



CAFF Strategies Series Report  
May 2016

## Arctic Migratory Birds Initiative Implementation Meeting Report

Texel, Netherlands, April 5-7, 2016



## Acknowledgements

### CAFF Designated Agencies:

- Norwegian Environment Agency, Trondheim, Norway
- Environment and Climate Change Canada, Ottawa, Canada
- Faroese Museum of Natural History, Tórshavn, Faroe Islands (Kingdom of Denmark)
- Finnish Ministry of the Environment, Helsinki, Finland
- Icelandic Institute of Natural History, Reykjavik, Iceland
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Greenland
- Russian Federation Ministry of Natural Resources, Moscow, Russia
- Swedish Environmental Protection Agency, Stockholm, Sweden
- United States Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service, Anchorage, Alaska

### CAFF Permanent Participant Organizations:

- Aleut International Association (AIA)
- Arctic Athabaskan Council (AAC)
- Gwich'in Council International (GCI)
- Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC)
- Russian Indigenous Peoples of the North (RAIPON)
- Saami Council

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— CAFF Designated Area

# Arctic Migratory Birds Initiative Implementation Meeting April 5-7, 2016 Texel, Netherlands Workshop Report

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## Workshop Purpose

AMBI, in cooperation with the Government of the Netherlands, hosted an implementation meeting in Texel, Netherlands April 5-7, 2016 to accomplish the following:

- Review progress to date of implementation of actions identified in the [Arctic Migratory Birds Initiative Work Plan 2015-2019](#)
- Discuss strategic approaches to acquire funds to implement action items identified within the East Asian Australasian Flyway and African-Eurasian Flyway as outlined in the [Arctic Migratory Birds Initiative Work Plan 2015-2019](#)
- Determine the roles that attending participants may play in fundraising and/or action item implementation within the East Asian Australasian and African-Eurasian Flyways as outlined in the [Arctic Migratory Birds Initiative Work Plan 2015-2019](#)
- Develop partnerships around specific action items identified in the [Arctic Migratory Birds Initiative Work Plan 2015-2019](#)
- Identify, develop and document next steps towards accomplishing action items within the [Arctic Migratory Birds Initiative Work Plan 2015-2019](#)

## Outcomes, Record of Decision, Tasks and Timing

### Overall

- AMBI has nominated Evgeny Syroechkovskiy to be its chair for a one-year period.
- The CAFF Chair (Reidar Hindrum) will request of the Arctic Council Senior Arctic Officials Chair (David Balton) that specific letters of thanks and calls to action be sent to individual observer countries via Ministries of Foreign Affairs. If the Arctic Council Chair and Senior Arctic Officials agree to submit letters, the content of these letters will be specific to each country and will be drafted in cooperation with AMBI country representatives.
- Flyway groups are to arrange regular teleconference calls to ensure momentum and coordination between AMBI representatives and meeting attendees. CAFF Chair, Secretariat, and AMBI SG to propose solution for flyway level coordinator positions.
- AMBI meeting attendees saw the utility in the Americas Flyway crosswalk document approach and agreed that such an exercise would be helpful for their flyways. Would require the assistance of a flyway coordinator.
- AMBI Steering Group (SG) needs to consider how to better engage industry in these actions. Perhaps develop a strategy for engagement.

### East Asian Australasian Flyway

- Meeting attendees agreed that there is a need for a flyway-level coordinator to help complete the crosswalk document, provide AMBI evaluation to the CAFF Board, and organize flyway efforts especially in relation to the upcoming Singapore workshop. Flyway and AMBI SG to put together a terms of reference for the position.
- Singapore (How Choon Beng) announced that they would host the next EAAFP MoP in January 2017. On the side of this meeting, Singapore will host (in cooperation with Norway) an AMBI specific meeting that will further work along the flyway on habitat and harvest issues (exact length to be determined). Organizers hope to announce this AMBI workshop around the celebrations for International Migratory Bird Day (May 2016). A workshop coordination committee has been struck to help organize the workshop and need to finalize timing of the workshop and MoP:

- Russia (Evgeny Syroechkovskiy)
- Singapore (How Choon Beng)
- USA (Rick Lanctot)
- Norway (Reidar Hindrum to discuss with Norwegian Embassy in Singapore)
- China (Lu Jun)
- BirdLife International (Barend van Gernerden, Nicola Crockford in BirdLife Asia Singapore office)
- Wetlands International (Ward Hagemeyer)
- Flyway coordinator (?)
- Convention of Migratory Species (Nina to approach the illegal killing task force)
- CAFF Secretariat (Courtney Price)
- EAAFP
- AMBI flyway representatives to input into a crosswalk document identifying AMBI actions against existing conservation and related development initiatives. Meeting attendees to consider consulting with other ministries and departments to input in a complete manner that considers existing conservation and related development initiatives (consider: EAAFP, protected areas, bilateral agreements, National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs), foreign aid, CBD Aichi targets, Sustainable Development Goals, etc.).
- BirdLife (Nicola Crockford) and EAAFP (Spike Millington) to follow-up with Lu Jun about the assessments and studies done to highlight importance and irreplaceability of Tiaozini site. China (Lu Jun) has plan to make a joint investigation with Prof. Chang Qin and Evgeny Syroechkovskiy's team on Spoon-billed Sandpiper in this autumn in Tiaozini and Rudong as well as other staging site in China.
- CAFF Chair (Reidar Hindrum) and USA delegate (Rick Lanctot) to look into possibilities of how to raise issue of Spartina eradication on next China/USA environmental bilateral in autumn 2016.
- Wetlands International (Ward Hagemeyer) to also examine possibility of identifying funding opportunities for Spartina eradication feasibility study.
- CAFF (Courtney Price) to put Lu Jun and Theunis Piersma in touch regarding the New Zealand suggestion to SFA to consider building a new Nanpu research station.
- CAFF (Courtney Price) to follow up with Russia (Evgeny Syroechkovskiy) on identifying a Great Knot breeding grounds expert to suggest to Republic of Korea.
- AEW (Nina Mikander) to discuss with China (Lu Jun) and EAAFP Anatidae Working Group to identify a contact point for LWFG in China, addressing LWFG poisoning at Dongting Lake, and conservation planning for the species in the country.
- CAFF Chair (Reidar Hindrum) to explore possibilities and appropriateness with Dutch Foreign Affairs Ministry on including World Heritage Site discussions on the agenda of the SFA site visit to Wetlands International in the Netherlands, acknowledging that SFA may not be the most appropriate authority in which to advance this issue (i.e., MOHURD and Cultural Ministry).
- China (Lu Jun) to consult with AMBI identified sites of importance including Yalu Jiang, Luannan and Jiangsu coast sites (including the status of Tiaozini and possibility to re-include Tiaozini into the Yancheng Nature Reserve) and report back to AMBI on 1) interest of sites to be included in a World Heritage Sites nomination, and 2) steps necessary to achieve this.
- AMBI EAAFP flyway to consider how to best feed into the upcoming IUCN Korean national (May 2016) and tri-national meetings (August 2016) to discuss the Yellow Sea World Heritage Site nomination. (Nicola to lead on this).
- AMBI Chair (Evgeny Syroechkovskiy) to follow up with China (Lu Jun) on how AMBI can help the SFA raise awareness with appropriate Bureaus to increase awareness on unsustainable harvest of AMBI species.
- Russia (Evgeny Syroechkovskiy) to follow up with China (Lu Jun) about how AMBI could participate in China's Spoon-billed Sandpiper workshop.
- A focal point from SFA is needed for cooperation on unsustainable harvest on the flyway. China (Lu Jun) to consult in SFA about this and follow up with Courtney Price and Evgeny Syroechkovskiy.

