



A good start to 2001

The CMS Secretariat is pleased to report some very positive developments at the start of 2001, beginning with the conclusion in January of a new Agreement on Albatross and Petrel conservation. In March, the subsidiary scientific body (SBSTTA) of the Convention on Biological Diversity recommended that CMS should be acknowledged by the CBD/COP as the lead partner on matters related to migratory species, and that a CBD/CMS joint work programme should be developed and implemented.



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Good progress is also being achieved in the consultations concerning possible new Agreements and MoUs, and with the implementation of existing ones. We are optimistic that the negotiation of a Conservation Plan to accompany the Indian Ocean-South East Asia Marine Turtle MoU will be successfully concluded in a few months from now. There are also plans to organise the first expert meeting of the signatory States of the MoU on Marine Turtles of the Atlantic Coast of Africa. At UNEP's recent coordination meeting for multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) it was encouraging to see how increasingly interesting and attractive CMS and the related Agreements are becoming for potential partner conventions across the world.

The portfolio of CMS publications is also growing. A publication on marine turtles will be circulated in May as CMS Technical Series No 6. Reprints of the Djerba Action Plan on the Conservation of Sahelo-Saharan antelopes (Technical Series No 3 and 4) are also available on request. The Action Plan needs further work before it can be implemented.

Needless to say, 2001 will be a busy year for CMS. In early May the CMS Scientific Council will meet in Edinburgh, Scotland. Preparations for the next Standing Committee Meeting in December are already under way.

In 2002 a number of meetings will be held to which CMS has an essential contribution to make: the first Meeting of the Parties of ACCOBAMS in February, COP6 of the Convention on Biological Diversity (April), Rio + 10 (Summer), COP7 of CMS and MOP2 of AEWA (September), COP8 of Ramsar (November) and COP12 of CITES (November).

As always the challenges facing the Secretariat can best be met with the enthusiastic and determined support of the Parties. This is even more true as we prepare for the forthcoming meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

ALBATROSS AND PETRELS

Delegates from twelve Range States and representatives of various NGOs and fisheries interests group attended the second negotiation meeting to consider a proposed CMS Agreement for the conservation of albatrosses and petrels. The meeting was held at the University of Cape Town, South Africa and was organised by South Africa's Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism and Environment Australia with support from the Governments of New Zealand and the United Kingdom.

The meeting agreed on an Action Plan. It also produced an Agreement text which was adopted by consensus and which will hopefully become the final text after the formality of a final round of internal consultations. Meeting Chairman, Mr. Steve Hunter, is confident that the Agreement will be open for signature in June and therefore it can be expected to enter into force before COP7 (September 2002). The first negotiation meeting had taken place in Hobart in July 2000, building on the initiatives of the *Valdivia Group of Southern Hemisphere Countries for the Environment* and various resolutions and recommendations of CMS COPs regarding albatross conservation and by-catch.

Range States represented at the meeting were: Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Chile, France, New Zealand, Norway, South Africa, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States and Uruguay.

Also present were the CMS Secretariat, the Food and Agriculture Organisation, BirdLife International, WWF and representatives of an APEC member economy.

The Agreement will cover 21 albatross species and seven petrels. One issue arising from the listing is the consistency of the taxonomic nomenclature used in the draft Agreement and in the Convention; this will be addressed at the CMS Scientific Council in May. Deletion of the reference to the Southern Hemisphere in the title of the Agreement will facilitate any future extension of the range northwards, which could be achieved by simply adding northern species to the annex. For the time being however, the Agreement will retain a distinctly southern flavour.

The Agreement's speedy conclusion will act as a spur for CMS Parties and other countries in the region to consider further cooperative actions.

The local press also took a keen interest in the delegates' presence in Cape Town, in part because of the meeting being opened by Mohammad Valli Moosa, South Africa's Minister for Environmental Affairs and Tourism. Several local papers and broadcast media carried features on albatrosses, the detrimental effects of by-catch in long-line fisheries and the meeting itself.

Delegates also had the opportunity of visiting Robben Island, a World Heritage Site, significant not only politically as Nelson Mandela's place of imprisonment, but also ecologically for its wildlife, including penguins, which fortunately are recovering from the recent oil-spill.



