

## Darwin Fellowship - Interim Report

*(Please check guidance for submission deadlines, max 3 pages.)*

Darwin Main Project Ref No	EIDPS037 /
Darwin Project Title	Developing implementation strategies for the African-Eurasian Migratory Landbirds Action Plan (AEMLAP)
Name of Darwin Fellow	Dr. Samuel Temidayo Osinubi
UK Organisation	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)
Your Organisation(s)	BirdLife Africa Partnership Secretariat, West Africa Sub-Regional Office
Your role within your Organisation	Flyways Officer / CMS AEMLAP WG Coordinator
Start/end date of Fellowship	1 <sup>st</sup> July 2014 – 30 <sup>th</sup> June 2015
Location	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), The Lodge, Sandy, UK, SG19 2DL
Darwin fellowship funding (£)	18,385
Type of work (eg research, training, other, please specify)	Training and network development
Main contact in UK Organisation	Dr. Danae K. Sheehan
Author(s), date	Osinubi, S.T. & Sheehan, D.K. – Jan. 2015

### 1. Background

Before the start of the Darwin Fellowship, Dr. Osinubi worked as the Flyways Officer at the BLAPS Sub-Regional Office in Accra, supporting regional initiatives for migratory birds within the BirdLife Africa Partnership and acted as the coordinator of the African-Eurasian Migratory Landbirds Working Group (AEML-WG) since its establishment after COP10. Consequently, he worked closely with the AEML-WG, the CMS Secretariat, Governmental representatives, other experts, BirdLife and the RSPB during the process of drafting and review of AEMLAP.

The aim of the Fellowship is the successful implementation of the AEMLAP, which requires

- determining clear, verifiable targets,
- good communication between European and African stakeholders, and
- coordination of activities with effective CMS Secretariat support.

The long-term aim of the Fellowship is to secure a commitment for AEMLAP implementation from CMS AEMLAP Range States and other stakeholders.

In terms of organisational roles, the RSPB undertakes a significant programme of work on migratory birds, central to which is one focusing on declining species of landbird in the Africa-Eurasia flyway. The RSPB also provides BirdLife Partnership representation with the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) to assist the process of getting international species action plans agreed, monitored, reviewed and implemented. Through Dr. Danae Sheehan and Nicola Crockford, guidance is provided in coordinating the implementation of multidisciplinary actions within AEMLAP. David Stroud of the UK Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) provides advice on how to catalyse the transformation of action plans into practical conservation action and how to support implementing agencies working at different scales. The BirdLife Africa Partnership Secretariat (BLAPS) coordinates the involvement of African BirdLife Partners in BirdLife's Global Flyways Programme, which includes supporting their work with CMS and associated Multilateral Environmental Agreements, in particular AEMLAP. Based in the UK, Dr. Osinubi has been able to work with staff from the BirdLife Global Secretariat Global Science and Information Management teams.

## 2. Progress

With the award of the Darwin Fellowship, Dr. Osinubi moved to the UK and commenced the Fellowship slightly ahead of the start date (1<sup>st</sup> July 2014). This was to enable participation in the 18<sup>th</sup> CMS Scientific Council meeting, from 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> July, 2014, in Bonn, Germany. At this meeting, the AEMLAP resolution and documents were endorsed, with minor text addition to the resolution, for presentation at the 11<sup>th</sup> CMS Conference of Parties (COP11). This CMS Scientific Council meeting provided the opportunity for a first-hand experience of such meetings, as well as the chance to expand the network of contacts relevant for the adoption and implementation of AEMLAP. A series of interviews were given during this meeting and made available online to increase awareness about AEMLAP and other CMS resolutions ([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N8H3PoyVD\\_w&list=PL7xwjIiWZQSINkNSMIJwNuuVAP0O3jle](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N8H3PoyVD_w&list=PL7xwjIiWZQSINkNSMIJwNuuVAP0O3jle)).

The Migrant Landbird Study Group (MLSG) is an independent and international network of professionals and amateurs involved in the research, monitoring and conservation of migratory landbird species. This initiative was conceived under AEMLAP as a strategy for addressing the research gap identified as a priority in the Action Plan. At the inaugural meeting of the MLSG in Wilhelmshaven, Germany, in March 2014, a Board was selected. Dr. Osinubi and Dr. Sheehan are on this Board. The Board was able to organise its first meeting at the University of Copenhagen, Denmark, from 14<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> July, 2014 (with Skype participation by Dr. Osinubi and Dr. Sheehan). It was agreed that Board meetings will take place every six months at a location favourable for the attendance of a majority of Board members. The second Board meeting took place at the RSPB Lodge, Sandy, from 1<sup>st</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup> December, 2014. So far, the MLSG has produced and revised its information brochure (<http://www.birdlife.org/africa/migratory-landbirds-study-group-mlsg>), launched a logo as well as online and social media presence (<http://migrantlandbirds.org/wp/>; Facebook and Twitter), and was present at several scientific conferences (26<sup>th</sup> International Ornithological Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> International Bird Observatory Conference, 5<sup>th</sup> Bio-logging Science Symposium). Proposals for symposia at the 10<sup>th</sup> European Ornithologists' Union conference have been submitted.