- CAFF (Courtney Price) to put India (Suresh Kumar) in touch with the Spoon-billed Sandpiper Task Force to see if any cooperation can be made or if any mechanisms can be identified through Ministry of Environments for cooperation and to provide advice on habitat selection for potential surveys.
- Status of AMBI species in India should be clarified and summarized by Wildlife Institute of India (Suresh Kumar).
- It should be possible to invite Suresh to the next AMBI meeting to report on Spoon-billed Sandpiper survey (Evgeny Syroechkovskiy to follow up) and also to invite India to participate in Spoon-billed Sandpiper Task Force meeting in Singapore in January 2017.

#### African Eurasian Flyway

- AMBI SG agreed on the need for a flyway-level coordinator to help complete the crosswalk document, provide AMBI evaluation to the CAFF Board, and to arrange regular teleconferences engaging all parties on the topic.
- Meeting attendees and others to input into a crosswalk document identifying AMBI action regarding the Bijagós objective against existing conservation and human development initiatives. Meeting attendees to consider consulting with other ministries and departments to input in a complete manner that considers existing conservation and human development initiatives (consider: AEWA, protected areas, bilateral agreements, National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs), foreign aid, CBD Aichi targets, Sustainable Development Goals, The Regional Marine and Coastal Conservation Programme for West Africa, The Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitat, EU Bird Directive, IUCN work and activities, Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative, etc.)
- Meeting attendees agreed that there is a need for a Bijagós World Heritage Site coordinator to organize AMBI activities pertaining to World Heritage Site. Terms of Reference for World Heritage Site coordinator drafted (see appendix 1). CAFF Chair (Reidar Hindrum) to consider how to approach observer countries and all flyway to consider other sources to pool resources. In particular, CAFF (Courtney Price and Reidar Hindrum) to follow up with AEWA on possibilities to approach potential funding opportunities.
- AMBI (Courtney Price) to arrange a call between flyway representatives and Guinea-Bissau to identify needs and partnership opportunities, in particular to discuss the management and tourism plan.
- Flyway needs to develop a series of highly visible communications products to tell the story of the flyway and to identify how the Bijagós site is an important location in the flyway.
- AMBI and CWSS to consider a site visit to increase visibility at a political level.
- CWSS and AMBI to consider how to support a scientific committee to help Institute for Biodiversity and Protected Areas (IBAP) take a decision on the boundaries of the WHS, the management plan, and tourism plan.
- AEWA (Nina Mikander) to report back to the AMBI SG on the outcomes of the Lesser White-fronted Goose Working Group meeting.

## Proceedings

### April 5

#### **Welcome to the CAFF AMBI Implementation Meeting**

Reidar Hindrum (CAFF Chair, Norwegian Environment Agency)

On behalf of CAFF, Reidar Hundrum, CAFF Chair, welcomed everyone attending the [AMBI](#) implementation meeting and remarked about how pleased CAFF was to see the diversity and

expertise in the room, including from the many observer organizations to the Arctic Council. Reidar remarked that Norway is a lead country of [AMBI](#) and is enthusiastic about its progress during the Norwegian chairmanship of CAFF. Reidar also announced that AMBI has nominated Evgeny Syroechkovskiy to be its chair for a one-year period, and thanked him for this leadership.

### **Welcome to the Netherlands**

Jorden Splinter (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Netherlands)

On behalf of the Netherlands, Senior Arctic Official Jorden Splinter welcomed everyone to Texel, Netherlands, and an important stop over site in the Wadden Sea for Arctic-breeding migratory birds. As an observer to CAFF and the Arctic Council, Jorden said the Netherlands is hosting this important workshop to address the conservation and sustainable use of Arctic breeding birds in decline and welcomed cooperation from all nations and organizations in the Arctic Council structure and stated that the Netherlands is committed to working cooperatively on this issue of mutual concern.

### **CAFF and AMBI Overview**

Courtney Price (CAFF Secretariat)

Courtney Price provided an overview of CAFF and the [Arctic Council](#) structure. CAFF is the biodiversity working group of the [Arctic Council](#) and consists of [National Representatives](#) assigned by each of the eight Arctic Council Member States, representatives of Indigenous Peoples' organizations that are [Permanent Participants](#) to the Council, and Arctic Council [observer countries](#) and [observer organizations](#). For more details about the [Arctic Council](#) and [CAFF](#), please visit their websites (linked here).

The [Arctic Migratory Birds Initiative](#) (AMBI) is a project in response to key findings and recommendations that arose from the [Arctic Biodiversity Assessment](#) (ABA), a report containing the best available science informed by traditional ecological knowledge on the status and trends of Arctic biodiversity and accompanying policy recommendations for biodiversity conservation and released in 2013.

Specifically, ABA key finding #3 stated *"Many Arctic migratory species are threatened by overharvest and habitat alteration outside the Arctic, especially birds along the East Asian Flyway."*

In response, recommendation #8 aims 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."* Recommendations are further broken down to specify that CAFF will work within existing structures, agreements and other actions at flyway levels.

AMBI is led by a steering group that has membership from Canada, U.S.A., Norway, Russia, BirdLife International and UNEP Regional Office of North America. Work is sectioned into four flyways:

1. [Americas](#): Canada (Jennifer Provencher, Garry Donaldson), USA (Rick Lanctot), Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network, Manomet (Rob Clay), and UNEP Regional Office of North America (Monika Thiele).
  - a. Observer countries relating to AMBI actions in this flyway: Mexico, Colombia, Suriname, French Guiana (France), Brazil
2. [Circumpolar](#): CAFF's [CBird](#) expert group, Canada (Jennifer Provencher, Grant Gilchrist), BirdLife International (Rory Crawford)
3. [African Eurasian](#): Norway (Anders Braa), BirdLife International (Nicola Crockford), AEWA (Nina Mikander).
  - a. Observer countries relating to AMBI actions in this flyway: Netherlands, Germany, UK, Spain, France, Portugal, Mauritania, Guinea-Bissau
4. [East Asian Australasian](#): Russia (Evgeny Syroechkovskiy), USA (Rick Lanctot), BirdLife International (Nicola Crockford), East Asian Australasian Flyway Partnership (Spike Millington)

- a. Observer countries relating to AMBI actions in this flyway: China, Republic of Korea, Japan, Singapore, India

AMBI deals with priority species and conservation issues and aims to make on the ground changes inside and outside the Arctic that benefit Arctic-breeding birds. These actions might include cooperative fundraising efforts, direct conservation actions, capacity building, knowledge sharing, diplomacy, and partnerships. Courtney welcomed creative collaboration and encouraged everyone to think of practical advancements that might be made over the coming days.

#### East Asian Australasian Flyway: overview of objectives and priority action review

Evgeny Syroechkovskiy (AMBI Chair, All Russian Institute for Nature Conservation)

Evgeny Syroechkovskiy introduced this flyway as the most threatened in the world, with many species in alarming decline. AMBI has prioritized six species in this flyway and is focussing on issues of conserving breeding and staging habitats, and is addressing two main threats: intertidal habitat change and unsustainable harvest.

