coordinator (see Action #6) will be a critical step towards achieving the objectives for the AEF.

3. What actions/resources are needed to advance the objective/action under the current AMBI timeframe?

It is important to confirm that the Common Wadden Sea Secretariat (CWSS)/Banc d'Arguin National Park (PNBA) MoU 2017-2019 action plan will include support for the Bijagós World Heritage resubmission. Guinea-Bissau needs support to enhance its ability to implement the World Heritage recommendations from the last nomination attempt. The AMBI AEF coordinator could help facilitate these processes by making linkages, gathering knowledge, and coordinating efforts.

4. Recommendations for CAFF/AMBI to undertake regarding this objective –

- i) CAFF/AMBI should work with the WSFI and CWSS to consider what efforts could help secure support for the Bijagós World Heritage resubmission inclusion in the CWSS/PNBA MoU 2017-2019 action plan.
- ii) The new AMBI AEF coordinator should work with other stakeholders in the region to ensure a coordinated effort, including Wetlands International, BirdLife Africa and the MAVA Foundation for Nature that have ongoing projects in the region.

Action 2. Strengthen international recognition of the site.

1. Current status

- BirdLife Africa presented on behalf of Bijagós at the Texel (Netherlands) implementation meeting, April 2016.
- Both Mauritanian and Guinea-Bissau were unable to attend the Texel meeting, so progress on this objective was limited. There has been negligible other AMBI engagement on this action due to the lack of a flyway coordinator.
- A representative from AMBI (Norway) will attend the Bijagós World Heritage Steering Committee in Bijagós in February 2017 to explore partnership opportunities.
- In an exchange of letters, the Senior Arctic Official has communicated with Mauritania and Guinea-Bissau on sites of mutual interest and intentions to cooperate.

2. *How does the current status meet the flyway committee's expectation for progress at this time?*

Talks and presentations among national representatives of the Arctic Council member countries and observer states, and subsequent workshop discussions, are succeeding in strengthening international recognition of the site, but there is much more to be done on this action.

3. *What actions/resources are needed to advance the objective/action under the current AMBI timeframe?*

It is important the AMBI African-Eurasian flyway coordinator arrange a call with the AMBI flyway committee and representatives from Guinea-Bissau to identify needs and partnership opportunities, in particular to discuss the management and tourism plan. There is also a need for CWSS and AMBI to consider how to support a scientific committee to help the Institute for Biodiversity and Protected Areas (IBAP) make decisions about boundaries of the World Heritage Site, and the management and tourism plans.

The AMBI AEF coordinator should be tasked with helping the WSFI and Bijagós team promote stronger international recognition of the site amongst Arctic countries and others, in particular to develop a series of highly visible communications products to illustrate the key significance of the site, as recommended at the Texel meeting.

4. *Recommendations for CAFF/AMBI to undertake regarding this objective –*

- i) AEF coordinator tasks should include:
 - a. Engage with WSFI, AEWA and other parties that are supporting migratory bird monitoring and research that is demonstrating the importance of the Bijagós region.
 - b. Develop communication materials in collaboration with the Bijagós World Heritage Steering Committee to promote international recognition of the site.
 - c. Work with the Bijagós World Heritage Steering Committee to develop proposals related to promoting international ecotourism.
 - d. Convene an international expert working group to support the resubmission of the Bijagós World Heritage nomination, including help to define the nomination boundaries, etc.
 - e. Look for ways to enable African partners to formulate proposals and projects that will support local needs for intertidal habitat conservation.

Action 3. Protect the site from damaging developments

1. *Current status*

- No progress to date

2. *How does the current status meet the flyway committee's expectation for progress at this time?*

The focus on many efforts on AMBI in the AEF have been on exchanging knowledge and increasing the links between stakeholders. The committee recognizes that more action needs to be undertaken quickly to ensure these more specific habitat objectives are addressed as well.

3. *What actions/resources are needed to advance the objective/action under the current AMBI timeframe?*

A coordinator that can work with stakeholders will help to create movement on this conservation action.

4. *Recommendations for CAFF/AMBI to undertake regarding this objective –*

- i) The new AEF coordinator tasks should include:
 - a. Developing proposals for work with various partners in the Bijagós region to protect the site from damaging developments.

Action 4. Support development of a site management committee and management plan, to guide management and to ensure that the needs of Arctic shorebirds are fully taken into account.

1. *Current status*

- No progress to date

2. *How does the current status meet the flyway committee's expectation for progress at this time?*

The focus on many efforts on AMBI in the AEF have been on exchanging knowledge and increasing the links between stakeholders. The committee recognizes that more action needs to be undertaken quickly to ensure these more specific habitat objectives are addressed as well.

3. *What actions/resources are needed to advance the objective/action under the current AMBI timeframe?*

A coordinator that can work with stakeholders will help to create movement on this conservation action.

4. *Recommendations for CAFF/AMBI to undertake regarding this objective –*

- i) The AEF coordinator tasks should include:
 - a) Seeking funding opportunities and developing proposals with partners to advance knowledge on wader ecology, mangrove habitat, inter-tidal interactions, and management actions, etc.
 - b) Support local partners to develop a site management committee and plan

Action 5. Mangrove restoration and provision of sustainable surveillance.

1. *Current status*

- No progress to date

2. *How does the current status meet the flyway committee's expectation for progress at this time?*

The AMBI AEF committee felt it was important to ensure that the capacity of the organization was built to sustain long term efforts before specific habitat actions were undertaken. While these are still recognized as important actions, a coordinator will help to build more opportunities for this work to take place via fundraising, and liaising with other stakeholders.

3. *What actions/resources are needed to advance the objective/action under the current AMBI timeframe?*
 - A coordinator that can work with stakeholders will help to create movement on this conservation action.
4. *Recommendations for CAFF/AMBI to undertake regarding this objective –*
 - i) The AEF coordinator tasks should include:
 - a) Developing proposals for work with various partners in the Bijagós region to support progress on this action.

Action 6. Coordination of the implementation of the Bijagós component of the AMBI workplan

1. *Current Status*

- The AMBI Steering Group and the AEF flyway committee have made draft Terms of Reference for an AEF Flyway coordinator who could help advance the World Heritage Site nomination of Bijagós, Guinea Bissau building on existing CWSS MoUs with Mauritania.
- Explore how lessons from the transboundary World Heritage Site nomination process in this flyway might inform the work of the East Asian-Australasian Flyway, which is also seeking nomination for the Yellow Sea. The CWSS has an MoU with the Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea and China are involved in AMBI.
- Participants at the Texel AMBI workshop agreed to input to a crosswalk document identifying AMBI action regarding the Bijagós objective that adds value beyond existing conservation and development initiatives, including taking account the activities and objectives of relevant ministries, agencies, protected areas, development aid initiatives, and organisations.
- The Netherlands, Sweden and Norway have committed funds to support a part time flyway coordinator starting in spring 2017 (ideally April 1). The CAFF Secretariat is currently putting in place the framework and contacts required. While this is an ongoing task, these commitments mean that AMBI will soon be able to support a coordinator dedicated to supporting implementation of the flyway objectives.

2. *How does the current status meet the flyway committee's expectation for progress at this time?*

Good progress is being made on this front with funding from the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden contributing to this effort.

3. *What actions/resources are needed to advance the objective/action under the current AMBI timeframe?*

Securing support for the AEF flyway coordinator is the highest priority action for this flyway. It has been estimated that the total need is €67,000 Euros annually for a full time position based on an average post-doctoral salary. A major task for the coordinator once in place will be to undertake a crosswalk analysis to pinpoint how AMBI can contribute to existing initiatives and add value to the activities of others.

4. *Recommendations for CAFF/AMBI to undertake regarding this objective –*

- i) CAFF/AMBI to continue efforts to secure funding to support the AMBI AEF coordinator position.

Objective 2. Prevent unsustainable harvest of the Lesser White-fronted Goose

Although legally protected throughout most of its range, mortality due to illegal and accidental killing, plus disturbance caused by hunting at key staging and wintering sites along the flyway, are thought to be the key driver of the decline of the global population of Lesser White-fronted Goose. In general, the actions under this objective are carried out by the AEWA. While much of this work has been done outside of AMBI, AEWA and AMBI representatives sit on reciprocal committees in order to continually examine how each can bring added value to the other.

This set of actions is being led by AEWA, with AMBI aiming to support these efforts by raising awareness and support for work related to LWfG through higher level discussions and conduits that include AEWA, and also reach beyond to other parties.

Action 1. Reduce Lesser White-fronted Goose mortality rates caused by illegal killing.

1. Current status

AMBI has made little progress on this action however AEWA has provided information on a wide array of individual activities to under this action, providing an overview of relevant ongoing work:

- a) identifying key sites for the species and working to protect those sites - in particular with regard to reducing illegal killing;
 - b) launching an initiative for the sustainable use of migratory waterbirds in Central Asia; and
 - c) diminishing the threat from illegal killing in the Evros Delta, Greece.
- a) Work is ongoing by all relevant partners (mainly from Norway, Russia, Finland and the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat) under the framework of the AEWA LWfG International Working Group (IWG), and the bilateral Norwegian-Russian Environment Agreement to identify further key sites for the implementation of conservation activities related to illegal killing of the species, including satellite-tracking and several international expeditions to Azerbaijan, Iran and Kazakhstan. Two subsequent monitoring missions to Iran in 2015, revealed in particular very high numbers of LWfG at a site identified through satellite-tracking data. At the 3rd Meeting of the LWfG IWG in April 2016 in Trondheim, Norway, the range states agreed on a list of 9 sites/countries prioritized for urgent conservation action during 2016-2019 partly on the basis of new findings from this ongoing work. The present EU-LIFE+ project (2011-2017) 'Safeguarding the Lesser White-fronted Goose Along Its European Flyways' has been instrumental in achieving conservation goals in Europe, especially in key wintering sites in Greece, and Norway has provided extended funding of conservation activities in Greece (BirdLife Greece – HOS/2016-2018) pending the possibility of a new EU LIFE proposal (2018-2022).
 - b) The LWfG Coordinator at the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat has contacted various experts for guidance on establishing the initiative for sustainable hunting in Central Asia. This remains a crucial activity, not only with regard to the ongoing illegal killing of Lesser White-fronted Geese and other protected species along this part of the flyway. The 2015 AEWA Conservation Status Report confirmed of all the regions covered by AEWA the rates of decline in migratory waterbird species is highest in Central Asia. The preparation and exchange of information materials for awareness-raising and environmental education (including Central Asia/China) is also an activity included in funding provided by Norway to BirdLife Greece.
 - c) The extension of the non-hunting zone at the Evros Delta in Greece to include the Kalavos area has not yet been achieved, despite ongoing efforts including high level letters sent to the Greek Ministry of the Environment by both the Chair of the Senior Arctic Officials and the AEWA Executive Secretary requesting adoption of the National Action Plan. Through the current EU LIFE+ project mentioned above, the protection of the species at key sites in Greece has, however, been much improved. The funding provided to BirdLife Greece by Norway

allows for the continuation of conservation actions to reduce illegal killing at the Evros Delta in Greece following the end of the LIFE project.

2. *How does the current status meet the flyway committee's expectation for progress at this time?*

Activities under actions a) and c) are on track under AEWA, but more work is needed. Little progress has been made on action b) mainly due to lack of capacity and funding. Apart from some of the international activities carried out under Actions a) and c) all activities were carried out without any support directly provided through AMBI. There is more room for AMBI to contribute to this work through increased awareness of these issues with international partners.

3. *What actions/resources are needed to advance the objective/action under the current AMBI timeframe?*

To date, no additional actions have been undertaken due to the efforts of AMBI. Additional funding from outside 'traditionally' available resources is urgently needed to step up work and deliver on these important conservation actions. It remains unclear how the AEWA LWfG IWG and its Coordinator, can make more concrete use of AMBI without more coordination efforts. Currently only the government institutions in Norway, have been able to utilize the existence of AMBI as an additional important "argument" in national fundraising processes, albeit not necessarily to tap into new national funding sources.

Following the 3rd Meeting of the AEWA LWfG IWG in April 2016 as well as the adoption of its 2016-2019 work plan, the three following activities should be prioritized for immediate action/funding to be able to deliver on this objective:

- i) Examine the motivations behind hunting/illegal killing of Lesser White-fronted Geese at key sites (including detailed site-specific recommendations).
 - ii) Conduct a survey of known and potential wintering sites of the Western main population of the species (Azerbaijan, Iran, Iraq, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan) in winter 2017/2018.
 - iii) Establish a long-term solution (including funding) for the continued security of the Fennoscandian population at the main wintering sites in Greece (including the continuation of the smart patrolling system etc.).
4. *Recommendations for CAFF/AMBI to undertake regarding this objective –*
- i) CAFF/AMBI should work to coordinate fundraising efforts with the AEWA Secretariat to ensure that these programs continue to bring added value to each other, and leverage the maximum support available for priority projects.
 - ii) CAFF/AMBI should continue to raise awareness and contribute to discussions surrounding LWfG with relevant countries and partners in the region.

Action 2. Expand international Lesser White-fronted Goose conservation efforts to include the Eastern main sub-population.