At the CMS COP11 Regional Preparatory and Negotiation Workshop for Africa in Harare, Zimbabwe, from 21<sup>st</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> September, 2014, a presentation was made and several relevant workshop activities conducted involving Dr. Osinubi. The African workshop was particularly helpful with developing new and strengthening past African government and NGO contacts, as well as CMS and UNEP contacts. This workshop also provided an opportunity to advocate for the adoption and implementation of AEMLAP, while getting feedback from contacts on strategies and practices for on-the-ground implementation.

Towards encouraging the use of the AEMLAP Annex 3 document (species list), an interactive online species tool was envisaged. Working directly with the BirdLife Global Science and Information Management teams at the global secretariat in Cambridge, an approach was developed, embedding a policy (AEMLAP) search criteria into the BirdLife DataZone (<http://www.birdlife.org/datazone/species/search>). This allows users to identify AEMLAP species of direct relevant to them. The information update and development of new functionalities of this species tool is under review, with opportunities being explored for linkages with the WCMC Species Plus and IUCN Red Data List tools, as well as expanding the policy criteria to cover AEWAs and Raptor MoU species, and tracking the implementation of avian Species Action Plans.

At the CMS COP11 that took place in Quito, Ecuador, from 4<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> November, 2014, an AEMLAP side event was successfully organised (<http://www.iisd.ca/cms/cop11/>). This hour-long side event took place in one of the meeting rooms at the COP11 venues during the lunch break on 5<sup>th</sup> November. Speakers at the side event included Prof. Alfred Oteng-Yeboah (CMS Standing Committee Chair), Olivier Biber (Chair of the AEML Working and Steering groups), Dr. Franz Bairlein (Institute for Avian Research), Dr. Sheehan (RSPB), Bernd de Bruijn (VBN), Dr. Borja Heredia (CMS) and the AEMLAP Coordinator.

The AEMLAP resolution and documents, presented as UNEP/CMS/COP11/Doc.23.1.4, were adopted with minor text changes as UNEP/CMS/Resolution 11.17 (<http://www.cms.int/en/meeting/eleventh-meeting-conference-parties-cms#cop11-documents>).

The Friends of the Landbirds Action Plan (FLAP) is an initiative under AEMLAP aimed at addressing the public education, information, awareness and engagement gap identified as a priority in the Action Plan. Engaging with the general public across Africa, Europe, the Middle East and Central Asia, with a view towards facilitating behavioural changes that benefit migratory landbirds is a complex problem. This concept has been scaled down into a specific project, looking at developing a communication strategy for engaging with a target group in one country. This project was presented to students of the MPhil in Conservation Leadership programme at the University of Cambridge. Output from this placement project, with supervision by the AEMLAP Coordinator, will help in refining the FLAP concept.

The Fellowship is progressing very well. Issues to be raised are the transfer of the monthly allowance payment from the RSPB to the BirdLife Global Secretariat in October 2014, which was effected with prior approval from the Darwin Fellowship management, and has worked accordingly. The second issue to be raise is the expiry of Dr. Osinubi's UK academic visitor visa on 7<sup>th</sup> May, 2015, before the end of the Darwin Fellowship on 30<sup>th</sup> June, 2015. A change request has been attached to this report, requesting that Dr. Osinubi complete the last two months of the Fellowship from the BirdLife Europe office in Brussels, Belgium, or the CMS Secretariat in Bonn, Germany.

### 3. Achievements and Outcomes

The main achievement during the first six-months of the Fellowship was the adoption of the AEMLAP resolution and documents at the CMS COP11 (mentioned under section 2, above).

### 4. Next Steps

	January	February	March	April	May	June
AEML-SG meetings	■			■		
AEMLAP Flyway Action Coordination workshop participant list, timetable and logistics		■	■	■		
Online species tool coordination meeting		■	■			
U3AC Africa Forum presentation			■	■		
Manage MPhil Conservation Leadership placement project for FLAP			■	■	■	■
African Bird Club AGM presentation				■	■	
Relocation to Brussels or Bonn				■	■	
Send out invitation to participants of AEMLAP Flyway Action Coordination workshop				■	■	
MLSG Board meetings						■
End of Darwin Fellowship						■
Darwin final report						■