#### **EAAF 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**

Rick Lanctot (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service)

The USA is working to complete the four actions under this objective. One study will focus on understanding the migration routes, habitat use, and important stopover sites of Dunlin. To do this, geolocators have or will be deployed on eight of the 10 subspecies of Dunlin on their Arctic-breeding grounds around the circumpolar Arctic. Fieldwork is occurring at 23 sites; efforts are underway to gain partners that will assist on resighting birds and deploying GPS tags in wintering areas. In addition there are efforts to understand survival rates of Bar-tailed Godwits between the Yellow Sea and Alaska, and to document the level of legal harvest of Bar-tailed Godwits during the spring and summer in Alaska. Understanding the impacts of harvesting Bar-tailed Godwits will be a long-time effort and involve trust building with Alaskan native communities. There are additional efforts to nominate portions of the National Petroleum Reserve (Alaska) to the EAAFP site network (mostly for Dunlin and Yellow-billed Loons). In addition, the USA and Russia are working to survey potential breeding areas for Spoon-billed Sandpipers in key areas

One area where AMBI has helped is that a new connection was made between the US National Parks Service and US Fish and Wildlife Service to co-apply for funding that will seek to identify key breeding habitat for Spoon-billed Sandpipers in the Alaskan Arctic. USA and Russia are also cooperating on training of Russian pilot-biologists in Alaska introducing them to American aerial survey methodologies in August 2016.

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

Nicola Crockford (BirdLife International)

Nicola presented that the AMBI workplan contains many actions under this objective across Russia, USA, China, and Korea. A particular site of importance is the Yellow Sea, which is a bottleneck in the flyway where birds congregate in large numbers, and is also a hot spot for stressors including habitat loss due to reclamation in particular along the Jiangsu Coast (Rudong and Dongtai of particular importance for the Spoon-billed Sandpiper, with special key importance of Tiaozini sandflats), Luannan Coast (Nanpu and Tangshan of particular importance for Red Knot), Yalu Jiang particularly for Bar-tailed Godwit, and the west coast of the Republic of Korea (Geum Estuary). The status of the Yellow Sea is such that all remaining intertidal mud flats are of extreme importance.

AMBI will support existing efforts of these countries to understand the scientific and ornithological importance of these sites, explore the possibilities of a tri-national nomination for the Yellow Sea as a World Heritage Site, raise awareness amongst foreign ministries of the importance of these sites for Arctic breeding birds, and reduce the threat of the invasive *Spartina* in key areas. In many cases already AMBI has helped support Arctic country cooperation on these issues. For example, Norway and China cooperated on a Chinese workshop to follow up on [IUCN Resolution 28 of the Jeju World Conservation Congress](#). There are similar workshops planned for May in the Republic of Korea and hopes of a Tri-lateral meeting between China, the Republic of Korea and DPRK in the fall.

**EAAF 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**

Evgeny Syroechkovskiy (AMBI Chair, All Russian Institute for Nature Conservation)

Harvest pressures on birds in last 30 years has increased in Asia due to: 1) a rise in human populations, 2) increased bird concentration in remaining limited habitats, 3) increased transport networks and trade networks, and 4) a diversity of cheap and effective harvesting tools. The term “hunting” should only be used to describe legal take, where illegal take could be named “killing” or “harvest”. There is a need for clarification in East and Southeast Asia regarding the legal status of Arctic bird harvest. If existing harvest pressures in Asia would continue, bird populations will keep declining and many species and populations would be lost. The Spoon-billed sandpiper is just the first species at risk of extinction, with many more to follow if the tide is not turned. Utilizing initiatives like AMBI is an opportunity to raise this issue.

A lot of work on improving hunting regulations and mitigating poaching is underway in Russia to address AMBI concerns. A short update was given Russian activities on identified AMBI priority activities. However, the focus on this workshop will discuss this issue with regards to stop over and wintering sites due to the composition of the audience, which Evgeny stated were the priority areas that needed quick action.

Evgeny stated that we need to learn from other parts of the world on this issue and have a better understanding of national legislation and harvest pressures, especially when it comes to identifying locations where there are issues and challenges including Myanmar, Bangladesh, and China. Work can partner with the potential future Harvest Evaluation Task Force of the EAAFP. Evgeny referred to the AMBI meeting in Singapore and was very much encouraged by the partnerships and enthusiasm to address this issue as part of that meeting’s agenda.

**African Eurasian Flyway: overview of objectives and priority action review**

Anders Braa (Norwegian Environment Agency)

This flyway has an existing African Eurasian Waterbird Agreement (AEWA) and it is important to identify how we can work within this structure to provide additional internal support and resources, but also identify opportunities for cooperation that might exist outside of that structure, for example in capacity building and knowledge sharing across flyways.

**Objective #1: Secure intertidal non-breeding habitat of Arctic waders in Bijagós Archipelago, Guinea-Bissau**

Nicola Crockford (BirdLife International)

AMBI is in a position to provide knowledge and capacity development across flyways, to identify how lessons learned in other flyways (for example across the Wadden Sea World Heritage Site nomination) might assist in the successful designation of Bijagós. However, this would require a coordinator to work on this issue (multi-lateral nomination an issue in

the EAAF as well). This area has a history of development support from many Nordic countries and also has many industrial connections to oil. The IBAP is leading on the World Heritage Site nomination process, and at the last AEWA MOP6 in November 2015, Common Wadden Sea Secretariat and Parc National du Banc d'Arguin, Mauritania, agreed to extend their MoU by inviting Bijagós which will strongly push the re-nomination of the Bijagós as World Heritage Site (to be submitted in 2018). AMBI can help strengthen international recognition and seek to support national and local efforts to develop management plans and protect the site from damaging developments.

**Objective #2: Prevent unsustainable harvest of the Lesser White-fronted Goose**

Nina Mikander (African Eurasian Waterbird Agreement Secretariat)

AEWA is the only legally binding regional flyway agreement in the world and covers 119 Range States of which 75 countries as well as the European Union have become Contracting Parties to date. An AEWA International Single Species Action Plan for the Conservation of the Lesser White-fronted Goose (Western Palearctic populations) was adopted by the AEWA Meeting of the Parties in 2008 and its implementation is facilitated by an inter-governmental International Working Group consisting of designated government officials and experts from all 22 range states. Those range states that are Contracting Parties to AEWA have, in principle, a legal obligation to implement the Plan.

AMBI is still needed because many key range states for the Lesser White-fronted Goose are not yet Parties to AEWA and funding for crucial conservation action along the flyways is still lacking. Nina Mikander encouraged all to consider how that can be done, especially in terms of having some Arctic Council observer countries aware and participate in these activities. Main issues to be addressed are the illegal killing of the Lesser White-fronted Goose and the third meeting of the AEWA Lesser White-fronted Goose International Working Group taking place next week in Norway is expected to include the foreseen AMBI actions into the International Lesser White-fronted Goose International Working Group workplan for 2016-2019 and hope to make these more concrete in terms how AMBI could support the ongoing work. Nina Mikander to report back to the AMBI SG on the outcomes of the Working Group meeting.

**Discussion points:**

- Need to strongly consider how to involve industry as a powerful stakeholder that can affect land-use decisions in these actions. AMBI hasn't been discussing this thoroughly enough and needs to follow up on this. It was raised that some areas and partners have both a mandate and strength in engaging these partners (EAAFP, Wetlands International, etc.) and this is a welcomed areas for partnership, and that this level of engagement often happens at the site level.

**Update from the Americas and Circumpolar Flyway work including the America's crosswalk document**

Jennifer Provencher (Environment and Climate Change Canada)

Jenn Provencher gave an overview of the Circumpolar flyway, which is focussing on identifying at-sea sites and reducing bycatch. The group has had a recent workshop to undertake assessments in key regions (Canada and Iceland).