1. *Current status –*

- LWfG experts from China, Japan and Russia attended for the first time a Meeting of the AEWA LWfG IWG¹ in April 2016. The meeting included presentations on the status of the species along the Eastern flyway as well as a specific break-out session

¹ The LWfG IWG is the intergovernmental body coordinating the implementation of the AEWA International Single Species Action Plan for the Conservation of the Lesser White-fronted Goose (LWfG ISSAP)

for the development of an Action Framework for the Eastern main population. The participation of China and Japan was funded through the EU LIFE+ project 'Safeguarding the Lesser White-fronted Goose Along Its European Flyways'.

- It is planned to develop a separate International Action Plan – including priority conservation actions – for the Eastern flyway under the framework of the East-Asia Australasia Flyway Partnership (EAAFP). The overall international coordination of the implementation of activities will be facilitated by the existing AEWA LWfG IWG.
- Norway supplied Russian collaborators with satellite transmitters to improve knowledge on the migratory routes of the Eastern main subpopulation (unfortunately no breeding birds were found during the expedition).

2. *How does the current status meet the flyway committee's expectation for progress at this time?*

While some actions have been undertaken, overall this action is not on track. Some of the activities that were originally foreseen have been cancelled, and the process on how to include the Eastern main sub-population under the overall international conservation efforts for the species has been modified following discussions amongst all relevant stakeholders in both flyways. A discussion between the EAAFP and AEWA Secretariats took place during the AMBI Implementation Meeting in the Netherlands, however, other than that there has been no direct CAFF/AMBI support/facilitation. Unfortunately, no representative from AEWA will be in attendance at the AMBI meeting in Singapore, which would have provided a concrete platform to follow-up on these discussions with EAAFP. This is a missed opportunity that the committee hopes will be corrected in the future.

3. *What actions/resources are needed to advance the objective/action under the current AMBI timeframe?*

More efforts are needed to link AEWA and the EAAFP. AMBI can help with this action, but coordinators in both the AEF and the EAAF are needed in order for this action to move forward. The latest research results from the main wintering area of the Eastern main LWfG in China indicate that this population is once again declining². Thus, this Action remains extremely important as a step towards fulfilling the overall objective. AMBI could provide political support to engage officials in China and Russia and seek ways to help secure funding for the implementation of first urgent conservation activities (satellite-tracking of birds from the breeding grounds; production (modification) and distribution of information materials etc.).

4. *Recommendations for CAFF/AMBI to undertake regarding this objective –*

- i) CAFF/AMBI should seek ways to engage with China and Russia on assessing populations of the Eastern main LWfG in the region.
- ii) CAFF/AMBI should continue to support putting coordinators in place for both the AEF and EAAF flyways to ensure that coordination takes place on these joint issues.

² Fox et al. (in press).

Objective 3. Securing breeding habitat of waders in Iceland by ensuring that national afforestation, and other land use policies and practices are sustainable

Following a recommendation of the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention on European Wildlife and Natural Habitats adopted in 2002, the Government of Iceland was urged to undertake several actions to ensure that the national afforestation policy was not harmful to its waterbird populations.

Action 1. Cooperate with Iceland to avoid risk to breeding water birds from changes in land use in the Icelandic lowlands, especially as regards the national afforestation policy.

1. Current status

- Within the framework of the Implementation Review Process (IRP) established under the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement (AEWA), an on-the-spot assessment mission on behalf of the Agreement and the Bern Convention took place in May 2016, hosted by the Icelandic Ministry for the Environment and Natural Resources.
- Following the assessment mission, a report³ including expert recommendations were drafted in consultation with the Icelandic government. On the basis of this report, the 36th Meeting of the Bern Convention Standing Committee, which took place on the 15-18 November 2016, adopted a recommendation on the Conservation of Natural habitats and Wildlife, Specially Birds, in afforestation of lowland areas in Iceland⁴.
- The AEWA Standing Committee is also expected to discuss and agree on the report and the recommendations therein at its 12th meeting, scheduled to take place on the 31 January – 1 February 2017.

2. How does the current status meet the flyway committee's expectation for progress at this time?

This Action is on track with regard to established international processes under the AEWA and the Bern Convention. There has been no CAFF/AMBI involvement.

3. What actions/resources are needed to advance the objective/action under the current AMBI timeframe?

Any activities with regard to this Action should be coordinated and consulted with the government of Iceland.

4. Recommendations for CAFF/AMBI to undertake regarding this objective –

- i) CAFF/AMBI is recommended to follow up with Iceland to see if CAFF/AMBI may be of assistance.

³ AEWA Implementation Review Process (IRP) On-the-spot Assessment Mission in Conjunction with the Bern Convention – Possible Impact of Icelandic Forestry Policy on migratory waterbirds. October 2016. http://www.unep-aewa.org/sites/default/files/basic_page_documents/aewa_final_iceland_irp_report.pdf

⁴ Recommendation on the conservation of natural habitats and wildlife, specially birds, in afforestation of lowland in Iceland. November 2016. <https://wcd.coe.int/com.instranet.InstraServlet?command=com.instranet.CmdBlobGet&InstranetImage=2952193&SecMod e=1&DocId=2392536&Usage=2>

AMBI Americas Flyway Midpoint Evaluation

Executive Summary

To date the Americas committee has been chaired by a representative from Environment and Climate Change Canada via the Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS); first by Vicky Johnston (2013-2015), and more recently by Jennifer Provencher (2016-2017). This part-time coordination role, in conjunction with funding from the Commission for Environmental Cooperation (under the North American Free Trade Agreement; \$460,000CAD) and the United Nation's Environmental Program (\$70,000 USD), have led to many achievements, including the development implementation strategies designed to engage experts from across the region in formulating key activities needed to increase conservation actions necessary for shorebirds throughout the Americas (Table 6).

To move the AMBI workplan along even further, greater engagement is needed in South America to implement site-specific objectives. An upcoming opportunity in November 2017 (in conjunction with the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Group) needs to be enacted on immediately. Unfortunately, coordination support from ECCC/CWS for AMBI Americas will end on March 31, 2017. The AMBI Americas committee has been actively seeking continued support, but nothing has been committed to date (December 2016). As a result, the AMBI Americas Committee is seeking support from CAFF for an AMBI Americas coordinator to fully engage with South American counterparts and co-host a meeting in 2017 to fully achieve the AMBI Americas objectives.

Table 6. Overview of AMBI AF Workplan

AMBI AF Workplan	Status	Notes on progress
Objective 1 – Evaluate and mitigate effects of over-abundant white goose populations		
1. Research to identify impacts from snow geese on shorebird habitat	On Track	
2. Incorporate Traditional Knowledge into management plans	On Track	
Objective 2 – Evaluate and mitigate loss of habitat due to climate change		
1. Assess breeding habitat for climate change resilient regions	On track	
2. Encourage protection of large tract of resilient habitat	No action to date	Too early to implement
3. Assess north coast of South America for resilient shorebird habitat	No action to date	Partners in South America needed
Objective 3 – Mitigate habitat impairment from human intrusions and disturbances		
1. Work with communities to established increased protection for important sites	On track	
2. Work with other initiatives to reduce hunting of shorebirds in the region	Little progress made	Currently other groups are leading on this
Objective 4 – Mitigate habitat impairment from destruction and degradation		
1. Create maps of shorebird habitat in relation to industrial land use	No action to date	Partners in South America needed
2. Make available best management practices for coastal developments	No action to date	Partners in South America needed
3. Make available shorebird habitat information for land use planning purposes	No action to date	Partners in South America needed
4. Work towards site designations for increased protection	No action to date	Partners in South America needed

Specific AF Actions

Objective 1. Evaluate, and determine appropriate mitigations, to impacts of overabundant goose populations on Arctic shorebird habitat.

Populations of white geese in the eastern and central North American Arctic have dramatically increased over the past 30 years. In some areas, like the west coast of Hudson Bay, large areas that were formerly sedge tundra have been reduced to a monoculture of moss or even bare ground. In less extreme cases, goose grazing reduces sedge height, which decreases use by nesting shorebirds.

Action 1. Conduct research that is designed to identify and quantify the magnitude and mechanism(s) of impact that white goose habitat destruction has on breeding populations of shorebirds, in particular Semipalmated Sandpipers, in the eastern and central Canadian Arctic.

1. *Current status*

- Research examining how shorebird populations are being affected by overabundant white goose populations is currently ongoing in the Hudson Bay region, coordinated by Dr. Paul Smith (funded by Environment and Climate Change Canada and the Arctic Goose Joint Venture). Results are currently being compiled and prepared for publication in peer-reviewed literature.
- Additional research funding is being applied for through the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board.
- There is interest in expanding this type of work to Banks Island in the western Canadian Arctic through the lab of Dr. Trevor Lantz at the University of Victoria.
- AMBI has brought added attention to this research topic that is of interest to a variety of groups, and while some of this research started before AMBI, increased funding to include perspectives from Inuit partners have been secured due to AMBI and its link with Arctic Council objectives that highlight the need to include traditional knowledge in research efforts.

2. *How does the current status meet the flyway committee's expectation for progress at this time?*

The above work is currently meeting expectations.

3. *What actions/resources are needed to advance the objective/action under the current AMBI timeframe?*

In order to support this work more broadly, the Americas committee will continue to work with Dr. Smith and to ensure that results from these projects are available broadly.

4. *Recommendations for CAFF/AMBI to undertake regarding this objective –*

- i) This objective is on track, there are no further recommendations for CAFF/AMBI.

Action 2. Incorporate Inuit knowledge and advice into management recommendations.

1. *Current status*

- ECCC staff and university collaborators are partnering with community-based organizations in Arviat and Coral Harbour, Nunavut, to undertake studies into the effects of overabundant white geese on the land, other birds, and people.

2. *How does the current status meet the flyway committee's expectation for progress at this time?*

Initial organization and fundraising proposal have been written. Preliminary funding from the Nunavut General Monitoring Program will allow ECCC staff and community partners to hold organizational meetings in February/March 2017. Field work will occur in summer 2017, and the project should be complete by the end of 2018.

3. *What actions/resources are needed to advance the objective/action under the current AMBI timeframe?*

This research is on track, but we are looking for opportunities to expand this work to Alaska. Currently Rick Lanctot and Jennifer Provencher have contacted the Alaska Migratory Bird Co-Management Committee to present AMBI and the work in the Americas Flyway at the upcoming meeting in April 2017.

The major impediment for this objective to succeed is securing the funds needed to provide adequate salary to keep our post-doc research lead for the length of the TK-shorebird-white goose project. The project team will continue to apply for funding.

4. *Recommendations for CAFF/AMBI to undertake regarding this objective –*
 - i) There are no specific recommendations at this point.

Objective 2. Evaluation and determine appropriate mitigations to loss and shifting of shorebird habitat from climate change.

Climate change is expected to cause large changes in the quantity, quality, and location of Arctic habitats. This is one of a number of factors (e.g., disruption of lemming cycles) that are expected to have a negative impact on Arctic-nesting shorebirds.

Action 1. Undertake an analysis that identified the attributes and locations of shorebird habitats that are most likely to persist under future climate scenarios.

1. *Current status*
 - This component was funded from the Commission on Environmental Cooperation (CEC) under the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).
 - Analysis is now complete and a report has been written and accepted by the CEC steering committee. The CEC is now revising the report for exposure on a new website.
2. *How does the current status meet the flyway committee's expectation for progress at this time?*

The status of this objective is in line with the committee's expectations

3. *What actions/resources are needed to advance the objective/action under the current AMBI timeframe?*

The Americas Flyway committee must follow-up with researchers to get both a detailed and high level summary of the work. In order to maximize the usability of this work, summary documents and communication tools should be created under AMBI that will facilitate the use of this

knowledge in conservation and protected area planning, and combining it with efforts to look at the impacts of climate change on shorebirds elsewhere within the Americas.

4. *Recommendations for CAFF/AMBI to undertake regarding this objective –*

- i) CAFF/AMBI should create space on the CAFF website where products such as these reports can be accessed, shared and highlighted.

Action 2. Encourage the protection of large contiguous tracts of shorebird habitat, in parts of the eastern and central Canadian Arctic that are least susceptible to climate changes.

1. *Current status*

- Now that the results from the above analysis are complete, this action can be moved forward, but there has been very little done on this item to date.

2. *How does the current status meet the flyway committee's expectation for progress at this time?*

While this action has not been a focus to date, the committee recognizes that the uptake of this information in the next phase of AMBI is critical.

3. *What actions/resources are needed to advance the objective/action under the current AMBI timeframe?*

To ensure that the information and analysis that have been completed is used by stakeholders involved in protected area development, further analysis that scales this information down to a smaller scale to identify more specific areas is needed. This would focus shorebird research and climate change research into discrete areas where the payoff would be greatest. Additionally, increased linkages between this work and that of AFSI and WHSRN sites south of the Arctic should be made with some of the bird sanctuary area co-management committees in northern Canada. They share birds and this sort of awareness-raising would be handy in future when we want to encourage maintenance of existing sites and protection of emerging sites in the Arctic.

4. *Recommendations for CAFF/AMBI to undertake regarding this objective –*

- i) CAFF/AMBI should continue to engage with AFSI or the Americas Flyway Framework to ensure flyway level communication is ensured.