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CMS Scientific Council Chairman, Dr. Colin Galbraith

PRIORITY ACTIONS FOR THE CONSERVATION OF HIGH ANDES FLAMINGOS

by Sandra Caziani & Patricia Marconi,
Pachamama Foundation &
High Andes Flamingos Conservation
Group

With the support of CMS, in winter of 2000 an international simultaneous census of High Andes Flamingos was performed. It aimed at identifying key areas and elaborating an integrated conservation and management proposal for the Andean (*Phoenicoparrus andinus*) and James (*P. jamesi*) flamingos. Eighty experts from Argentina, Bolivia, Chile and Peru were directly involved in the census and fieldwork activities.



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Another important outcome of this project was the signature in 2000 of an international agreement on the conservation and integrated management of the High Andes wetlands by Argentina, Bolivia and Chile. This agreement will be implemented in harmony with the Conservation and Management Proposal of High Andes Flamingos, and comprises a strategy, a common action plan and a management proposal to be implemented in each the country. Among the objectives of the strategy we envisage:

- increasing the scientific knowledge on High Andes species and their habitat;
- promoting the participation of local communities and organizations in the development of protected areas;
- planning and management as well as species management;
- organizing public awareness and environmental education activities targeting key groups; and
- strengthening the institutional and legal framework of the High Andes Flamingos Conservation Group (GCFA) as an international organization.

Implementation of the Conservation and Management Proposal started through joint transboundary projects. A tri-national protected area proposal has been drawn up among Argentina, Bolivia and Chile. At the same time, each country is developing its own conservation projects following the tri-national management proposal. These projects mainly include the expansion of boundaries and/or the creation of new protected areas as well as specific regulations for the protection of targeted species. In September 2001 with the additional support of Wetlands for the Future, a workshop on strategic planning will be conducted. At present, a GEF project proposal is being submitted to the World Bank, based on the Conservation and Management Proposal.

Regarding the international legal framework, it is necessary to undertake a detailed comparative analysis among the four countries involved in the strategy, as a prerequisite for common actions. It also became clear that it is important to find complementary approaches to scientific research to identify seasonal movement and habitat selection patterns for these migratory flamingos, as well as the factors determining their reproductive success.



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Furthermore, two hundred and twenty two wetlands were grouped into 39 management units, which are and could be subject to transboundary management. Among these, 20 units were identified as key areas based on (a) the number of Andean or James Flamingos present, (b) breeding success, (c) the uniqueness and relative isolation of the habitats at the landscape scale, (d) historical records of large population numbers or successful nesting colonies. Fifteen of these 20 key areas have some degree of protection or international recognition (as national or regional protected areas or as Ramsar sites) but, in general, the level of implementation is only partial.

THE CONSERVATION OF THE RUDDY-HEADED GOOSE IN THE AUSTRAL REGION OF ARGENTINA AND CHILE

by Daniel Blanco, Wetlands International, South America

The Ruddy-headed Goose (*Chloephaga rubidiceps*) comprises two distinct populations distributed in the southernmost tip of South America: one sedentary in the Falklands (Malvinas) Islands, and a migratory population. The latter breeds in Tierra del Fuego (Chile and Argentina) and mainland Chile, and winters in southern Buenos Aires province, in Argentina. It is this population which has seriously declined since the 1950s and last estimates report no more than 400 individuals overall.

Due to its critical situation, the mainland population of this goose was listed in Appendix I of CMS and it was designated by the Convention as a "Concerted Action" species (Resolutions 4.2 and 5.1).

In 1999, CMS provided funds for the "Ruddy-headed Goose (*Chloephaga rubidiceps*) conservation in the austral region of Argentina and Chile" project, aiming at restoring the species to a more favorable conservation status. The project was carried out from July 1999 to July 2000 and was coordinated and implemented by Wetlands International (WI) from its offices in Buenos Aires, in cooperation with local researchers from Chile and Argentina and with the participation of Dr. Jesper Madsen, an international goose expert.

Results from the breeding areas showed that Ruddy-headed geese were almost exclusively associated with wet marshes ("vegas") in the steppe zone, and that the introduction of the Patagonian fox (*Dusycion griseus*) to Tierra del Fuego seems to be the major factor causing the decline and subsequent failure of the population's recovery. The good news is that the size of the population after the breeding season was estimated to be at least 900 individuals. Surveys in the wintering area were also very successful, helping to improve understanding of the species' distribution and ecology during the non-reproductive period.

At present WI, with the help of CMS, is working on the production of a publication which will assist in the conservation and management of the Ruddy-headed Goose in Argentina and Chile. This document will be ready in June 2001 and will be distributed to all the key actors involved in the conservation of the species along its distributional range. In addition, WI continues working in close cooperation with the *Dirección de Fauna y Flora Silvestres* (SDSyPA, Argentina) to get an MoU for the conservation of this Goose signed between Chile and Argentina.