In the Americas the group is working on evaluating the effect of overabundant geese on shorebird populations and developing mitigation measures.

Jenn gave an overview of the AMBI America's Flyway crosswalk document, which was funded by UNEP Regional Office for North American. As a first step to kick-start AMBI work in the flyway, this crosswalk mapped AMBI actions to other initiatives along the flyway to:

- see where their flyway has overlapping priorities with existing structures
- find where AMBI brings added value to existing programs and promote institutional uptake of AMBI objectives
- “speak the language” of other programs and activities
- identify where partners and funding could exist for AMBI actions, and stress how AMBI supports their work
- examine older structures/approaches through a modern lens, allowing AMBI to integrate priorities and address recent information on drivers of change
- develop a series of smaller implementation plans
- apply for funding that, without tri-national partnerships, otherwise wouldn't have been made available

Jenn advised that such a crosswalk document should move beyond just bird conservation plans to identify where AMBI fits alongside larger foreign aid and human development goals, plans, and portfolios, including mapping against SDGs, NBSAPs, protected areas, bilateral agreements, foreign aid structures, coastal development, etc.

With the crosswalk in place the Americas flyway was able to approach the Commission for Environmental Cooperation (environmental component of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) with a tri-national action plan for implementation and received 460,000 USD for implementation. This funding would not have been available without all three countries coming together. AMBI could provide similar value-added for other regions (e.x., EU).

**Discussion points:**

- With a crosswalk you must be aware of areas where previously identified activities have not been implemented and be aware of those pitfalls, including political and financial constraints. However, many areas in these plans are ongoing and will take decades to complete, so in the meantime it allows us to leverage more support for these activities.

## Break Out Groups

### East Asian Australasian Flyway

**Crosswalk**

Meeting attendees agreed that a crosswalk approach would be helpful and agreed to input from a national perspective into such a document. Courtney Price agreed to send this around to meeting participants and encouraged them to consider consulting with other ministries and departments to input in a complete manner that considers existing conservation and related development initiatives (Protected areas, bilateral agreements, NBSAPs, foreign aid, SDGs, etc.)

**Intertidal habitat**

During the first break out group the EAAF went through the AMBI Work Plan and focussed on the efforts to required inputs from those in the room.

It was recommended that World Heritage Site nomination in the Yellow Sea should focus on including all intertidal habitat that remains in the Yellow Sea, and as such it was recommended to proceed in a coordinated way across the three countries to ensure that the site is accepted as a whole. AMBI should consider what contributions it can make to assist in this coordination, perhaps as a staged approach. In China sites have to be a national protected area before it is considered for World Heritage site, so there is some ground work to be done first including proving connectivity and universal value.

**Action 3:** Jiangsu Coast (China) important site for Spoon-billed Sandpiper and other shorebirds

- a) Protection: In Jiangsu, the Yancheng Littoral Mudflats and Valuable Fowls National Nature Reserve exists where 25 shorebird species exceed 30% of their global populations and some species (great knot, Eurasian curlew, bar-tailed godwit, curlew sandpiper, Kentish plover) include the whole flyway population in this wetland. But *Spartina* issues are a concern. Protected areas are needed to ensure conservation of three key the Spoon-billed Sandpiper sites at Rudong/Dongtai coast of Jiangsu. Provincial level protected area would be established at one of them soon at Yankou at Rudong. In addition, China has nominated the Spoon-billed Sandpiper for inclusion into Level One protection, which would require all new developments to consider the species. The Chinese-Russian bilateral cooperation on migratory birds and international scientific attention has been very helpful to increase the profile and importance of this site.
- b) Tiaozini: international attention and support is needed to save this most important Spoon-billed Sandpiper site in the world, critical for future existence of the species. AMBI to approach the Arctic Council on possibility of diplomatic letters. Although international papers have discussed the importance of this site, there needs to be an official assessment led from the State Forestry Administration (SFA) with international cooperation; Prof. Chang Qing is tasked by SFA to do this in Jiangsu Province. BirdLife (Nicola Crookford) and EAAFP (Spike Millington) to follow-up with China (Lu Jun) about assessments and studies done to highlight importance of Tiaozini site by Prof. Ma from Fudan University, and his possible cooperation with Prof. Chang Qing. Peer-reviewed paper by Chinese ornithologists soon to come on the importance of Tiaozini. Lu Jun to bring this forward to the SFA.
- e) *Spartina*: Eradication across key Spoon-billed Sandpiper sites necessary with potential for AMBI to have involvement and visible effect here. *Spartina* can be successfully eradicated on huge areas. Methodology has been developed in the USA and New Zealand. The SFA had visited USA, and lots of information exchange is already happening. Needs a feasibility study started ASAP in Rudong/Dongtai with serious funding needed to make large scale operation at key sites at Yellow Sea. CAFF Chair (Reidar Hindrum) and USA delegate (Rick Lanctot) to look into possibilities of how to raise issue of *Spartina* eradication on next China/USA bilateral in autumn 2016. Wetlands International (Ward Hagemeijer) to also examine the possibility of identifying funding opportunities for a *Spartina* eradication feasibility study.

**Action 4:** Luannan (China), critically important site for Red Knot and other shorebirds

- a) Provincial wetland park established in 2015 with possibility to become a nationally protected site in 2016. Development is restricted without special permit. Intertidal areas to be controlled by State Oceanic Administration of China.
- b) The SFA received a suggestion from the Embassy of New Zealand in Beijing to consider building a monitoring station at Nanpu. CAFF (Courtney Price) to put Lu Jun and Theunis Piersma in touch regarding the New Zealand suggestion to SFA to consider building a new Nanpu research station.
- c) The Red Knot is also be nominated for inclusion into Level Two protection.

**Action 5:** Yalu Jiang (China) important site for Bar-tailed Godwit, Dunlin, Great Knot and other shorebirds

- a) Yalu Jiang National Nature Reserve is already a protected area. Australia and New Zealand working to support implementation of a management plan in this area.

**Action 6:** Republic of Korea

- a) Korea is in a scientific partnership with Australia (Dr. Richard Fuller) and the USA (US Wetland Research Centre) on the Great Knot and habitats. Project is looking for collaboration from Russian scientist/expert in Great Knot breeding grounds. CAFF (Courtney) to follow up with Russia (Evgeny Syroechkovskiy) on identifying a Great Knot breeding grounds expert.

- b) Republic of Korea hosted CBD CoP12 and launched the [BioBridge Initiative](#) (BBI). The intention of BBI is to create a platform that will match Parties or institutions that possess relevant experience and expertise with developing Parties needing support.
- c) Geum Estuary is partly protected. In May the IUCN is organizing a workshop in Republic of Korea to follow up from [IUCN Resolution 28 of the Jeju World Conservation Congress](#) with another tri-lateral workshop in the fall. Commitments made under the Ramsar Changwon Declaration to halt any large-scale reclamation initiatives in Korea need to be followed up on.
- d) Republic of Korea is trying to promote the importance of intertidal areas in and around Busan.

### Objective #3

#### Action 4: Support Singapore to develop capacity in the region

- a) Singapore will work through the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to push to establish a site network and build capacity across the network.

#### Action 5: Cooperate with Singapore on international dialogue across Southeast Asia

- a) Singapore announced that they would host the next EAAFP MoP in January 2017. On the side of this, Singapore will host (in cooperation with Norway) an AMBI specific meeting that will further work along the flyway on habitat and harvest issues (length of meeting to be determined). Organizers hope to announce this AMBI workshop around the celebrations for International Migratory Bird Day (May 2016). A workshop coordination committee has been agreed to help organize the workshop and need to finalize timing of the workshop and MoP.