Action 3. AMBI will explore opportunities to conduct assessments that quantify the vulnerability of key sites for shorebirds on the north coast of South America to climate change, and recommend actions to mitigate and/or to adapt to these impacts. AMBI will facilitate transfer of the knowledge and recommendations to habitat managers at the relevant sites

1. *Current status*

- While no actions have been taken on this objective under AMBI, other groups (The National Audubon Society and BirdLife International) are now taking initial steps in this area of research so the AMBI Americas Flyway committee has prioritized to work with this group, rather than start a separate process.
- Once completed, this assessment will provide a valuable first look at the vulnerability of key sites for shorebirds.

2. *How does the current status meet the flyway committee's expectation for progress at this time?*

While the focus over the last two years has been on the northern objectives, the committee recognizes that more action needs to be undertaken quickly to ensure that the southern objectives are addressed as well.

3. *What actions/resources are needed to advance the objective/action under the current AMBI timeframe?*

In order to directly address this objective, continued discussions between federal and state agencies and appropriate landowners of identified refugia need to be started to protect areas. Areas identified as refugia already that are currently part of the federal and state governments and not protected should become a discussion point for future protection. In order to move along on the AMBI objectives in South America at a high level of government AMBI needs to extend invitations to South American countries to ensure national commitments and engagement on these issues. Ideally, a stakeholder meeting in South America with other inter-governmental agencies that have a presence in the region, as many will not have heard of CAFF, is needed to create institutional arrangements that would allow for this work to take place.

4. *Recommendations for CAFF/AMBI to undertake regarding this objective –*

- i) CAFF/AMBI should continue to engage with Audubon/BirdLife on applying the results of this study within the framework of AMBI, and communicating these results at any planned future meetings in South America.

Objective 3. Mitigate habitat impairment from human intrusions and disturbance.

The effects of human activity on shorebirds and their habitat are not high in the consciousness of many local communities or governments along the flyway. AMBI has identified a clear and pressing need for key shorebird sites along the flyway to have a higher profile.

Action 1. Communities and other partners associated with established Western Hemispheric Shorebird Reserve Network (WHSRN) and Important Bird Area (IBA) sites will be encouraged to conduct site assessments to identify critical threats to the focal species, and develop strategies to mitigate these threats.

1. *Current status*

- The WHSRN Executive Office (in part through support from ECCC) has worked with local partners to undertake site assessments using WHSRN's Site Assessment Tool at 8 key sites in northern South America (Brazil (2 sites), Colombia (1 site), French Guiana (2 sites), and Suriname (3 sites)).
- Key site identification workshops/processes have also been undertaken in Guyana and Venezuela, with the latter also including an initial assessment of threats. Additionally, the CEC funding supported work by the Manomet Center for Conservation Sciences to identify key sites for Semipalmated Sandpipers and Red Knot, and then to identify threats to these sites. This information is summarized in a report, and is being put in a website created by CEC.

2. *How does the current status meet the flyway committee's expectation for progress at this time?*

While the focus over the last two years has been on the northern objectives, the committee recognizes that more action needs to be undertaken quickly to ensure that the southern objectives are addressed as well.

3. *What actions/resources are needed to advance the objective/action under the current AMBI timeframe?*

In order to ensure progress on AMBI objectives in South America, AMBI needs to extend invitations to South American countries to ensure national commitments and engagement on these issues. Ideally, a stakeholder meeting in South America with other inter-governmental agencies that have a presence in the region, as many will not have heard of CAFF, is needed to create institutional arrangements that would allow for this work to take place.

4. *Recommendations for CAFF/AMBI to undertake regarding this objective –*

- i) CAFF/AMBI should seek to better engage with partners in South America to ensure progress the southern AMBI Americas objectives.
- ii) CAFF/AMBI should actively seek to find hosting partners to hold a meeting in South America in mid-2017. One upcoming opportunity for such a meeting is the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Group meeting in November in Peru. The AMBI Americas committee should begin to focus on co-hosting a side event during this meeting.

Action 2. AMBI will cooperate with initiatives that document the scope of shorebird hunting at selected sites along the Flyway. This includes working with hunters to assess level of take (in countries with legal hunts) and using direct observation and indirect measures (e.g., number of registered firearms, quantity and species of birds sold in local markets) as an indicator of hunt level (in countries where hunting is illegal).

1. *Current status*

- While AMBI AF included hunting in the original workplan, a very active working group has formed under AFSI to tackle unsustainable hunting in the Caribbean and northern South America. As a result, AMBI is committed to work with this group, but is not taking the lead on this work.

2. *How does the current status meet the flyway committee's expectation for progress at this time?*

AMBI AF committee members form part of the AFSI hunting working group and/or coordinate closely with working group members. The working group has made good progress with assessing levels of take (e.g. in the French Département and Suriname) and developing plans to assess hunt levels elsewhere (e.g. Guyana, Brazil).

3. *What actions/resources are needed to advance the objective/action under the current AMBI timeframe?*

In order to continue to support this work, CAFF/AMBI must continue to engage with the AFSI hunting group, and potentially could provide leadership in assessing hunt levels in geographies not currently prioritized by AFSI (e.g. Trinidad and Tobago, Puerto Rica). Ideally this continental scale assessment would include harvest numbers of shorebirds in the Arctic to have a greater

level of accuracy and detail. This is an area that CAFF/could contribute meaningful on this objective.

4. *Recommendations for CAFF/AMBI to undertake regarding this objective –*

- i) CAFF/AMBI should continue to engage with the Atlantic Flyway Shorebird Initiative and the Americas Flyway Framework to ensure flyway level communication is ensured, especially with regard to setting sustainable hunt limits throughout the flyway.
- ii) An assessment of shorebird numbers and species harvested in northern Canada should be supported by AMBI in Canada and the Alaska.

Objective 4. Mitigate habitat destruction and degradation from development.

Both rice farming and shrimp aquaculture were identified as industries that have widespread effects on shorebird habitats in general, and increasingly so in northern South America. These farming activities can have both positive and negative effects on shorebirds, but magnitude of the effect depends on locations and farming practices. Currently, the extent of the impact is not clear because the locations of all farms have not been mapped and overlain with key shorebird habitat site locations.

Action 1. AMBI will create maps showing the overlap of rice farms, shrimp farms, and key shorebird habitat sites in northern South America

1. *Current status*

- No actions to date.

2. *How does the current status meet the flyway committee's expectation for progress at this time?*

While the focus over the last two years has been on the northern objectives, the committee recognizes that more action needs to be undertaken quickly to ensure that the southern objectives are addressed as well.

3. *What actions/resources are needed to advance the objective/action under the current AMBI timeframe?*

In order to move along on the AMBI objectives in South America AMBI needs to extend invitations to South American countries to ensure national commitments and engagement on these issues. Ideally, a stakeholder meeting in South America with other inter-governmental agencies that have a presence in the region. There are also lots of lessons to learn from Asia, Europe and Australia, where Landsat (satellite) mapping of intertidal areas is being conducted. More could be done by AMBI to bring together groups in other flyways to share lesson learned on specific topics such as this.

4. *Recommendations for CAFF/AMBI to undertake regarding this objective –*

- i) Greater partnerships with South America countries and organizations must be initiated and maintained for movement on the southern AMBI Americas objectives.
- ii) CAFF/AMBI should actively seek to find hosting partners to hold a meeting in South America is mid-2017 (i.e. in Peru in November 2017).

Action 2. There are existing Best Management Practices (BMPs) for these activities elsewhere in the world, that could be adapted for this region. AMBI will make accessible searchable, accessible BMPs that are useful for rice cultivation and shrimp farming in northern South America. BMPs should take into account the potential exposure of shorebirds to harmful chemicals used in rice cultivation and shrimp farming, both in terms of type and application, and the timing of habitat use by shorebirds (e.g., for feeding, roosting, or both).

1. *Current status*

- No actions to date.

2. *How does the current status meet the flyway committee's expectation for progress at this time?*

While the focus over the last two years has been on the northern objectives, the committee recognizes that more action needs to be undertaken quickly to ensure that the southern objectives are addressed as well.

3. *What actions/resources are needed to advance the objective/action under the current AMBI timeframe?*

In order to move along on the AMBI objectives in South America AMBI needs to extend invitations to South American countries to ensure national commitments and engagement on these issues. Ideally, a stakeholder meeting in South America with other inter-governmental agencies that have a presence in the region, as many will not have heard of CAFF, is needed to create institutional arrangements that would allow for this work to take place. Additionally, best management practices from other regions should be incorporated into the work, especially from Asia. To really capitalize on the relationships and support of AMBI, the AMBI flyways should again seek ways to learn from other flyway experts on topics such as this one.

4. *Recommendations for CAFF/AMBI to undertake regarding this objective –*

- i) Greater partnerships with South America countries and organizations must be initiated and maintained for movement on the southern AMBI Americas objectives.
- ii) CAFF/AMBI should actively seek to find hosting partners to hold a meeting in South America in mid-2017 (i.e. in Peru in November 2017).
- iii) Plan cross flyway activities to share experience for AMBI in 2017-19.

Action 3. AMBI will work to ensure that key sites for shorebirds have been clearly identified and documented in publicly-available databases, that information on these sites is incorporated into development bank/multilateral agreement decision tools and environmental safeguard policies, and that the information is readily available to governments in the focal area and incorporated into development plans.

1. *Current status*

- This work is ongoing and a part of the shorebird tracking efforts that are being supported from funds from the CEC grant. This includes compiling a list of all sites known to host Semipalmated Sandpipers and Red Knots in North America, with special attention to locating habitats in the Arctic that are considered resilient to climate change.

- CEC funds supported the purchase of tracking devices for shorebirds to be deployed on Arctic-breeding individuals to show connections along migration routes.
- A workshop to identify priority sites for shorebirds in Venezuela was also undertaken with support from ECCC.
- Americas committee members have also been coordinating with efforts by AFSI (led by the WHSRN Executive Office and National Audubon Society) to identify and document key sites for shorebirds within the Atlantic Flyway.

2. *How does the current status meet the flyway committee's expectation for progress at this time?*

This work is ongoing, and will continue to be ongoing as tracking data continues to be collected and analyzed. As the tracking units are deployed in the Arctic but then continue to relay data for several years to come this is ongoing work.

3. *What actions/resources are needed to advance the objective/action under the current AMBI timeframe?*

The AMBI Americas committee must continue to encourage analysis of tracking and banding data with a focus on high level synthesis type work that aims to identify regions that are important to shorebirds through the Americas. As many of the tags that are currently being deployed are nano-tags that are picked up by the MOTUS tower network, AMBI should support MOTUS towers to be installed throughout the region to increase the detections of shorebirds that have already been tagged.

4. *Recommendations for CAFF/AMBI to undertake regarding this objective –*

- CAFF/AMBI should work with partners to find funding opportunities to support data analysis and compilation that will bring together tracking information from a variety of resources that will identify key shorebird habitat.
- CAFF/AMBI should work with partners to find funding opportunities to install MOTUS towers in the Caribbean and South America where the tower coverage is minimal at best, and non-existent in many regions, to maximize the data collected from the tagging efforts that are already underway.

Action 4. AMBI will work to obtain site designations (e.g., Western Hemispheric Shorebird Reserve Network, Ramsar sites), and ensure that information about each site's characteristics and ecosystem services is transmitted to local and national governments.

1. *Current status*

- Through funding from the CEC AMBI has supported community-based work that will assist communities in designating important shorebird habitat in their local regions to achieve increased protection.
- Currently, there are 4 sites on the Atlantic Flyway (James Bay, Bay of Fundy, Delaware Bay and Georgia Barrier Islands) and three on the Pacific (Copper River, Willapa Bay and Bahía Todos Santos) that are receiving support from the CEC funding, which for four sites (James Bay, Georgia Barrier Islands, Willapa Bay and Bahía Todos Santos) will allow these communities to apply for WHSRN status (the remaining three sites are already WHSRN sites, though the Bay of Fundy is proposed for expansion).

- The main outcome expected from the proposed work is that communities that are local to important habitats for Semipalmated Sandpiper and Red Knot experience enhanced sustainability in their use of these areas, such that shorebirds, people and the biodiversity that occurs in these habitats will benefit.
- New WHSRN nominations are also under development for AMBI focal species in Brazil (at least 2 and 1 other currently in review), French Guiana (1 site) and Venezuela (1 site).

2. *How does the current status meet the flyway committee's expectation for progress at this time?*

The committee is happy with how this work is progressing, and is currently planning to submit another application to the CEC for additional funding to support these activities.

3. *What actions/resources are needed to advance the objective/action under the current AMBI timeframe?*

These sites need to be formally accepted into WHSRN and additional sites identified. Also connections between sites need to be realized, perhaps by exchanging people throughout the flyway sites. The AMBI Americas committee work to outline a draft project in order to be ready for the upcoming CEC call.

4. *Recommendations for CAFF/AMBI to undertake regarding this objective –*

- i) Garry Donaldson is leading on initiating a proposal for the next round of CEC funding.

AMBI Circumpolar Flyway (CF) Midpoint Evaluation

Executive Summary

The Circumpolar Flyway (CF) committee comprises of the chair of CAFF's Circumpolar seabird expert group (CBird), and representatives from Canada and Birdlife International. Through CBird, AMBI has been able to coordinate efforts related to the CBird workplan across the region through the national representatives from both Arctic Council member countries, and observer countries with representation. As a result, a number of the AMBI objectives, (i.e. increased coordinated of at-sea tracking efforts) have advanced well over the last two years (Table 7).

