



## PRESS RELEASE

### Seabirds now internationally protected across Africa and Eurasia

A total of twenty migratory waterbird species, including several species of auks, frigate birds, gannets and tropic birds have been added to Annex 2 of the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement (UNEP/AEWA) - an international treaty dedicated to the conservation of migratory waterbirds in Africa and Eurasia.

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*Bonn, 2 October 2008* - the decision to give 20 waterbird species - traditionally considered as seabirds - greater international protection was made at the Fourth Meeting of the Parties to AEWA (MOP4) which was held in Antananarivo, Madagascar from 15-19 September 2008.

At the meeting over 150 delegates from 80 countries adopted, among others Resolution 4.11, which calls for the inclusion of 20 additional waterbird species in Annex 2 of the Agreement (AEWA Annex 2: Waterbird Species to which the Agreement Applies). The inclusion of these species gives them greater international protection and calls upon countries and other stakeholders in the region to take concrete action for those species that have an unfavourable conservation status.

Most seabird populations are highly threatened. Amongst the most significant threats are food shortages due to depletion of fish stocks, to which overfishing and climate change both contribute. By-catch in long-line fisheries, oil pollution and solid waste (debris) are other problems for seabirds. Further threats are destruction of habitats and unsustainable human exploitation. On-land threats include disturbances at breeding sites and introduced terrestrial predators.

Bert Lenten, the Executive Secretary of AEWA said: "I am very satisfied with the decision of the 4th Meeting of the Parties to include 20 seabird species in AEWA. This means that more attention will be paid to the conservation of these species. Some of them, such as the tropic birds need urgent attention because their populations are numbering less than 10,000 individuals."

At the request of the Meeting of Parties the AEWA Technical Committee, the international scientific advisory body of the Agreement, reviewed existing provisions and regulations related to seabirds in international law. The outcome of this review is that although a number of provisions and regulations exist, the threats seabirds are facing are insufficiently covered by other Multilateral Environmental Agreements in the African-Eurasian region. The inclusion of these migratory seabird species in the AEWA species list will help fill this gap and provides the basis for greater international efforts to conserve these waterbird species, traditionally regarded as seabirds.

**Notes for Editors:**

The 20 new seabird species that have been included in Annex 2 of AEWA are:

<b>Species Name</b>	<b>English name</b>
<i>Phaethon aetheras</i>	Red-billed Tropicbird
<i>Phaethon rubricauda</i>	Red-tailed Tropicbird
<i>Phaethon lepturus</i>	White-tailed Tropicbird
<i>Sula (Morus) bassana</i>	Northern Gannet
<i>Sula dactylatra</i>	Masked Booby
<i>Fregata minor</i>	Great Frigatebird
<i>Fregata ariel</i>	Lesser Frigatebird
<i>Catharacta skua</i>	Great Skua
<i>Stercorarius longicaudus</i>	Long-tailed Skua
<i>Rissa tridactyla</i>	Black-legged Kittiwake
<i>Sterna anaethetus</i>	Bridled Tern
<i>Sterna fuscata</i>	Sooty Tern
<i>Anous stolidus</i>	Brown Noddy
<i>Anous tenuirostris</i>	Lesser Noddy
<i>Alle alle</i>	Little Auk
<i>Uria aalge</i>	Common Guillemot
<i>Uria lomvia</i>	Brunnich's Guillemot
<i>Alca torda</i>	Razorbill
<i>Cephus grylle</i>	Black Guillemot
<i>Fratercula arctica</i>	Atlantic Puffin

AEWA Resolution 4.11, the full Technical Committee Seabird Report and other information related to seabirds please see: [www.unep-awea.org/press](http://www.unep-awea.org/press)

**AEWA** – The African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement, or AEWA is a United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) backed treaty dedicated to the protection of 255 species of waterbirds which migrate along the African-Eurasian Flyways. AEWA provides the framework for countries in the region to work together to conserve such species as ducks, waders, storks, flamingos and many other migratory waterbirds. Countries that have become Parties to the Agreement commit themselves to putting measures in place to conserve the region's waterbird populations and the habitats on which they depend. Currently 62 Parties out of 118 Range States in Africa and Eurasia have joined AEWA.

For more information on AEWA please see: [www.unep-awea.org](http://www.unep-awea.org)

**MOP4 in Madagascar** – Madagascar was host country to the Fourth Meeting of the Parties to AEWA (MOP4), which was jointly organized by the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat and the Madagascar Ministry of the Environment, Forestry and Tourism (MEFT). At the meeting a total of 20 resolutions were adopted and delegates reviewed the implementation of the Agreement and Action Plan and addressed a number of issues relating to the conservation of migratory waterbirds. The theme of MOP4 was **“Flyway conservation at work – Review of the past, vision for the future”**.

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