### Discussion:

- The SFA is visiting Wetlands International in the Netherlands. CAFF Chair to explore possibilities and appropriateness with Dutch Foreign Affairs Ministry on including World Heritage Site discussions on the agenda of the SFA site visit to Wetlands International in the Netherlands, acknowledging that SFA may not be the most appropriate authority in which to advance this issue (i.e., MOHURD and Cultural Ministry).
- Need to have a consolidated understanding across governments as to what constitutes an important site and raise that at a policy level

### African Eurasian Flyway

The group focussed on Objective #1 of the AFEU workplan: Bijagós Archipelago habitat. Unfortunately, the representatives from Guinea-Bissau and Mauritania were not present, and were not able to Skype into the breakout group.

### Coordinator:

It was identified that work on Objective #1 would require a coordinator to bring parties together across the AFEU flyway, and from other flyways where World Heritage Site nomination processes and expertise could be shared. It would be appropriate for this position to be located at the Common Wadden Sea Secretariat (CWSS). Mava Foundation funding could be leveraged to secure more support.

AEWA is willing to support coordinating some work, and contacting countries – particularly the designated AEWA government representatives in the various countries – but would need to know more specifics before doing so. AEWA also highlighted that although falling within the AEWA range, this objective is currently not a priority under any of the running AEWA processes. Any action undertaken under the framework of AMBI would, therefore, be of added value.

Need to develop a Terms of Reference to help identify what the position would accomplish and to find support.

**Crosswalk:**

Meeting attendees agreed that a flyway crosswalk was a useful document and that the flyway should endeavour to complete it for the Bijagós objective. Meeting attendees to consider consulting with other ministries and departments to input in a complete manner that considers existing conservation and human development initiatives (consider: Protected areas, bilateral agreements, National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs), foreign aid, CBD Aichi targets, Sustainable Development Goals, The Regional Marine and Coastal Conservation Programme for West Africa, The Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitat, EU Bird Directive, IUCN work and activities, Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative, etc.)

**Action #1:** Share experience on World Heritage Site nomination

In 2012 Guinea Bissau applied for a World Heritage Site designation for the Bijagós Archipelago and were rejected. A new approach is to apply again in 2018 for the natural site component (rather than cultural).

AMBI could add considerable value to facilitate connections Guinea-Bissau and other areas that have successfully undergone World Heritage Site nomination processes, within this flyway and to pull together lessons from across flyways. A coordinator position is necessary and needs to organize opportunities for face-to-face meetings where much of this exchange can happen.

There is also a need to achieve justification for the application, which can come from the researchers, scientific exchange and World Heritage Site managers. There needs to be clear articulation for the role and importance of the site along the flyway.

**Action #2:** Strengthen international recognition of the site

There is much motivation, especially at a local level to obtain World Heritage Site designation. However, high-level political support is needed.

AMBI should arrange a call between flyway representatives and Guinea-Bissau to identify needs and partnership opportunities, in particular to discuss the management and tourism plan.

One consideration is to align and embed the issue of Bijagós World Heritage Site nomination alongside terms and issues that have cross-departmental implications to raise the issue across the government and at high levels. This includes consideration of adaptation, mitigation, habitat resilience, climate change, sustainable development and human development. This will also present opportunities to access a diversity of funding.

AMBI and CWSS to consider a site visit to increase visibility at a political level.

Flyway needs to develop a series of highly visible communications products to tell the story of the flyway and to identify how the Bijagós site is an important location in the flyway.

## April 6

**Wadden Sea World Heritage**

Gerold Lüerßen (Common Wadden Sea Secretariat (CWSS))

Gerold Lüerßen presented on the Wadden Sea World Heritage Site, the largest stretch of unbroken mudflats in the world and shared by the Netherlands, Germany and Denmark. Cooperation on protection of the Wadden Sea area has been happening since 1978, with several layers of international protection (EU Birds and Habitat directives, Conservation Area, Particularly Sensitive Sea Area, Ramsar, and more) and regional protection (National Parks, Wildlife Reserve, Planning

Area) in place before the World Heritage Site designation. The Wadden Sea has been designated on basis of the following criteria: undisturbed geomorphological processes and dynamics; ecological processes, natural forces prevail, and; high biodiversity value, integrity of habitat types, features and processes and sufficient management.

Joint bird monitoring is an important activity in the region. A decline in some bird species cannot be explained by Wadden Sea ecology alone; a more comprehensive flyway view is needed. The problem is that on this level there is insufficient data on bird numbers and critical habitat status.

The World Heritage Committee requested more cooperation along the AFEU flyway, and the CWSS launched the Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative (WSFI) in 2012 to establish a joint vision and develop partnerships in capacity building and monitoring along the flyway. Since then many activities have taken place, including a focus on training, communications and monitoring.

The current focus of the WSFI is outlined in the [Future of the Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative](#) document, where work in Africa is detailed. Activities are published on the website of the [WSFI](#).

#### **Discussion:**

- Funding is on an annual basis in Germany and funds project based work. The Dutch flyway monitoring support will end in 2018. Institutional cooperation needs to be strengthened.
- Cooperation from other North Sea nations is possible. To consider how to best approach this cooperation, i.e., through AMBI or other existing structures such as the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive.

#### **Breeding birds in the Wadden Sea: translating global changes into local actions**

Kees Koffiberg (Dutch Centre for Field Ornithology)

Kees Koffiberg noted that since 1991, 18 of 29 species of bird that breed in the Wadden Sea are in decline, with large regional variability. The main driver appears to be poor reproduction rates caused by increasing flood risk (climate change), suboptimal habitat management (horses), food availability and predation risk.

Large international directives and policies exist (Natura 2000, OSPAR, AEWA, Wadden Sea Plan) but these are not very specific when it comes to implementation at site level. Area is moving towards a trilateral framework for action, identifying bottlenecks for breeding birds and possible directions for action to improve breeding conditions. The Wadden Sea Board adopted this framework in March 2016.

#### **Requirements for the re-submission of Bijagós to the UNESCO World Heritage Committee**

Geoffroy Citegese (BirdLife International, on behalf of the Institute for Biodiversity and Protected Areas (IBAP), Guinea-Bissau)

Geoffroy Citegese gave a presentation on the current status of the World Heritage Site nomination process for Bijagós. Due to previous rejection, Guinea-Bissau is going to re-submit the application as a natural site with the cultural component to follow in future. The WSFI is supporting this nomination with a meeting to discuss the issue in Guinea-Bissau later this year.

The site needs to:

- clearly designate borders,
- develop a management plan (considering tourism, fisheries, extractive industry, etc.)
- develop a tourism plan (including waste management, buffer zones and a tourism charter)
- regulate fisheries (enhance surveillance),
- work with extractive industries to ensure non-exploitation within site boundaries and navigation concerns

- strengthen the role and capacity of the Cultural and Environmental Bijagos Center (staffing, equipment, etc.)
- strike a scientific and international support committee,
- hold meetings and information sessions for local communities and partners (cooperation with WSFI)

IBAP is looking for coordination and scientific support. CWSS and AMBI to consider how to support a scientific committee to help IBAP take a decision on the boundaries of the WHS, the management plan, and tourism plan.

### **The potential site in China for nomination of World Heritage**

Lu Jun (National Bird Banding Center)

The departments in China that are responsible for World Heritage Site nominations are 1) State Administration of Cultural Heritage (which manages the cultural heritage component of the nomination) and the 2) Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development (MOHURD) (which manages the natural heritage component of the nomination). The application needs to be submitted to the State Council and approved by the Prime Minister.