While the AMBI CF workplan includes some items from CBird's workplan (Objectives 1 and 4), it also includes topics that are not currently being addressed by CBird (Objectives 2, 3, and 5). Thus, much of the work accomplished to date on bycatch issues is attributable to Environment and Climate Change Canada and BirdLife International, as well as CBird.

While good progress has been made on obtaining information on at-sea sites and seabird bycatch, little progress has been made on mitigating habitat destruction, mitigating unsustainable harvest, and assessing the status of poorly known seabirds. It is recommended that to fully achieve success in the AMBI CF these objectives and actions need to be prioritized through an AMBI CF coordinator leading on connecting with CBird members and other experienced partners. Importantly, progress on some objectives will require AMBI to reach out to potential partners, within CBird and beyond, to identify funding and partnership opportunities.

Table 7. Overview of AMBI CF Workplan Objectives

AMBI CF Workplan	Status	Notes on progress
Objective 1 – Critical information on at-sea sites		
1. Develop and implement at-sea surveys	On track	
2. Develop and implement at-sea tracking	On track	
3. Identify where key habitat sites intersect with emerging industrial activities	Moderate progress	Will be further developed in the second half of AMBI
Objective 2 – Mitigate habitat destruction		
1. Promote protection of habitat	Little progress to date	Too early to assess
2. Guidelines for responsible colony viewing	No action to date	Will be further developed in the second half of AMBI
Objective 3 – Mitigate seabird and seaduck bycatch		
1. Gillnet bycatch assessments	On track	
2. Develop and test mitigation measures	No action to date	All efforts are supporting this long term action
Objective 4 – Mitigate unsustainable harvest		
1. Develop communication material on sustainable harvest of seabirds	Little progress to date	Further expertise is needed on the AMBI circumpolar committee
Objective 5 – Assess status of poorly known Arctic species		
1. Support the Snowy Owl Working Group	Little progress to date	Engagement from the Snowy Owl Working group is needed

AMBI Circumpolar Flyway Workplan Objectives

Objective 1. Obtain critical information on key at-sea sites for marine bird congregations

Identifying Arctic marine areas that support large numbers of birds will help to flag shifts in seabird and seaduck distribution relative to changes in habitat, as well as aid managers in prioritizing marine conservation areas.

Action 1. Develop and implement at-sea surveys

- a) Improve temporal and spatial coverage of seabird habitat use in the Circumpolar Arctic
- b) Generate analysis of habitat use in relation to biotic and abiotic factors

1. *Current status*

- Work to expand the temporal and spatial extent of at-sea seabird habitat use has been undertaken and coordinated through CBird.

2. *How does the current status meet the flyway committee's expectation for progress at this time?*

Overall, this objective is progressing as expected, and benefits from coordinated effort under CBird.

3. *What actions/resources are needed to advance the objective/action under the current AMBI timeframe?*

Continued support of CBird is critical to ensuring that the tracking data is coordinated, collected, analyzed, archived and published appropriately. This is important as the type of information collected in tracking studies is data rich, large and complex. As computing methods are still being developed to deal with such large data sets, proper archiving is integral to maximising benefits from these collection efforts.

4. Recommendations

- i) CBird should continue to ensure that tracking data archiving plans are in place with all national contact points and representatives to CAFF.

Action 2. Develop and implement at-sea tracking

- a) improve temporal and spatial coverage of seabird habitat use and wherever possible, compile data tracks.
- b) analysis of habitat use in relation to biotic and abiotic factors in the Circumpolar Arctic (2015-2017)

1. *Current status*

- This work is being conducted by members of CBird.
- Recent efforts have mostly focused on the North Atlantic region.
- Seabird tracking data of Thick-billed murres from a variety of countries has been published (Fredericksen et al. 2016 *Conservation Biology*). This paper highlights the importance of Greenland as a wintering location for breeding murre colonies across the North Atlantic.
- Several projects are occurring in Canada, Greenland and Norway that will relate biotic and abiotic factors to marine bird habitat use.

2. *How does the current status meet the flyway committee's expectation for progress at this time?*

Overall, this objective is progressing as expected and AMBI is working with CBird to ensure that the data collected as a part of these projects are used to the maximum benefit.

3. *What actions/resources are needed to advance the objective/action under the current AMBI timeframe?*

Continued support of CBird is critical to ensuring that the tracking data is coordinated, collected, analyzed, archived and published appropriately.

4. Recommendations

- i) CBird should continue to ensure that tracking data archiving plans are in place with all national contact points and representatives to CAFF.

Action 3. Identify areas where key marine seabird habitats intersect with current and especially emerging commercial fisheries, resource exploration and shipping developments.

- a) Identification of areas where research and management priorities should take place (perhaps drawing on pre-existing Important Bird Areas throughout the Circumpolar Arctic that have already been identified). Develop this through 2015-2017.
- b) Areas where longline and trawl fisheries and marine bird hotspot overlap are identified
- c) Best practice mitigation measures adopted where marine birds and ships or resource development overlap

1. *Current Status*

- This work is being conducted by members of CBird.
- In Canada work is underway to merge marine birds and their seasonal use of habitats data, and industrial activities data (e.g., tourism, fisheries, hydrocarbon extraction) in the Labrador Sea. This work will produce an Ecosystems Services Valuation report for resources and activities of the Labrador Sea. This action is being supported by ECCC/CWS (\$12,500 CAD). This project is expected to be finalized in Spring 2017.
- Once this exercise is complete, work to address best practices or mitigation measures to be used when seabirds and human activities overlap will begin. It is anticipated that mitigation measures developed as part of Objective 3 (seabird bycatch) will also address this objective.
- There are also ongoing efforts at Acadia University to merge tracking data from Canada and Greenland in order to overlay this with fishing and shipping in the region. Results are expected in late 2017.

2. *How does the current status meet the flyway committee's expectation for progress at this time?*

Most of the work in the first two years of AMBI has focused on identifying the key marine seabird habitats. The next phase will focus on how these align with fisheries, shipping and other developments.

3. *What actions/resources are needed to advance the objective/action under the current AMBI timeframe?*

Continued support of CBird is critical to ensure this objective is completed.

4. *Recommendations for CAFF/AMBI to undertake regarding this objective –*
 - i) CAFF/AMBI should work with CBird to increase their capacity (i.e., post-docs, etc.) to carry out high-level analyses to examine patterns at the circumpolar level and integrate information across large scales.

Objective 2. Mitigate habitat degradation

Seabird colonies are generally located in coastal areas which are the interface between marine and terrestrial ecosystems. This, in addition to their propensity to congregate in large numbers, makes them vulnerable to disturbance related to human activities (e.g., shipping, resource extraction infrastructure, tourism, natural resource development).

Action 1. Identify and participate in the current initiatives to facilitate protection of marine birds and marine habitat.

- a. Work to coordinate and expand efforts to identify Ecologically and Biological Significant marine areas throughout the Circumpolar Arctic
- b. Work to develop Strategic Environment Assessments (SEA) in the circumpolar Arctic. Examples include a SEA for Baffin Bay/Davis Strait (Canada), as well as the proposed Lancaster Sound National Marine Conservation Area feasibility assessment (Canada).

1. *Current Status*

- CAFF participated and supported the CBD process to identify EBSAs in the Arctic. This included providing data on seabirds generated by CAFF activities.
- Work to address this Objective has not been initiated at a large scale. Once adequate data is collected (Objective 1) and analyzed we will be well positioned to engage in the processes outlined below.
- This objective requires the synthesis and interpretation of appropriate data to feed into habitat protection initiatives and environmental assessments. To advance this objective at a Circumpolar scale, CBird attended a workshop in Washington, DC (Fall 2016), hosted by PAME, to discuss ways to establish linked Marine Protected Areas in the Arctic.
- Further engagement in regional processes will be facilitated once Objective 1 has been advanced.

2. *How does the current status meet the flyway committee's expectations for progress at this time?*

Little progress on this action has taken place to date as Objective 1, the habitat identification component, is of critical importance in this flyway.

3. *What actions/resources are needed to advance the objective/action under the current AMBI timeframe?*

Further support for building collaboration and engaging in these processes will be required to fulfil this objective. Engaging in these processes will be a long-term activity, and will likely extend well beyond AMBI timelines.

4. *Recommendations for CAFF/AMBI to undertake regarding this objective –*

- 1) CBird should work to ensure that information regarding key marine habitat areas are included in CAFF publications.

Action 2. Ensure that guidelines for responsible seabird colony viewing are made available to the tourism industry.

1. Current Status
 - Preliminary work has been initiated to identify existing guidelines for responsible colony viewing that have been developed within the circumpolar Arctic.
2. *How does the current status meet the flyway committee's expectation for progress at this time?*

Progress is limited and this action should be prioritized in the second part of AMBI.

3. *What actions/resources are needed to advance the objective/action under the current AMBI timeframe?*

Next steps include engaging a student to identify regions where guidelines do not exist, and assess the applicability of existing guidelines to these regions. For regions that lack guidelines, CAFF/AMBI should seek additional funding to translate guidelines into appropriate languages. Once produced, the translated guidelines will be distributed by CAFF to for governments and partners, including tourism operators such as the Association of Arctic Expedition Cruise Operators and other umbrella organizations.

4. *Recommendations for CAFF/AMBI to undertake regarding this objective –*
 - i) CAFF/AMBI will seek partners, including the tourism industry, and funding to complete this project.

Objective 3. Mitigate seabird and seaduck bycatch

An estimated 300,000 seabirds are killed globally in longline and trawl fisheries each year. Broadly speaking, observer effort in fisheries worldwide is far below minimum levels (20% of the fleet) that would give satisfactory estimates of seabird bycatch, and data collection protocols are frequently not well-designed for the purpose of estimating fishery-wide bird mortality.

Action 1. Undertake gill net bycatch assessments in key regions

- a) Existing bycatch data reviewed and updated
- b) Governments share fishing effort data and overlaps between fishing effort and susceptible bird species identified
- c) Observer programmes updated to incorporate seabird bycatch data collection
- d) Observer programmes implemented to collect seabird bycatch (and other) data in gillnet fisheries

1. Current status

Canada

- This work is being led by Environment and Climate Change Canada – Canadian Wildlife Service.
- Canada held a stakeholder meeting on seabird bycatch in March 2016 in Iqaluit, Nunavut. The meeting brought together parties that have interest in the northern

fisheries and seabirds, including the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO), the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board, the Nunavik Marine Region Wildlife Board, the Government of Nunavut Fisheries and Sealing Department, the Nunavut Offshore Allocation Holders Association, Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. and Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC). Key findings from this meeting include consensus that seabird bycatch in northern fisheries is an important topic to address in Nunavut, that the current state of data is not sufficient, and that that national and regional governments and the fishing industry should work together to improve these efforts.

- ECCC has worked with DFO and at-sea observers to improve data collection methods by introducing standardized data collections sheets for different regions that work in northern fisheries.
- Some observers on the vessels used these new and improved data sheets, and an assessment on the data collected will take place in 2017.
- ECCC is working to expand the use of the data sheets.
- Carcass collection kits were developed by ECCC and distributed to one boat fishing in northern Canada. While only one boat has agreed to carry to participate in the carcass collection program, the process is now in place to distribute these kits to all fishing boats operating in 2017, along with protocols and international permits.
- ECCC carried out two contracts to assess the current state of seabirds and fisheries in northern waters (\$30,000 CAD in total). The first study focused on summarizing the northern fisheries effort over a three period (2013-2015) for which data was available (Wheeland, 2016). The second report built on this study with a focus on seabird bycatch in the region (Whidden and McFarlane-Tranquilla, 2016). A series of maps that overlaid seabird colonies and foraging ranges with the fisheries in the region were created. These maps are now also being incorporated into DFO management plans in the region.
- To follow up on this action, ECCC is currently creating a contract (\$10,000 CAD) to assess how fisheries activities in the Baffin Bay/Davis Strait region impacts northern fulmars (the species identified as the most vulnerable to gillnets).

Iceland

- Birdlife International is undertaking work under this objective.
- In association with partners in Iceland, BirdLife International is partnering with local lump sucker fishermen to assess seabird bycatch in coastal gillnets. Field studies aboard participating vessels in 2015 and 2016 are yielding the first estimated data for this fishery in the region. Analysis of this data is underway, and this new data will be incorporated into a larger bycatch assessment in the region.

Norway

- Norway completed an initial assessment of seabird bycatch in coastal lump sucker fisheries in 2016.
- Norway is now leading a coordinated effort to access existing data on seabird bycatch in lump sucker fisheries throughout the North Atlantic via CBird, and will be leading a joint publication.

- A side meeting for the Lump sucker Bycatch project lead by Norway will be held at the upcoming CBird meeting in March 2017.

2. *How does the current status meet the flyway committee's expectation for progress at this time?*

Good progress has been made on points a-d in Canada, Iceland and Norway, but increased engagement from the Kingdom of Denmark and Greenland are needed to better understand this conservation concern at the larger scale, as the foraging range of some species span international borders.

3. *What actions/resources are needed to advance the objective/action under the current AMBI timeframe?*

There is a need to continue to work with Canadian partners to assess bycatch and implement better data collection, but these actions need to be mirrored in Greenland for this action to be achieved there is a need for participation from Greenland to get a more comprehensive picture of the issue, and to initiative successful interventions to reduce bycatch in the Baffin Bay/Davis Strait.

4. *Recommendations for CAFF/AMBI to undertake regarding this objective –*
- i) CAFF/AMBI requests active participation in this bycatch project from the Denmark/Greenland CBird representative beyond CBird due to the bycatch objectives not currently being addressed by CBird.

Action 2. *Develop and test bycatch mitigation measures*

- a) In steps similar to those identified for gillnet fisheries, countries and regional fisheries managers should share fishing effort data to identify overlaps with bird distribution, highlighting areas where further data collection and the implementation of mitigation measures should occur (i.e. overlaps between northern fulmar and longline fishing operations)
- b) Key habitat sites for susceptible species and overlaps with gillnet fisheries identified – spatial/temporal measures implemented to reduce bycatch rates

1. *Current Status*

- There has been little action on this objective. BirdLife International has been undertaking gill net modification mitigation measures in other regions (Lithuania and Japan).
- Mitigation measures have been discussed at a meeting with Canadian partners, but most parties want to see a demonstrated effect on seabird populations before allocating resources towards developing and implementing mitigation techniques.

2. *How does the current status meet the flyway committee's expectation for progress at this time?*

Stakeholders have identified this action is dependent upon previous actions. As such, there no progress to date, as expected.

3. *What actions/resources are needed to advance the objective/action under the current AMBI timeframe?*

More time and resources should be invested in action 1 (Objective 3 above) in order to achieve stakeholder support. Seabird bycatch mitigation is a long term objective and given progress to date, establishing mitigation techniques by 2019 may be unrealistic. It is recommended that AMBI continues to strive for this outcome, but the effort should stay focused on assessing levels of bycatch (action 1). This will foster long term relationships with fisheries stakeholders that will ultimately lead to a better understanding of this conservation issues, and co-develop long term solutions that will increase the conservation status of seabirds in the region.

4. *Recommendations for CAFF/AMBI to undertake regarding this objective –*
 - i) CAFF/AMBI should recognize that this work is more likely to develop beyond AMBI.

Objective 4. Mitigate unsustainable harvest

The use of living resources is fundamental to many regions of the Arctic. For coastal people, marine mammals and seabirds are among the principal sources of harvest. Analyses have demonstrated that murre species are sensitive to climate change on a circumpolar level, but also showed that even closely related species may react differently to a given temperature change. Taken together, these issues apparently driven by climate change will likely complicate the sustainable use of seabird populations so that previous harvest levels may no longer be sustained for some species, while sustainable levels may increase for others.

Action 1. Develop reporting guidelines as well as outreach and education plans to support sustainable harvest of seabirds

- a) Guidelines should be developed for reporting harvest consistently throughout the circumpolar Arctic by 2016. Guidelines should draw on and expand approaches of harvest reporting from regions where it is currently most effective.
- b) Develop outreach and education plans to support sustainable harvest of seabirds with an emphasis on direct local involvement from coastal communities by 2016.
- c) The efforts of the AMBI Circumpolar Flyway and its members should offer outreach and engagement expertise intended as a helpful third party in regions where new seabird harvest regulations and/or amendments are proposed.

1. Current Status -

- This objective has not moved forward and is dependent on further coordination and resources.

2. *How does the current status meet the flyway committee's expectation for progress at this time?*

More action is needed on this objective, including specific resources and personnel tasked to address this objective.

3. *What actions/resources are needed to advance the objective/action under the current AMBI timeframe?*

AMBI needs support (financial and expertise) to develop harvest reporting guidelines, specific communications/behavior modification plans to support sustainable harvest, and consultation activities to implement successful outreach and education plans.

4. *Recommendations for CAFF/AMBI to undertake regarding this objective –*
 - i) CAFF/AMBI should develop a plan to implement work under this action with CBird.

Objective 5. Begin to assess status of poorly known Arctic bird species

Changes in winter sea ice extent and polynya formation that affect seabird, could also affect the food intake of snowy owls while living at sea in winter. Given the variety of habitats owls use during the year, the vast circumpolar migrations some owls make, and the changes taking place in Arctic sea ice environments in winter due to climate change, snowy owls are a priority species of the AMBI Circumpolar Flyway.

Action 1. Support the activities and priorities of the International Snowy Owl Working Group

Including:

- a) ISOWG recommends that the Snowy Owl should be considered for inclusion in the IUCN Red List because recent global population (estimates < 14,000 pairs) are considerably lower than those provided in the latest data from the IUCN Red List and BirdLife International (290 000 - 300 000 individuals). A further recommendation is to develop a more precise population estimate.
- b) Given the nature of Snowy Owl movements across continents and national boundaries, the International Snowy Owl Working Group ISOWG highlights the need for wider-scale tracking of Snowy Owls throughout their range (satellite/GSM/GPS).
- c) Continue ISOWG cooperation and knowledge sharing.
- d) Develop an international action plan to identify and address threats and stressors.

1. *Current Status*

- The ISOWG was initiated in 2007 during the 4th World Owl Conference in the Netherlands. The group was established to share information on Snowy Owl biology, and initiates ideas for research priority areas. It is not officially housed under any institution.
- To date no projects have been initiated to address this objective.
- AMBI CF invited members of the ISOWG to participate in the Flyway meeting in Canada held during the ArcticNet conference in December 2015, but the invitation was declined.

2. *How does the current status meet the flyway committee's expectation for progress at this time?*

The committee has tried to include this group in discussions, but the lack of engagement has prevented movement on any of the objectives listed in the AMBI workplan.

3. *What actions/resources are needed to advance the objective/action under the current AMBI timeframe?*

In order to move forward on this objective, more engagement from the SOWG is needed.

4. *Recommendations for CAFF/AMBI to undertake regarding this objective –*

- i) AMBI recommends a member from the ISOWG should be added to the AMBI Circumpolar Flyway Committee to ensure communication flow between these two groups.

AMBI East Asian-Australasian Flyway (EAAF) Mid-term Evaluation

Executive Summary

The AMBI East Asian-Australasian Flyway (EAAF) includes ambitious objectives that are targeted towards actions in seven countries, including Arctic and non-Arctic nations. Conservation issues focus on 1) protecting breeding sites in the Arctic, 2) protecting overwintering intertidal habitat throughout the flyway, and 3) addressing illegal killing and unsustainable harvest of Arctic-breeding migratory birds in the region. This flyway represents the most ambitious set of objectives within AMBI given the complex conservation issues in the region. As a result, further consultation under AMBI with relevant partners have highlighted that several actions listed in the workplan should be revisited in 2017 to ensure that the AMBI objectives reflect the current needs of the region.

For the action items related to the United States, very good progress has been made due to AMBI highlighting these issues with federal partners (Table 8). Similarly, great work has been achieved in Russia, including improved protection for more than 10 Arctic breeding shorebirds expected to be finalised in the Russian Red Data Book in 2017, in part due to AMBI highlighting focal species (Table 8). Important steps have been taken to engage with stakeholders in other regions have been made mainly through the leadership of Russia, and the support of Singapore. There still remain numerous actions that have little to no progress made to date in cooperation with some Asian observer countries. This is in part due to the lack of a coordinator on this flyway. Since a part-time EAAF coordinator was hired in October 2016 great process on engaging with stakeholders has been made.

A successful AMBI-EAAF workshop was organised in Singapore through close coordination by Singapore AMBI focal point, Mr. How Choon Beng and the part-time EAAF coordinator. Through the Singapore focal point, resources were secured to produce workshop material, venue, events-coordination support for the workshop. More than 95 participants took part in the workshop, representing 46 organisations and 25 countries. A number of important stakeholders in the EAAF were engaged for the first time through the workshop, including representatives from the World Heritage Promotion Committee for Korean Tidal Flats, and various government (Myanmar, Vietnam, Indonesia, Philippines, Cambodia) and NGO representatives from across Southeast Asia.

Importantly, AMBI EAAF, with Russia as the flyway lead and directly following up from the AMBI EAAF workshop outcomes in Singapore 2017, has made significant progress on getting multiple countries in the region to form an international task force on illegal killing of migratory birds in the region. As a result CAFF/AMBI was able to work with partners at the Meeting of the Parties (MOP9) of the East Asian Australasian Flyway Partnership (EAAFP) in January 2017 to form a task force under the EAAFP on illegal hunting, taking and trade of migratory birds in the EAAF. This is an important first step to assessing and addressing this issue on a flyway level scale.

Support for an AMBI EAAF coordinator beyond January 2017, preferably full-time, would greatly improve many of the actions in the workplan within this current phase of AMBI, although the committee recognises that while much of the groundwork of AMBI is needed and must be put in place immediately. Many of the ultimate outcomes from the AMBI EAAF workplan (protected status) may come to fruition after this phase of AMBI.

Table 8. Overview of AMBI EAAF Workplan Objectives

AMBI East Asian Australasian Workplan	Status	Notes on progress
Objective 1 – Secure breeding sites in the Arctic		
1. Improve conservation work on the Spoon-billed sandpiper	On track	
2. Document important coastal areas in Russia	Moderate progress to date	Additional resources are needed
3. Assist with EAAFP Site Network nomination in Alaska	On track	
4. Share methodologies for studying shorebirds and waterfowl	Moderate progress to date	Additional resources are needed
Objective 2 – Secure intertidal habitat in the EAAF		
1. Protection of coastal regions in Russia	Little progress to date	Additional resources are needed and too early to access
2. Gather information on important coastal sites in Alaska	On track	
3. Ensure protection of Jiangsu Coast in China	Little progress to date	EAAF coordinator will help this action
4. Ensure protection of Luannan Coast in China	No progress to date	Action is needed at diplomatic level
5. Ensure protection of Yalu Jiang coast in China	No progress to date	EAAF coordinator will help this action
6. Support conservation of intertidal areas in Korea	No progress to date	More active engagement with Korea needed
7. Coordination with the EAAFP	Little progress to date	EAAF coordinator will help this action
Objective 3 – Address issues of illegal harvest in the region		
1. Support Russia to eliminate illegal harvest	Little progress to date	Active stage to start after the new Russia National Red Data Book is in place
2. Assess levels of harvest in Alaska	On track	
3. Support China to eliminate illegal harvest	Moderate progress to date	EAAF coordinator will help with follow-up this action
4. Support capacity in Singapore for wetland and shorebird management	Moderate progress to date	EAAF coordinator will help this action

5. Cooperate with Singapore to increase international dialogue	On track - Initial stage	Need to be continued
6. Initiate a dialogue with Japan to develop conservation actions	No progress	More communication is needed by CAFF and AMBI Chairs
7. Initiate a dialogue with India to develop conservation actions	Moderate progress to date	EAAF coordinator will help this action
8. Coordination support in Singapore	Moderate progress to date	EAAF coordinator will help this action
9. Cooperate with EAAFP and AEWA work on illegal and unsustainable harvest issues	Moderate progress to date	EAAF coordinator will help this action

EAAF Specific Actions

Objective 1. Secure important breeding and staging habitats of key AMBI-EAAF migratory bird species in Arctic Russia and Alaska, with a focus on Spoon-billed Sandpiper, Bar-tailed Godwit and Dunlin.

Although the Russian and Alaskan Arctic is relatively pristine compared to most regions of the EAAF, a number of areas of particular importance for breeding or staging of key priority species need to be effectively protected. These important sites need to be identified and recognized through international, national, or regional frameworks.

Action 1. Improve conservation work on Spoon-billed Sandpiper (SBS) in the breeding grounds.

1. Current Status –

- Survey of previously not visited areas had identified a new important breeding location for SBS in southern Chukotka: Okeanskoe, with 17-25 pairs by Ministry of Natural Resources and Ecology in Russia.
- After two years preparatory work in July 2016 the Chukotka Government initiated a project to prepare for the creation of the Nature Park “The land of Spoon-billed Sandpiper” as a result of AMBI highlighting the importance of conserving this species.
- ‘Headstarting’ is a conservation effort of Birds Russia/WWT/RSPB which has increased the number of SBSs raised in captivity.
- Monitoring is continuing at key areas in Southern Chukotka by the Russian Ministry of Natural Resources and Ecology.
- Funding was obtained from the US National Park Service due in large part because of their desire to participate in AMBI. This new study will involve surveys for SBSs and Red Knots along the Northwest coast of Alaska during the spring of 2018 and 2019. Portions of this coastline were deemed to have appropriate breeding habitat for SBSs during a recent habitat modelling exercise.

2. How does the current status meet the flyway committee's expectation for progress at this time?

The committee is happy with the result and looking forward for more work to be done in further years. While this work will not be complete when this phase of AMBI is completed in 2019, this project fills a critical data gap, and resulted in part from actions by AMBI.

3. What actions/resources are needed to advance the objective/action under the current AMBI timeframe?

More resources are needed to expand surveys in the Russian breeding grounds to make sure all key SBS locations are secured with adequate conservation status. Resources are needed for project development work for creation of the Nature Park “The land of Spoon-billed Sandpiper” in Chukotka.

There may be other work that can be done in Alaska that compliments the above mentioned 2018-19 surveys. The AMBI EAAF committee will continue to seek partners, and other projects that would increase the value of these planned surveys.