Sites need national protection before submissions to the WHS. Sites that have expressed interest in World Heritage Nomination process include Yancheng National Nature Reserve (est. 1984) and the Yellow River Delta National Nature Reserve (est. 1990). Lu Jun presented the details of these two sites including their importance to a variety of species and habitats.

Lu Jun suggested that AMBI could support Chinese World Heritage Site nominations by making official statements and recommendations for important sites to include via Foreign Ministry and Arctic Council channels.

There was uncertainty if other sites of importance featured in the AMBI plan, such as Yalu Jiang, and Tiaozini were to be included in a World Heritage Site nomination process. Lu Jun to consult with AMBI identified sites of importance including Yalu Jiang, Luannan and Jiangsu coast sites (including the status of Tiaozini and ability to re-include Tiaozini into the Yancheng Nature Reserve) and report back to AMBI on 1) interest of sites to be included in a World Heritage Sites nomination, and 2) steps necessary to achieve this.

### **National perspective and progress toward multi-lateral World Heritage Sites in the Republic of Korea**

Sung-Ryoung Kang (National Institute of Ecology)

There are 12 existing World Heritage Sites in Republic of Korea, mostly of cultural importance. There is a tentative list of 15 more including: Upo Wetlands and the Southwestern Coastal Tidal Flats.

#### **Discussion:**

- Republic of Korea will likely bring forward an application in the Yellow Sea within the next two years. Should be strategic consideration of moving ahead tri-nationally in order to ensure the area is considered as a whole. Upcoming IUCN Korean national (May 2016) and tri-national meetings (August 2016) are an excellent mechanism for AMBI countries and partners to prioritize sites and engage. AMBI flyway to consider how to best feed into these meetings.

April 7

## Break out groups

### East Asian- Australasian

The break out group discussed the issue of overharvest and illegal killing, AMBI Objective #3, a sensitive topic inside and outside the Arctic. This is an issue across the entire world.

#### **Objective #3**

##### **Action #1: Russia**

Spring hunting has been shortened in Russia by 30% five years ago. Need to have a better understanding in particular of current location of LWFG stopover sites, and need to work with locals to understand site use and hunting pressures.

Need to benefit from cooperation in Russia-China bilateral agreements.

##### **Action #2: USA**

In the USA, the USFWS is working to understand subsistence harvest of shorebirds in the Yukon Delta (western Alaska) through a successful proposal supported through the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, in part because of AMBI priorities. This will involve long-term efforts to build relationships and trust between the government and native communities. In the Americas we are especially interested in understanding both legal and illegal harvest in the Caribbean and north-eastern South America.

##### **Action #3: China**

- a) The SFA has nominated the Spoon-billed Sandpiper for Level 1 protection, and it is unknown when this will be adopted by the China State Council but hopefully this year. Need to include support for this in letters from the Arctic Council to Foreign Ministries.
- b) Big advancements have recently been made in China in eradication of illegal harvest, but there is still need to work across government departments to increase regional awareness of harvest and market patrol for wild bird trade. At the Singapore meeting it would be good to have a presentation from China on best practices and experiences. Should highlight the advancements on this work in the letter to Foreign Affairs.
- c) There needs to be a LFWG contact point in China to understand where the key stopover sites are, and their protection status. AEWA (Nina Mikander) to discuss with China (Lu Jun) identifying a contact point for LWFG in China, addressing LWFG poisoning at Dongting Lake, and conservation planning for the species in the country.
- d) China needs internal funding to help advance survey and monitoring efforts of AMBI species.
- e) There is need to ensure that all cases of illegal harvest in key stopovers sites in Dongtai/Rudong are reported to the Jiangsu Forestry Bureau for action. Prof. Chang Qing of Nanjing Normal University is developing dialogue with local fishermen to reduce unintentional deaths of Spoon-billed Sandpipers and other Arctic shorebirds in coastal nets in Jiangsu. China (Lu Jun) has plan to make a joint investigation with Prof. Chang Qin and Evgeny Syroechkovskiy's team on Spoon-billed Sandpiper in this autumn in Tiaozini and Rudong as well as other staging site in China.
- f) Need to work with locals to understand the drivers behind the system of illegal trapping, transportation and trade to restaurants and develop localized mitigation plans. As a start AMBI should encourage the SFA to share AMBI documents amongst local authorities in key regions. Translation of key AMBI information is essential.
- g) Market surveillance is important and needs to be addressed, but is not within the jurisdiction of the SFA. Local authorities regularly monitor markets and restaurants, but they may not focus on birds. Need to make food inspection and other responsible state authorities aware of the need for action on wild birds. SFA capacity to influence survey markets is limited, and there needs to be cooperation with other state agencies and local

authorities. Need to consider possibilities of involving the FAO, and TRAFFIC is not a priority partner. Cooperation on this should be an issue in the Singapore workshop. AMBI Chair (Evgeny Syroechkovskiy) to follow up with China (Lu Jun) on how AMBI can help the SFA raise awareness with appropriate bureaus to increase awareness on unsustainable harvest of Arctic bird species.

- h) China will organize a workshop on Spoon-billed Sandpiper in early 2018. AMBI and the Spoon-billed Sandpiper Task Force could assist in international component of the workshop. SFA could prepare and launch a National Report and Action Plan on Spoon-billed Sandpiper conservation could be prepared by SFA at this meeting. Russia (Evgeny Syroechkovskiy) to follow up with China (Lu Jun) on cooperation for this workshop. There is possibility that AMBI meeting in 2018 could be combined with this workshop.
- i) A focal point from SFA is needed for cooperation on unsustainable harvest on the flyway. China (Lu Jun) to consult in SFA about this and follow up with Courtney Price and Evgeny Syroechkovskiy. China requires special permit from SFA to harvest wild birds. Therefore, all hunting and trapping without this permit is a crime and investigated by proper authorities.

#### **Action #5a:** Discussion of Singapore workshop

Suggestion for workshop to be held January 7-9, 2017 with:

- 1 day AMBI Steering Group
- 2 day workshop
- 1 day excursion
- Followed by EAAFP MoP

Workshop aims:

- Review development of AMBI program and ensuring adequate reporting to CAFF Board and Arctic Council Ministerial (Spring 2017),
- build AMBI links with relevant ASEAN state agencies and wider bird conservation community in Southeast Asia and strengthen cooperation with Singapore,
- address key AMBI priorities: habitat degradation and unsustainable harvest, and
- develop a draft plan to address unsustainable harvest issues in the flyway.

Speakers

- Need to look at other regions for case studies
- Initial list of invited speakers needs revision.

Attendees

- 45+ people
- Government representatives from target countries, including Arctic Council observers and Southeast Asian nations to be represented by high level state officials in wildlife management and to be identified via Singapore connections in ASEAN (How Choon Beng) with advice of EAAFP (Spike Millington)
- NGOs participation to be identified by BirdLife International, Spoon-billed Sandpiper Task Force of EAAFP and Wetlands International

Launch consideration

- Organization needs to begin right away.
- Would be opportune to announce this workshop around this year's International Migratory Bird Day (May 2016) because this year's theme is illegal killing.