4. Recommendations for CAFF/AMBI to undertake regarding this objective –

- i) No specific recommendations at this point.

Action 2. Identify important staging areas in coastal areas of Russia for priority species, and where possible encourage and assist their nomination as EAAF Partnership Network Sites with follow-up conservation actions.

1. *Current Status –*

- Four key Arctic shorebird stopover locations were identified by the Russian Ministry of Natural Resources and Ecology in Kamchatka Kray, Sakhalin and Khabarovskiy Kray to further inform work to create protected areas and sites.
- Survey missions were also carried out to update counts of waders and evaluate habitat in 2015-16 in the Kamchatka, Sakhalin and Khabarovskiy Kray regions.

2. *How does the current status meet the flyway committee's expectation for progress at this time?*

The committee is happy with this good start and is looking forward to see its development. The committee would also try to help seek additional resources needed for continuation of work.

3. *What actions/resources are needed to advance the objective/action under the current AMBI timeframe?*

Additional resources are needed in order to carry out surveys along coastal Russia and implement the creation of protected areas.

4. *Recommendations for CAFF/AMBI to undertake regarding this objective –*

- i) CAFF/AMBI should seek partners, expertise and funding opportunities that could assist in this action.

Action 3. Encourage and assist in the nomination for the EAAF Partnership Flyway Site Network of important breeding and staging areas used by priority species in Alaska as part of the EAAF Partnership Flyway Site Network.

1. *Current Status –*

- A new site EAAF site, called Qupaluk (pronounced Coo-pa-luke), was recently nominated for north-central Alaska and is currently under evaluation by EAAFP for acceptance into the flyway site network. This site was chosen specifically because of the high numbers of breeding Dunlin (*Calidris alpina ssp. arctica*) found (about 6,500 in a 21,100 ha wetland region). This site also supports high numbers of the Spectacled (*Somateria fischeri*) and globally threatened (VU: Vulnerable) Steller's (*Polysticta stelleri*).
- Additional survey work is currently being planned for north-western Alaska during the spring of 2018 and 2019. If important migration stopover sites are located during these surveys, an effort will be made to nominate sites here too. However, the nomination of any additional sites would not be possible until 2020 or later when these surveys are concluded (RL: Lower risk).

2. *How does the current status meet the flyway committee's expectation for progress at this time?*

This work is on track, and while the committee recognizes that more work is needed the committee is happy with these initial results.

3. *What actions/resources are needed to advance the objective/action under the current AMBI timeframe?*

No additional resources are needed at this point in time.

4. *Recommendations for CAFF/AMBI to undertake regarding this objective –*
 - i) There are no specific recommendations at this time.

Action 4. Share experience and methodologies for surveying shorebird distribution, monitoring population size and trends, conducting demographic studies, and managing habitats of priority species and other migratory birds.

1. *Current Status –*

- Training and sharing of experience with two Russian experts in aerial waterfowl surveys was implemented in Alaska under support of the US FWS in July 2016. These activities are under further development as shared priorities in the region, and may become part of future US-Russia bilateral activities.
- No specific actions have been implemented to date for shorebirds. However, depending on discussions with Russian colleagues during upcoming AMBI, MOP9, and Spoon-billed Sandpiper Task Force meetings, new work is possible. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service overseeing the surveys may invite Russian colleagues to assist in the Spoon-billed Sandpiper surveys in spring 2018, or exchange field people for other waterbird surveys in spring 2018/2019.

2. *How does the current status meet the flyway committee's expectation for progress at this time?*

The committee is happy about the successful sharing experience waterfowl section and looking forward for more cooperation between US and Russia in shorebird conservation. Increased participation of many different partners at the Singapore AMBI workshop, and EAAFP meetings was an excellent opportunity to start more discussions on this topic as there is a need for a standardized and well-coordinated waterbird/shorebird monitoring system to be established across the wider EAAF region. Follow up discussions are needed to further planning for future events, but AMBI could play a key role in facilitating this.

3. *What actions/resources are needed to advance the objective/action under the current AMBI time frame?*

More discussions between Russia and the US occurred during the Singapore 2017 meeting. These discussions will be followed up on in the coming year by the parties involved. While opportunities exist, and the researchers are eager, additional funding is needed for these exchange opportunities.

4. *Recommendations for CAFF/AMBI to undertake regarding this objective –*
 - i) CAFF/AMBI should work with US and Russia CAFF board members to seek further opportunities for cooperation and collaboration on this objective.

Objective 2. Secure intertidal and associated habitat for Arctic waders at key staging and wintering sites in the EAAF

The loss and degradation of habitat along the flyway is the focal conservation issue for this work plan, especially at the critical staging sites provided for most priority species by the intertidal areas of the Yellow Sea.

In particular, reclamation of coastal wetlands of the Yellow Sea is driving one of the two major extinction crises facing the world's migratory birds.

Action 1. Ensure protection of northwest Sakhalin and West Kamchatka coast, notably intertidal areas

1. Current Status –

- Surveys of 4 key locations targeted for protection under AMBI (Sobolevo and Khayriuzovo in Kamchatka; Ulbanskiy and Nikolaya Bays of Sea of Ohkotsk in Khabarovskiy Kray and Baikal and Pomr' Bays at north Sakhalin) were initiated during 2015-16 mainly by BirdsRussia. All had high concentrations of AMBI target species at key sites.
- Further steps in 2017-19 will aim to summarise survey information on the importance of these areas, nominate them as EAAFP network sites and work with regional and national governments to insure creation of protected areas.

2. How does the current status meet the flyway committee's expectation for progress at this time?

The committee is happy with this action and recognizes that this is a long term goal and operation in very remote areas with lack of awareness among both local people and regional decision makers and limited resources would take time.

3. What actions/resources are needed to advance the objective/action under the current AMBI timeframe?

Additional resources are needed in order to carry out surveys along coastal Russia, which will then lead to supporting the protection of important areas.

4. Recommendations for CAFF/AMBI to undertake regarding this objective –

- ii) CAFF/AMBI should seek partners, expertise and funding opportunities that could assist in this action such as the Wildlife Conservation Society (Russia Program), which has expressed interest in cooperating on this project.

Action 2. Gather better information on spring and fall staging sites and requirements of Dunlin and Bar-tailed Godwits along western Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta, coastal Bristol Bay, and northern side of the Alaska Peninsula

1. Current Status –

- The US Fish and Wildlife Service and other partners are currently carrying out a study to track the movement of Dunlin in Alaska and the wider EAAF region. In this study, geolocator tags were placed on Dunlin breeding in both northern and western Alaska during the summer of 2016. Tagged birds will be recaptured during the summer of 2017 and track lines from birds will be downloaded. This information will help us better understand spring and fall staging of Dunlin in the above named areas.
- The US Fish and Wildlife Service and US Geological Survey has conducted a pilot, fall staging survey for Bar-tailed Godwits in 2016 in this region. The survey was unsuccessful at locating birds. A proposal has been recently submitted to the US National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) to continue this work. If successful, there would be two additional fall staging surveys in 2017 and 2018.

2. *How does the current status meet the flyway committee's expectation for progress at this time?*

While some of this work will not be complete when this phase of AMBI is wraps up in 2019, these projects fill a critical data gap. The committee is happy with these actions.

3. *What actions/resources are needed to advance the objective/action under the current AMBI timeframe?*

No additional resources are needed at this point in time.

4. *Recommendations for CAFF/AMBI to undertake regarding this objective –*
 - i) There are no specific recommendations at this point in time.

Action 3. Ensure protection of Jiangsu Coast ecosystem, especially the Rudong and Dongtai areas, for Spoon-billed Sandpiper and other Arctic shorebirds

1. *Current Status –*

- There is ongoing limited work to ensure the protection of these ecosystems.
- First discussions with China AMBI focal point (Dr. Lu Jun) was held during Texel AMBI workshop in spring 2016.
- Subsequently, the AMBI Chair (Russia) visited China in November 2016 for further discussions on AMBI cooperation including habitat conservation. Significant progress was achieved in discussion with Bird Banding Center of the State Forestry Administration (SFA).
- Yangkou, one of two key locations in Rudong, has recently been declared as a protected area of the lowest level. Unintentional killing of shorebirds by standing fishing nets has ceased, but some poisoning and duck trapping still occurs. The invasive *Spartina alterniflora* is being eliminated in the region through a manual removal program, but still remains in some areas and increases in others. Further action is needed to ensure good management at the site.
- A reclamation project in Dongling is now complete, which threatens the status of Arctic shorebirds in the region. There is no habitat protection in place in Dongling, and no future plans are being discussed. Importantly, *Spartina* is taking over most of intertidal areas and urgent control measures are needed.
- In Tiaozini there are reclamation plans in place that threaten the most critical habitat for the SBS and the most important part of Rudong/Dongtai. For now, reclamation is postponed, but there remains a risk that reclamation may begin within the next two years.
- At the AMBI workshop in Singapore, AMBI China focal point Dr. Jiang Hongxing provided further updates on the Yellow Sea coasts of Jiangsu, Shandong, Liaoning and Hebei province, and the various national/provincial level governmental initiatives to conserve these habitats.. It was highlighted that the the Jiangsu Coast is the major area currently lacking protection, and that the intertidal wetlands in this area are in the most immediate danger. While government at higher levels are supportive of efforts to protecting these wetlands, it is the local government that is resisting conservation plans as they are trying to stimulate economic growth in the region. It is important that the international community recognizes these areas as important sites that could persuade local governments to take conservation action.

- A workshop is planned for the Rudong/Dongtai area in mid-2017 aimed at changing the policy at the provincial level and ensure long-term conservation of all three locations (Yangkou, Dongling and Tiaozini).
- The Chinese delegation at the Singapore AMBI workshop suggested that AMBI should attend all appropriate meetings in the region to help highlight the international importance of the region, and should conduct a follow-up workshop in the Jiangsu region in 2018 to again draw attention to the region's importance.

2. *How does the current status meet the flyway committee's expectation for progress at this time?*

While some progress on this action has been achieved, there is much more work to be done. AMBI EAAF should focus on using the momentum of AMBI to further engage with China on this issue.

3. *What actions/resources are needed to advance the objective/action under the current AMBI timeframe?*

The Jiangsu provincial government is expected to play a very important role in ensuring and maintaining the protection of habitats for the SBS in Rudong and Dongtai. An international workshop focusing on the conservation of SBS and other Arctic-breeding shorebirds co-hosted by CAFF and relevant government agencies in China by 2018 could be a major follow-up step to further promote SBS and general shorebird conservation in Jiangsu. It has thus been recommended that a meeting or workshop be held in Jiangsu through the coordination of CAFF, with a leading role by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China and involvement of several other state-level agencies (e.g. State Forestry Administration) to engage the Jiangsu provincial government to initiate protection measures in these important wetlands. This workshop was again discussed in Singapore 2017, with several follow-up actions required including securing funding from an Arctic country to support such a workshop. Another letter from the Arctic Council Chair to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China is needed in early 2017 to highlight the importance of a workshop. As the SBS is a focal AMBI species is the main species of concern, the SBS Task Force of the EAAFP can be expected to be the partner in preparation of the workshop.

Plans to protect Tiaozini and Dongtai are more complicated because of the planned development. Studies are needed to understand tidal dynamics along the coast of Jiangsu. BirdLife and other NGOs and institution are advocating World Heritage Status for sites in the Yellow Sea Tidal Flat (jointly involving the participation of the People's Republic of China, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and Republic of Korea). AMBI is a platform to promote important sites to local governments and communities. Survival of several shorebird species, including the SBS depends upon conservation of these sites, a stop to the reclamations in Rudong/Dongtai area would go very far to help the survival of this species.

4. *Recommendations for CAFF/AMBI to undertake regarding this objective –*

- CAFF/AMBI should seek opportunities to work with China to host an AMBI meeting on habitat protection in China in 2018 to ensure further progress on this action, including what funding can be secured from Arctic countries to support such a workshop.
- CAFF/AMBI should prepare a letter from the Arctic Council Chair to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China in early 2017 to highlight the importance of the potential workshop to discuss habitat conservation in the region.

- iii) CAFF/AMBI should seek partnering opportunities to ensure an AMBI EAAF coordinator can be in place for the duration of AMBI implementation.

Action 4. Ensure protection of Luannan Coast especially Nanbao, Tanshan for Red Knot and other Arctic shorebirds.

1. *Current Status* –

- No progress to date.

2. *How does the current status meet the flyway committee's expectation for progress at this time?*

While no progress has been made on this action, there are positive indications from the Hebei provincial government. As reported by Dr. Lu Jun, the governor of Hebei has promised to establish a new wetland reserve in the Luannan area, but the specific region is yet to be determined. There is also recognition of the complex land use in the Luannan area that may complicate designation of any new reserve. Follow up action by CAFF is needed on this front to engage stakeholders.

3. *What actions/resources are needed to advance the objective/action under the current AMBI timeframe?*

Local meeting/consultations with Hebei provincial government could be initiated by the State Forestry Administration in 2017 as contribution to AMBI. AMBI experts, as well as other international experts, might be invited and share views on the critical importance of the area for Arctic shorebirds conservation. Conservation in this area would involve cooperation efforts with Chinese universities, NGOs, Wetlands International, East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership and other international organisations. There is potential role for the Netherlands as Arctic Council observer considering key role of research of Prof. Theunis Piersma in Luannan. The subject was discussed at the AMBI Texel workshop. Having an EAAF coordinator to communicate and coordinate this activity should be one of priorities and would help develop more actions on this objective.

In the AMBI Singapore workshop it was highlighted that New Zealand and China have a bilateral agreement that involves the Luannan coastal region, and that AMBI could explore with New Zealand how AMBI can coordinate actions with other players in the region.

4. *Recommendations for CAFF/AMBI to undertake regarding this objective* –

- CAFF/AMBI should cooperate with state-level agencies in China to initiate a local meeting on habitat protection in Luannan to ensure further progress on this action.
- CAFF/AMBI should seek partnering opportunities to ensure an AMBI EAAF coordinator can be in place for the duration of AMBI.
- CAFF/AMBI should work with partners that have bilaterals in the region such as New Zealand to ensure coordinated efforts are being undertaken.
- CAFF/AMBI should consider asking the Netherlands to support the participation of Dr. Piersma and the Dutch embassy in Beijing in a workshop on habitat protection.

Action 5. Ensure protection at Yalu Jiang, Liaoning for Bar-tailed Godwit, Dunlin, Great Knot and other Arctic shorebirds

1. *Current Status* –

- No progress to date.

2. *How does the current status meet the flyway committee's expectation for progress at this time?*

Relevant follow-up actions (identification of areas to be protected) could be pursued through engagement of Liaoning provincial government and Dandong city officials which has jurisdiction over these wetlands, through the assistance of China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. As with the Luannan Coast above, this region (Yalu Jiang National Nature Reserve) is also now named in the bilateral agreement (MOA) between China and New Zealand.

3. *What actions/resources are needed to advance the objective/action under the current AMBI timeframe?*

As for the above action, an AMBI meeting in China focusing on habitat conservation for intertidal regions may help progress this action item. Having an EAAF coordinator to communicate and coordinate knowledge of available conservation actions will help develop more actions on this objective. Given the critical importance of the area for the Alaska breeding population of Bar-tailed Godwit increased engagement in AMBI on this flyway from the US in 2017-19 may help. A visit by US AMBI focal points and CAFF representatives to Beijing and Yalu Jiang would help to encourage further cooperation. Further consultations and cooperation with New Zealand and other EAAFP partners are needed to ensure next steps are inclusive of all the stakeholders and relevant.

4. *Recommendations for CAFF/AMBI to undertake regarding this objective –*

- i) CAFF/AMBI should seek opportunities to with China to host an AMBI meeting on habitat protection in China before 2018 to ensure further progress on this action.
- ii) CAFF/AMBI should work with partners that have bilateral instruments in the region such as New Zealand to ensure coordinated efforts are being undertaken.
- ii) CAFF/AMBI should seek partnering opportunities to ensure an AMBI EAAF coordinator can be in place for the duration of AMBI.
- iii) CAFF/AMBI should inquire with the US on how they may be able to increase their engagement with this objective.

Action 6. Support conservation of the intertidal areas on the west coast of the Republic of Korea for the Spoon-billed Sandpiper, Great Knot, and Dunlin

1. *Current Status –*

- CAFF/AMBI has made first contact with the World Heritage Promotion Team of Korean Tidal Flats at the AMBI workshop in Singapore. Two representatives (including the chair) attended the workshop. The representative shared on the criteria for nomination, management plans, monitoring work and development of educational tourism in the area.
- Both World Heritage Promotion Team of Korean Tidal Flats representatives and AMBI focal point for Korea, Dr. Kang Sung-Ryung participated in the AMBI workshop breakout group focussed on priorities in habitat conservation in the EAAF with respect to the AMBI work plan. The discussion, which included also included representative from China and Russia agreed on a number of priority actions needed to fulfil objectives in the AMBI work plan in relation to the intertidal areas in the Yellow Sea.

- Dr. Kang Sung-Ryung also expressed interest from several agencies in Korea to host an AMBI meeting in Korea in 2017 or 2018. These discussions should be followed up to progress Korean engagement.

2. *How does the current status meet the flyway committee's expectation for progress at this time?*

The lack of a flyway level coordinator has hindered AMBI engagement with the World Heritage Promotion Team of the Korean Tidal Flats. The committee feels that there is a strong role for AMBI to play in this process, especially considering the World Heritage status theme in the African-Eurasian Flyway (AEF). Better communication should be established with relevant Korean Ministries. For the moment lack of feedback is making progress very slow.

3. *What actions/resources are needed to advance the objective/action under the current AMBI timeframe?*

Regular contact by CAFF Chair with the Ambassador for Arctic Affairs, Republic of Korea should be established for development of efficient communication scheme on AMBI issues. An AMBI EAAF coordinator beyond the Singapore meeting is needed to fully engage with stakeholders, with engagement with Korea a top priority.

4. *Recommendations for CAFF/AMBI to undertake regarding this objective –*

- CAFF/AMBI should seek partnering opportunities to ensure an AMBI EAAF coordinator can be in place for the duration of AMBI.
- CAFF/AMBI should engage with Korea to ensure their active participation in AMBI.
- CAFF/AMBI to follow-up with Korea on a potential AMBI event to be held in Korea in 2017/18.

Action 7. Coordinate implementation of actions related to the conservation of intertidal habitats in the EAAF and support to secure more resources for the operation of the EAAFP

1. *Current Status –*

- Funding from Norway and the US (\$5,000 USD) has been used to hire a part-time AMBI EAAF coordinator (Ding Li Yong) who has been critical in organizing the EAAF committee and planning the Singapore meeting (January 2017)
- Additional funds were recently granted by the Arctic Council's Project Support Instrument Fund and transfer of these funds is being arranged.
- Funding from the Singapore Ministry of Foreign Affairs (\$12,500 USD) and the Norwegian Embassy in Singapore (\$12,500 USD) made the AMBI workshop in Singapore in January 2017 possible. This was a critical forum for discussions related to conservation of intertidal habitats in the EAAF as partners from China and Korea participated in the meeting, and in particular the breakout group discussions on habitat conservation.

2. *How does the current status meet the flyway committee's expectation for progress at this time?*

The Committee recognises that many of the goals outlined in the AMBI workplan require increased communication and coordination with governments, conservation NGOs and other partners in the region, and that slow progress on many of these objectives is due to the lack of

dedicated staff time on these issues. The committee also recognises that more involvement of AMBI/CAFF representatives of Arctic Council countries is needed. Russia is leading much of the international work in this flyway with three visits by the AMBI Chair to Arctic Council observer countries in Asia. These visits have resulted in direct actions under AMBI. Similar visits by other AMBI/CAFF representatives could help actions to be implemented more efficiently. Arctic country involvement via local embassies has been fruitful to date to help implementation of AMBI in the region, and should be further explored.

3. *What actions/resources are needed to advance the objective/action under the current AMBI timeframe?*

The committee feels that continuing to work to ensure a coordinator is in place for the duration of AMBI is integral to success on this flyway. This will ensure that the momentum from the Texel and Singapore meetings is capitalized further on.

4. *Recommendations for CAFF/AMBI to undertake regarding this objective –*

- i) CAFF/AMBI should continue to seek partnering opportunities to ensure an AMBI EAAF coordinator can be in place for the duration of AMBI.
- ii) CAFF/AMBI should encourage more discussions and cooperation opportunities between national representatives on how to best make plans to visit and engage with other Asian countries in 2017-19.
- iii) CAFF/AMBI should explore with national contact points how national embassies in Asian countries could be more involved in AMBI.

Objective 3. Prevent illegal harvest and regulate unsustainable legal harvest of Arctic migratory birds, with a focus on Spoon-billed Sandpiper, Lesser White-fronted Goose, Bar-tailed Godwit, and other priority species.

A major threat to Arctic breeding species in the EAAF is the wide-scale, illegal harvest and sale of migratory birds at markets in many Asian countries. There is also a problem of poorly documented or managed harvests in Russia and the United States. Presently, few if any national and regional strategies and action plans have been developed to monitor and regulate the level of illegal and legal harvest occurring throughout the flyway.

Action 1. Support development and implementation of national and regional strategies and action plans for elimination of illegal harvest of birds in Russia.

1. *Current Status –*

- During 2015-16 Russia had internal discussions on the need of change of status of AMBI focal species from 'harvestable' to 'protected'. This decision will occur via the final approval of the new official Russian protected species list (Russian Red Data Book) which formally protect many species in Russia.
- One approved and released, development of regional and local strategies will follow this final approval of the Russian Red Data Book) and help the gradual shift from official sport and subsistence hunting to protection in 2018-19.
- At the AMBI workshop, Russia participated in the breakout group that provided recommendations on the need of a working group or task force to address illegal killing and harvest of migratory birds in the EAAF; the group also discussed terminology, and came up with provisional definitions and name for such a working group.
- Russia supported the creation of international task force focusing on this issue at the EAAFP, and participated in the MOP9 breakout group that developed the terms of

reference for the EAAFP Task Force on Illegal Hunting, Taking and Trade of migratory birds in the EAAF. This was critical to the EAAFP MOP9 approving the proposed terms of reference for this task force.

2. *How does the current status meet the flyway committee's expectation for progress at this time?*

The committee welcomes progress in an upgrade of conservation status of Arctic shorebirds in Russia and looking forward for further development.

3. *What actions/resources are needed to advance the objective/action under the current AMBI timeframe?*

While CAFF/AMBI cannot convene or chair an international Task Force on illegal killing/poaching of birds in Asia, CAFF/AMBI has been critical in starting these conversations, and should continue to play a role in supporting the formation of such a group, if it is determined by the group as relevant and needed. Additional resources are needed to support transition activities in local communities via NGOs in cooperation with local governments. AMBI may play a role in seeking additional resources for these activities.

4. *Recommendations for CAFF/AMBI to undertake regarding this objective –*
 - i) CAFF/AMBI should continue to engage with stakeholders in the region on this conservation issue.
 - ii) CAFF/AMBI should join any such inter-governmental group in the Asian Australasian region focused on illegal killing/unsustainable harvest.
 - iii) CAFF/AMBI should continue to take a supporting role in the EAAFP task force on illegal hunting, taking and trade of Arctic-breeding migratory birds in the EAAF.

Action 2. Conduct outreach; assess the magnitude and impacts of legal subsistence harvest on priority birds in Alaska, with a focus on Bar-tailed Godwits

1. *Current Status –*

- The Alaska Department of Fish and Game received 2016 funding from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFMF), to carry out a two-year study to better understand shorebird numbers and species harvested for subsistence across Alaska, partly due to AMBI highlighting the importance of this issue. The study aims to: (1) document local traditional knowledge of shorebirds in the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta region of Alaska, (2) increase awareness among subsistence harvesters regarding shorebird ecology and current conservation concerns, (3) and assess the potential subsistence harvest impacts on shorebird populations.

2. *How does the current status meet the flyway committee's expectation for progress at this time?*

The committee is happy with the progress of these activities.

3. *What actions/resources are needed to advance the objective/action under the current AMBI timeframe?*

No other actions are needed at this time.

4. *Recommendations for CAFF/AMBI to undertake regarding this objective –*

- i) CAFF/AMBI should continue to take a supporting role in the EAAFP task force on illegal hunting, taking and trade of migratory birds in the EAAF, including supporting a situation analysis that will aim to assess levels of take in Alaska.

Action 3. Support development and implementation of national and regional strategies and action plans for elimination of illegal harvest of birds in China.

1. *Current Status –*

- Efforts are underway to eliminate the use of mist nets and stop illegal hunting of migratory birds in China. This work is carried out in coordination between seven ministries and commissions of China and is undertaken across the country in the autumn 2016.
- Additional steps on this action took place during Singapore workshop. China's AMBI focal point, Dr. Lu Jun reported on nation-wide level actions to enforce laws against the illegal hunting of migratory birds, and the government's engagement with local people and officials to coordinate these efforts. China then took part in the AMBI-EAAF workshop breakout group that agreed on the need for a working group/task force addressing illegal hunting in the EAAF, and developed the terminology, and recommendations for the formation of a working group.
- China participated in the EAAFP MOP9 breakout group that developed the terms of reference for the EAAFP Task Force on Illegal Hunting, Taking and Trade of migratory birds in the EAAF. This was critical to the EAAFP MOP9 approving the proposed terms of reference for this task force.

2. *How does the current status meet the flyway committee's expectation for progress at this time?*

Progress on this action is moving slowly, but AMBI has yet to fully engage on this issue. The committee recognises that more can be done on this issue with a coordinator in place over the next two years.

3. *What actions/resources are needed to advance the objective/action under the current AMBI timeframe?*

China's experience in hunting mitigation might be used in some selected flyway countries (for example in Southeast Asian region) to share best practices. China may take a lead in some selected activities in this field for the whole flyway. CAFF/AMBI will continue to support China's role and participation in the interim task force on illegal hunting, taking and trade of migratory birds under the EAAFP.

4. *Recommendations for CAFF/AMBI to undertake regarding this objective –*

- ii) CAFF/AMBI should continue to engage with stakeholders in the region on this conservation issue.
- iii) CAFF/AMBI should join such any inter-governmental group in the Asian Australasian region focused on illegal killing/unsustainable harvest.
- iv) CAFF/AMBI should continue to take a supporting role in the EAAFP task force on illegal hunting, taking and trade of migratory birds in the EAAF.