Organization committee

- Russia (Chair: Evgeny Syroechkovskiy)
- Singapore (How Choon Beng)
- USA (Rick Lanctot)
- Norway (Reidar Hindrum to discuss with Norwegian Embassy in Singapore)
- China (Lu Jun)

- BirdLife International (Barend van Gernerden and Nicola Crockford)
- Wetlands International (Ward Hagemeijer)
- Flyway coordinator (when identified)
- Convention of Migratory Species (Nina to approach the illegal killing task force)
- CAFF Secretariat (Courtney Price)
- EAAFP

Next steps:

- Workshop organizing committee to meet and discuss next actions including: identifying drivers, identifying potential outcomes for the workshop, preparation of agenda and other workshop documents
- Find flyway coordinator to help bring the group together and organize the workshop
- ASEAN Biodiversity Center located at Philippines might be used as entry point to communication with ASEAN state agencies (How Choon Beng to clarify and Organization Committee to develop)
- Organization committee to explore the extent to which wild bird issues are included in new ASEAN Wildlife Crime activities, and how links could be made with the work AMBI wants to encourage in SE Asia. Singapore (How Choon Beng) to elucidate.
- AMBI EAA Flyway with BL (Berend van Gernerden) and Singapore (How Choon Beng) to review the involvement of activities the of wild bird cage trapping and trade in Southeast Asia for AMBI priorities

**Action #7: India**

India needs a letter from the Arctic Council to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs highlighting the importance of AMBI and the need for Indian participation as Arctic Council observer. Several different departments may be necessary to work with: the Indian Ministry of Earth Sciences is active in polar work, but this is largely centered on glaciology and climate, not wildlife, but could potentially provide support. Wildlife Institute of India (Suresh Kumar) will consult internally to see how to make these parties interested in Arctic biodiversity issues in hopes to open up funding opportunities and consult with AMBI on different state actors to be developed.

With regards to AMBI focal species, India could support work on the Spoon-billed Sandpiper and Great Knot, and other AMBI species' status in India should be clarified and summarized. India was an important for wintering Spoon-billed Sandpiper site, but there hasn't been much monitoring for these species in recent years. Given recent knowledge there is a good opportunity to find them again in Sundarbans and possibly other locations at Bay of Bengal coast. Suresh will get his institute staff involved in monitoring for these species this winter, in connection with ongoing Tiger Project. Knowledge on Spoon-billed Sandpiper distribution from Bangladesh Sundarbance could be used and the Spoon-billed Sandpiper Task Force of EAAFP could provide advice on habitat selection for potential surveys using Landsat imageries. It should be possible to invite Suresh to the next AMBI meeting to report on Spoon-billed Sandpiper survey and also to invite India to participate in Spoon-billed Sandpiper Task Force meeting in Singapore in January 2017.

All birds in India are protected, but there are still issues to address in coastal areas where Arctic shorebirds are wintering particularly at Point-Celimer where unsustainable harvest was described as one of key drivers for decrease in Arctic shorebirds. There have been many lessons learned on the issue of overharvest of Amur Falcons and this could be implemented in shorebird wintering areas in India. But shorebirds are a group of species that need more awareness-raising among administrators and responsible law enforcement agencies should be informed and involved.

**Action #8: Coordinator**

Meeting attendees agreed that there is a need for a flyway-level coordinator to help complete the crosswalk document, and organize flyway efforts especially in relation to the upcoming Singapore workshop. It was thought that this would be an excellent opportunity for Arctic Council countries to

host a coordinator for this flyway, in order to help document their involvement in the Arctic Council. Flyway and AMBI SG to put together a terms of reference for the position. CAFF Chair, Secretariat, and AMBI SG to propose solution for flyway level coordinator positions.

### African Eurasian Flyway

The break out group has drafted a Terms of Reference for the Intertidal World Heritage Site Coordinator position. BirdLife (Nicola Crockford) to finalize the document and will send it around for review. Flyway requests CAFF to send letters via the Arctic Council requesting funding for such a position.

## Country statements

Norway: Anders Braa

Welcomed all in attendance and thanked Netherlands for their support. Most challenging theme is Bijagós. Norway will continue to work through AEWA in LWFG issues where needed.

Russia: Evgeny Syroechkovskiy

Welcomes the chairmanship period. Russia is in a good stage of AMBI implementation. Looking forward to working together and will be particularly focussed on the upcoming Singapore meeting.

USA: Rick Lanctot

The USA is glad to make these connections at these meetings and recognizes that the ability for the Steering Group to sit down is important. The USA hopes to continue accomplishing USA (Alaska) objectives where possible and to expand their efforts in the Americas Flyway and East Asian Australasian Flyway.

Canada: Jenn Provencher

AMBI was a project started under the Canadian chairmanship and is working to coordinate the Americas and Circumpolar Flyways. AMBI has helped Canada to leverage otherwise unavailable international funds for national priorities. Canada is encouraged by the participation of the observers and encourages continued engagement and organization at a flyway level.

Finland: Antti Below

Finland is focussed on the western population of the LWFG. Will forward the Bijagós issue to the Ministry of Environment and follow up on potential to help.

China: Lu Jun

It is clear that the Yellow Sea is a bottle neck on this flyway and that we need to ensure protection. It is helpful if the Arctic Council can push AMBI at the Foreign Affairs Ministry to make inroads into the Chinese government.

Singapore: How Choon Beng

We are participating to see what we can contribute and how to firm up activities . We look forward to welcoming AMBI in a workshop in January.

Republic of Korea: Sung-Ryoung Kang

Looking for cooperation on the Great Knot and hope to include our work under as an AMBI project.

India: Suresh Kumar

Very positive in this meeting and looking forward to future collaboration, in particular on Spoon-billed Sandpiper monitoring and scientific information sharing.

Netherlands



Appreciated the opportunity to host the meeting and looking forward to future cooperation.

Germany/CWSS: Gerold Lürßen

Enthusiastic about the cooperation along the flyway and glad that Bijagós is on the agenda. Looking forward to cooperation.

UK: David Stroud

Enthusiastic about cooperation through the Arctic Council, given the UK's strong engagement in Arctic science. Looking forward to follow-up.

Spain: Andres Barbosa

This is the first time Spain has participated in a CAFF project and is very keen to keep involved. We have heard many places where Spain may lend support, in particular along the Bijagós issue, and will follow up accordingly.

France: David Grémillet

France has been following AMBI activities with keen interest, and the activities of its polar researchers contribute to actions in the Circumpolar flyway. Further, research activities on migratory birds in metropolitan France, the Caribbean, and in Africa provide information relevant to the management of two other flyways. We are looking forward to further developments.

AEWA: Nina

Glad to see some concrete steps and path forward for AMBI. Will take results to the LWFG workshop next week. Cooperation along the flyway is welcomed and if there is additional capacity that can be supported that would ensure value added. Need to consider how to link to other countries that are not here.

EAAFP: Spike Millington

We need to capitalize on the strengths of our partners and their connections and consider how we can add value. We welcome the CAFF/AMBI presence at the EAAFP MoP and side meeting. It is important that CAFF being a partner of EAAFP would be present at MoP in Singapore.

BirdLife International: Nicola Crockford

Thank you to the countries and partners for their enthusiasm. The meeting outcomes are very exciting and AMBI objective completely align with BirdLife's, so we look forward to action, in particular at the foreign affairs level.

Wetlands International: Ward Hagemeyer

We are happy to be re-engaged in this initiative that aligns well with our organizations priorities and are committed to seeking fruitful partnerships and activities to push these issues further. In particular we look forward to cooperating on the Singapore workshop.

Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS): Jonathan Slaght

Main interest in attending this meeting was to see how WCS could contribute, in particular along the Russian Arctic. Will take the information back and see how our organization can contribute.