Action 4. Support Singapore in its aim to help develop capacity for management of wetland and migratory birds in the region.

1. *Current Status*

- Singapore, through the work of Singapore's National Parks Board is currently in the process of establishing a network of wetland sites within the Southeast Asian (ASEAN) region to foster sharing of best practices, data and to facilitate capacity building. More updates are expected as this project develops in 2017.
- Singapore participated in the AMBI-EAAF workshop breakout group that identified priorities and actions needed to secure habitat to conserve Arctic breeding shorebirds in Southeast Asia. The group produced a list of recommendations and at various timeframe on how AMBI can better engage the region's governmental agencies and NGOs in conservation of shorebirds.
- Singapore participated in the EAAFP MOP9 breakout group that developed the terms of reference for the EAAFP Task Force on Illegal Hunting, Taking and Trade of migratory birds in the EAAF. This was critical to the EAAFP MOP9 approving the proposed terms of reference for this task force.

2. *How does the current status meet the flyway committee's expectation for progress at this time?*

The committee is very happy with the progress of this action and overall leading role of Singapore in AMBI cooperation within Asian region, and is keen to continue to work with Singapore on these issues.

3. *What actions/resources are needed to advance the objective/action under the current AMBI timeframe?*

There is a need for Southeast Asian countries to study the effect of illegal hunting and wildlife consumption in the region, especially with respect to migratory shorebird populations. Possible cooperation with Singapore's National Parks Board and Singapore ASEAN representatives is under discussion to fundraise for a two-year project aimed at studying illegal bird hunting in ASEAN+ (including Bangladesh) region through the ASEAN-Korea Cooperation Project and other similar schemes. A preliminary proposal to fund a Southeast Asia-wide situational analysis on shorebird harvest has been submitted to secure funding from the ASEAN-Korea Cooperation Fund in late October 2016 and still currently in review.

4. *Recommendations for CAFF/AMBI to undertake regarding this objective –*

- CAFF/AMBI should continue to engage with stakeholders in the region on this conservation issue.
- CAFF/AMBI should join appropriate intergovernmental groups in the Asian Australasian region focused on illegal killing/unsustainable harvest.
- CAFF/AMBI should continue to take a supporting role in the EAAFP task force on illegal hunting, taking and trade of migratory birds in the EAAF.

Action 5. Cooperate with Singapore on the development of wide-scale International dialog focused on the conservation of Arctic migratory birds in South-East Asia.

1. *Current status*

- AMBI Chair visited Singapore in October 2016 to develop discussions on both preparation of the workshop and discuss the opportunities for further collaboration.
- CAFF, with support from the Singapore Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Norwegian Embassy (co-hosting US\$12,500 each), organised an AMBI workshop focusing on EAAF shorebird conservation issues in Singapore in January 2017. An additional US\$700 was raised by the EAAF coordinator to support the travel expenses of two officials from Southeast Asian countries (Vietnam, Indonesia). The workshop and migratory bird conservation issues was well profiled in the Singapore media, with features in three major newspapers and the main news channel (interview with CAFF Chair) in Singapore.
- Singapore is currently raising support for a review and situation analysis on the levels and impacts of shorebird hunting in Southeast Asia.
- Singapore is investigating how to carry out a project on eliminating hunting and protecting habitats with other countries in the region (ex. Myanmar).

2. *How does the current status meet the flyway committee's expectation for progress at this time?*

The committee is very happy with the progress of this action and overall leading role of Singapore in AMBI cooperation within Asian region, and is keen to continue to work with Singapore on these issues. The committee commends the dedication and involvement of Singapore in AMBI to date, and congratulates Singapore with the successful arrangement of the AMBI workshop January 8-10 at Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve.

3. *What actions/resources are needed to advance the objective/action under the current AMBI timeframe?*

The AMBI workshop held in Singapore brought together 96 stakeholders and partnering organizations (including government agencies from five Southeast Asia countries) from 25 countries to discuss pertinent issues affecting Arctic migratory birds. Based on a successful meeting in January, there may be new opportunities the result from the workshop, including:

- Further cooperation with Singapore on AMBI related education and information sharing using Singapore as possible platform for further AMBI related meetings focused on SE Asia.
- Further cooperation with Singapore on possible demonstration project on implementation of AMBI priorities in habitat conservation and mitigation of illegal hunting in one of SE Asian countries.
- Development of more contacts with SE Asian countries on diplomatic level to support Arctic bird conservation in the region.
- Cooperation in supporting of AMBI coordination in the EAAF with funds for a coordinator position.

4. *Recommendations for CAFF/AMBI to undertake regarding this objective –*

- i) CAFF/AMBI should continue to engage with Singapore to foster relationships with other countries in the region.
- ii) CAFF should inform the Arctic Council of the extraordinary involvement of Singapore in AMBI, making sure to highlight these efforts during the next Arctic Council meeting Juneau in March 2017.

- iii) CAFF/AMBI should prepare a letter from the SAO Chair to Singapore thanking them for their efforts in co-hosting and organizing the January 2017 AMBI workshop.

Action 6. Initiate a dialog to promote cooperation on the conservation of Arctic migratory birds on the EAAF with focus on selected priority actions identified within this Action plan, including conservation of Spoon-billed Sandpiper in Japan and on the flyway and building on existing bilateral migratory bird agreements.

1. Current status

- No progress at the moment. While Japan was supposed to attend the AMBI meeting in Texel, due to illness the representative was unable to attend. Thus, the first contact between Japan's Ministry of Environment and AMBI/CAFF was established at the AMBI-EAAF workshop in Singapore in January 2017.
- During the Singapore meeting in January 2017, Japan's MOE representative presented on Japan's efforts to conserve shorebirds (including hunting) through various legislation and biodiversity conservation initiatives, and committed to further exploring how Japan may contribute to AMBI in the future.
- Importantly, Japan participated in the EAAFP MOP9 breakout group that developed the terms of reference for the EAAFP Task Force on Illegal Hunting, Taking and Trade of migratory birds in the EAAF. Japan's experience and leadership on this issue is expected to be an important component to the success of this new task force.

2. *How does the current status meet the flyway committee's expectation for progress at this time?*

The committee is looking forward to furthering the discussions with the AMBI representative from Japan. While there is a number of potential projects that may be undertaken with Japan, a targeted follow up conversation is needed.

3. *What actions/resources are needed to advance the objective/action under the current AMBI timeframe?*

After the AMBI workshop in Singapore, Japan is considering hosting a similar workshop in Japan by 2019 to bring together stakeholders involved in the conservation of intertidal wetlands and mitigation of hunting on the flyway. Additional funding opportunities can be sought through Japanese private companies and government schemes to support conservation work targeting Arctic breeding shorebirds in the region.

AMBI, through its engagement with Japan through the Arctic Council can help facilitate sharing of best practices and knowledge learned from conservation projects in Japan with Southeast Asian countries that have less developed conservation networks and programs.

Sharing experience of Japan's successful elimination of bird hunting could be very important to managing bird hunting in Southeast Asian countries and some other Asian countries. This can be implemented through projects targeting livelihoods of local communities, and realised with regional governments or/and NGOs.

4. *Recommendations for CAFF/AMBI to undertake regarding this objective –*

- i) CAFF/AMBI should continue to engage with Japan to better develop a meaningful engagement cooperation plan

Action 7. Initiate a dialog with India as Arctic Council observer with an aim to plan and implement actions to mitigate, reduce or eliminate illegal harvest of Arctic-migratory birds in India with priority actions on shorebird conservation in coastal areas.

1. Current status

- A representative from the Wildlife Institute of India attended and presented at the AMBI Implementation workshop held in the Netherlands (April 2016).
- In December 2016, the AMBI Chair had meetings with India's Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change to discuss AMBI, and how India can play an active role.
- India has submitted a number of recommendations that could help India engage more with AMBI on this flyway (see below for details and Appendix 1 for the complete submission).
- Unfortunately, no representative from India was able to attend the Singapore AMBI workshop.

2. *How does the current status meet the flyway committee's expectation for progress at this time?*

The committee is happy with the progress of this action, and is keen to continue to work with India on these issues. In particular, the AMBI Steering Group is keen to further consider the Indian recommendations to the AMBI workplan plan to promote India's participation in AMBI.

3. *What actions/resources are needed to advance the objective/action under the current AMBI timeframe?*

During the AMBI Steering Group meeting the recommendations from India to the AMBI evaluation were discussed. While the larger committee needs to be consulted, the Steering Group recognized room for many of the suggestions to be incorporated to better accommodate India's participation.

The feedback from Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India for the mid-term evaluation of AMBI Action Plan based on consultations with AMBI Chair should be considered including:

- a) A terminology change in relation to hunting and harvest to poaching or illegal hunting.
- b) A name change from the "East Asian- Australasian Flyway (EAAF)" to Asian- Australasian Flyway as EAAF includes only parts of Eastern India.
- c) India also recommends the inclusion of Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea* in the AMBI priority Species list.
- d) India would like to conduct an AMBI related workshop on migratory shorebirds during 2017-18 and based on that, to develop a detailed region-specific Action Plan.
- e) Aim to develop new shorebird monitoring studies as currently there is few focused shorebirds/waders conservation oriented studies along India's coastal wetlands.
- f) India will consider potential cooperation with other Asian countries on mitigation of illegal hunting/poaching
- g) Considering there are existing wintering sites of Lesser White-fronted Goose in Northern (Asan Barrage) and Western India, it is recommended that India be included when

planning international collaboration for the conservation of this species under the AMBI umbrella.

h) India would like to delegate a representative to the AMBI EAAF Committee

4. *Recommendations for CAFF/AMBI to undertake regarding this objective –*

- i) CAFF/AMBI should consider the suggestions submitted by India in the post mid-point evaluation review of the AMBI work plan.
- ii) CAFF/AMBI should explore with India the possibility of co-hosting a workshop on shorebird conservation in India.
- iii) CAFF/AMBI should ask India for a representative to the AMBI EAAF group and overall AMBI contact point.
- iv) CAFF/AMBI should discuss the details of the other recommendations with India after final AMBI Steering Group discussions on the above workplan suggestions.

Action 8. To ensure implementation of actions on illegal killing and unsustainable harvest, raise funds to hire a fulltime coordinator in the Singapore office of BirdLife-Asia

1. Current status

- The AMBI chair has met with Singapore officials during his October 2016 trip to Singapore to initiate these discussions.
- The CAFF Secretariat has worked to secure Arctic Council funds through the Project Support Instrument fund (€100,000) towards work on the African Eurasian and East Asian-Australasian flyways.
- CAFF Chair is negotiating with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Singapore and National Parks Board, Singapore on the possibilities to organize and host a coordinator position.
- BirdLife-Asia was an active contributor to the EAAFO MOP9 breakout group discussions that developed the terms of reference for the interim EAAFP Task Force on Illegal Hunting, Taking and Trade of migratory birds in the EAAF. This was critical to the EAAFP MOP9 approving the proposed terms of reference for this task force. The interim EAAFP task force on illegal hunting, taking and trade of migratory birds in the EAAF agreed that using the existing BirdLife methodology for a situation analysis on this issue should be used in this region to ensure comparability across flyways.

2. *How does the current status meet the flyway committee's expectation for progress at this time?*

The committee is very happy to have the current AMBI EAAF coordinator in place, and feels that ensuring the continuation of this position beyond January 2017 is critical to the success of AMBI in this region. While a fulltime coordinator in the Singapore is one option, the committee recognises that all possible synergies in the region to ensure a coordinator is in place should be pursued.

3. *What actions/resources are needed to advance the objective/action under the current AMBI timeframe?*

CAFF/AMBI should continue to seek ways with the relevant stakeholders on different options to secure the support for a coordinator in this flyway for the duration of AMBI.

4. *Recommendations for CAFF/AMBI to undertake regarding this objective –*
 - i) CAFF/AMBI should continue to engage with stakeholders in the region to secure funding for the EAAF coordinator position.

Action 9. Support cooperation of Secretariats of the EAAFP and the African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreements (AEWA) to coordinate the work on Lesser White-fronted Goose conservation on East Asian Flyway via the EAAFP Anatidae Working Group

1. *Current status*
 - Discussions on the conservation of the Lesser White-fronted Goose will be carried out as part of the EAAFP MOP9 meetings by the Anatidae Working Group, in which AMBI has participated.

2. *How does the current status meet the flyway committee's expectation for progress at this time?*

The committee feels that more can be done to support cooperation between these two groups.

3. *What actions/resources are needed to advance the objective/action under the current AMBI timeframe?*

If an international task force is formed in the region with an illegal harvest focus, AMBI should work with the AEWA secretariat to ensure their involvement and to help coordinate and support efforts.

4. *Recommendations for CAFF/AMBI to undertake regarding this objective –*
 - i) CAFF should encourage AEWA to take the lead on LWFG coordination for AMBI and focus on addressing illegal hunting and habitat loss in China and Russia.
 - ii) AMBI could provide the platform on which AEWA can work and share information with China AMBI Focal Points, since the majority of the eastern populations of LWFG overwinter in a few (protected) wetlands (e.g. East Dongting National Nature Reserve) in central China.