CAFF Chair: Reidar Hindrum

Thank you to the meeting attendees and to the Netherlands for hosting us in this unique location. We have focussed on the major activities and come up with more concrete details on how to make this more than just a plan. We are very happy that this initiative is moving forward and we will follow up on meeting outcomes shortly, in particular we will work to find flyway level coordinators and give messages to countries outside the Arctic via the Arctic Council and through foreign affairs departments. We will refer specifically to the AMBI Work Plan and the items you have emphasized here.

## Workshop attendees

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### Regrets

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## Appendix 1

### **Arctic Migratory Bird Initiative (AMBI) Knowledge to Action Coordinator for Intertidal World Heritage Sites**

#### **Context**

Migratory birds link countries and continents around the globe. Many European species depend on conservation actions along the African-Eurasian flyway, as migratory birds travel from northern Europe to southern Africa each year, illustrating that actions along the entire flyway are needed to protect and promote European biodiversity.

The Bijagós Archipelago of Guinea Bissau, which, together with the Banc d'Arguin of Mauritania, is the most important site for these species during the northern winter. More than 70% of Arctic and European waders use this region during migration. However, only one of these crucial sites (the Banc d'Arguin) has achieved the stringent World Heritage Site designation and protection status by IUCN. Guinea-Bissau is currently undertaking the nomination process to receive World Heritage Site protection status for the Bijagós Archipelago. This action has been identified by the conservation community as a priority to stop the dramatic decline in some migratory bird species, and has been included in the AMBI workplan. However these efforts are suffering from a lack of coordination.

In order to promote the conservation of Arctic breeding birds, the Arctic Migratory Birds Initiative under the Arctic Council's Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF) will support Guinea-Bissau to resubmit its nomination of the Bijagós as a World Heritage Site according to the recommendations of World Heritage Committee Decision and in line with African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement (AEWA) Plan of Action for Africa 2012-2017. To ensure success, it is critical that Guinea-Bissau has access to and builds on the experience of the other two intertidal World Heritage Sites in the world, the Banc d'Arguin, in Mauritania and the Wadden Sea of Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands. Additionally, this experience can also be exchanged with the Republic of Korea and China, via AMBI's East Asian-Australasian Flyway Work Plan, as they explore the possibility to nominate sectors of the Yellow Sea as World Heritage Sites in the coming years.

#### **Proposal**

It is essential to recruit a full-time dedicated coordinator to implement the objectives of the Arctic Migratory Bird Initiative African-Eurasian workplan in relation to habitat conservation in the Bijagos region. With this coordinator position AMBI aims to harness the energy and expertise of the international community to support Guinea Bissau and to deliver conservation actions for Arctic birds via intertidal World Heritage designation. The coordinator's main role will be to create a hub of expertise and knowledge exchange to facilitate the cooperation between existing and proposed intertidal World Heritage Sites relevant European and Arctic birds, capitalizing on the flyway approach through the Arctic Migratory Bird Initiative. Importantly, this coordinator will work with other relevant organizations in the region, especially the African Eurasian Waterbird Agreement and the Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative to ensure knowledge sharing to better promote conservation for European and Arctic migratory birds. While there is some capacity in World Heritage Nomination at the Common Wadden Sea Secretariat, this less than half-time position has no ability to extend this work to leverage this knowledge

into increased protection in western Africa. In order to bring added value to the current initiatives, and promote strong ties between partners the proposed coordinator will sit at the Common Wadden Sea Secretariat. Importantly, this idea and proposal is a direct recommendation from the African-Eurasian Flyway committee and stakeholders, who recently met face-to-face at a meeting hosted by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs in April 2016.

Without this coordinator in place AMBI risks losing the opportunity of capitalizing on the Arctic Council's initiative to conserve migratory bird habitat along the flyways, and outside of the Arctic countries. The Bjiagós region is not only important for Arctic breeding birds, but also European migrants. By working in coordination with the Arctic Migratory Bird Initiative and ensuring protection for migratory bird habitat in West Africa this coordinator will contribute to achieving UN Convention on Biological Diversity Aichi Targets for 2020 and European Union Directives.

## Options

It is suggested that the coordinator be co-hosted at the Common Wadden Sea Secretariat for a term of two years. This is a cost effective and efficient way to ensure that the coordinator is directly tied into existing programs and initiatives. A Steering Group including the Common Wadden Sea Secretariat, the Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna Secretariat, the African Eurasian Waterbird Agreement secretariat, BirdLife International, Ramsar, UNESCO, and Wetlands International will oversee the coordinator.

## Estimated costs for a full time coordinator position

Description	Year 1	Year 2	Total
Salary (based on average post-doc salary in Germany)	€60.000	€60.000	€120.000
Travel (based on one trip per year to coordinate efforts in Bijagós and one workshop meeting)	€10.000	€10.000	€20.000
Administrative support (office space and institutional support)	€1.000 (in kind from CWSS secretariat)	€1.000 (in kind from CWSS secretariat)	€2.000 (CWSS secretariat)
Annual partner workshops	€5.000 (have applied via the Mava Foundation)	€10.000 (have applied via the Mava Foundation)	€15.000 (Mava proposals)
Communication material development	€2.000 (in kind from CAFF)	€2.000 (in kind from CAFF)	€4.000 (CAFF)
Total amount	€77.000 (combined total)	€83.000 (combined total)	€161.000 (combined total)
<b>TOTAL CURRENT REQUEST</b>	<b>€70.000</b>	<b>€70.000</b>	<b>€140.000</b>

**Tasks of the AEF AMBI Intertidal Conservation Coordinator could include:**

1. The coordinator's position will capitalize on existing frameworks and other international initiatives (i.e. Common Wadden Sea Secretariat, African Eurasian Waterbird Agreement, Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna secretariat, Ramsar, the West African Regional Marine and Coastal Conservation Program (PRCM), UNESCO, IUCN World Heritage program, BirdLife International, Wetlands International and the Convention on Biological Diversity) to leverage existing knowledge into a successful re-nomination for World Heritage Status for the Bijagós region.
2. Coordinate with Arctic Council Member and Observer countries and governmental agencies responsible for international cooperation and conservation of migratory birds and habitats within the African Eurasian Flyway to facilitate implementation of the approved Arctic Migratory Bird Initiative's intertidal World Heritage objectives, including facilitating trans-boundary partnerships.
3. Work with partners in Guinea-Bissau and other national, local governments, and other stakeholders as appropriate, to implement the Arctic Migratory Bird Initiative workplan at existing and proposed intertidal World Heritage Sites.
4. Facilitate exchange of experience between existing and proposed intertidal World Heritage Sites with a focus on requirements of Arctic migratory birds within the African Eurasian Flyway, and other regions interested in nominating important intertidal Arctic bird habitat for World Heritage Site status.
5. Secure funding, especially via Arctic Council related sources, to support the implementation of the intertidal component of the Arctic Migratory Bird Initiative African Eurasian Flyway workplan, including continued coordination.
6. Explore opportunities with the business stakeholders that have interests and influence in the Bijagos region that may also have links to Arctic Council and the Arctic Economic Council to contribute conservation of intertidal regions.
7. Through working with the above partnerships the coordinator will work to also strengthen existing networks in the support intertidal conservation of Arctic migratory birds including the Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative and Wings over Wetlands Partnership which promote European biodiversity, and raise awareness of the importance of international cooperation and concerted action needed to conserve Arctic migratory birds.
8. Advise and consult on World Heritage Site nominations in other AMBI Flyways including the Yellow Sea in the East Asian Australasian Flyway.