Ruddy-headed Goose; © BIOS

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DJERBA ACTION PLAN

FRANCE APPROVES GAZELLE PROJECT - PROGRESS REPORT

This article is a follow-up to a similar article in Bulletin N°12 and reports on progress made towards the implementation of the Action Plan to restore and conserve Sahelo-Saharan Antelopes. The project will cover the range of six large ungulate species: Scimitar-horned Oryx (*Oryx dammah*), Addax (*Addax nasomaculatus*), Dama Gazelle (*Gazella dama*), Slender-horned Gazelle, (*Gazella leptoceros*), Cuvier's Gazelle (*Gazella cuvieri*) and Dorcas Gazelle (*Gazella dorcas*) across fourteen countries: Algeria, Burkina Faso, Egypt, Ethiopia, Chad, Libya, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sudan and Tunisia.



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Implementation of the First phase has begun and it is estimated to be completed by September 2001. This is a feasibility study of the subprojects that are defined in the Action Plan and cover three pilot Range States: Mali, Niger and Tunisia. CMS, supported by the *Office National de la Chasse et de la Faune Sauvage* (ONFS) and the *Institut Royal des Sciences Naturelles de Belgique* (IRSNB), is the implementing organization.

The First phase is wholly financed by the French GEF Programme *Fonds Français pour l'Environnement Mondial* (FFEM) which will also oversee the finalisation of the report of the feasibility study in consultation with antelope experts with a view to releasing the remaining funds needed for the implementation of the full project.

Poverty reduction through conservation measures

Is restoration and conservation of the Sahelo-Saharan antelopes a step towards a boost in the economy and enhancement of the active participation of the poor?

One way of reducing poverty is via the establishment of strong economic structures which increase employment opportunities and foster the development of the productive potential of the poor. This is why the Sahelo-Saharan antelope project is designed to reinforce local powers, based on mobilising, training and the developing of effective structures to take charge of biodiversity management.

Activities are geared to support private sector development in the field of ecotourism and the use of natural resources. It is expected that new economic and social structures will develop. These structures will in turn provide support to the productive potential of the poor through the creation of jobs as guides, guards, drivers, labourers, etc and the development thereafter of entrepreneurial capacity in catering, craftsmen, etc. to service the growing industry.

The project will also undertake sustainable development activities on the edges of protected areas, particularly in Mali, Morocco, Mauritania, Senegal and Chad. These activities will be targeted at improving the use of the rural environment, and will provide facilities for pastoralists as well as cultural and social infrastructure that will benefit the local populations and improve their living conditions.

The FFEM will fund the implementation of the pilot phase of this project (Tunisia, Mali and Niger). However, poverty reduction is a global responsibility. Replication of these activities in other Range States requires additional international funding in order to achieve the intended results, as the governments of these countries do not have sufficient resources to fund the protection of these globally significant species.

Reference:

Project identification Sheet on Conservation and restoration of Sahelo-Saharan antelopes and their habitats

REINTRODUCTION OF SCIMITAR-HORNED ORYX TO SIDI TOUI NATIONAL PARC, TUNISIA

by Renata Molcanová (Zoological Garden Bratislava, Slovak Republic) and Simon Wakefield (Marwell Zoological Park, United Kingdom)

“Antelopes were to be seen grazing peacefully wherever the eye turned; they had so seldom been pursued by man that they did not permit even the closest approach of humans to disturb their ordinary activities.” (Quotation from Gustav Nachtigal, 1870).

Today, nothing could be further from the truth for the antelope and gazelle of North Africa. Desert Antelope and gazelle are keystone species in various desert ecosystems, but have declined dramatically through the last century as a result of hunting and changes in land use, in combination with periods of drought. The Scimitar-horned Oryx (*Oryx dammah*) was formerly widespread in the arid grasslands of the Sahel, but has become extinct in the wild in most, if not all, North African countries. Fortunately, the captive population has increased over the last 20-30 years and is to be the basis for establishing free-ranging populations as a result of re-introduction activities. Unfortunately, even when reintroduction has successfully taken place, there can be a sudden change in circumstances, which threatens the released population. Although it may represent a symbolic end-point for the managers and general public, it only marks the beginning of the animals' most testing time.

It is now almost two years since ten Scimitar-horned Oryx were released into Sidi Toui NP in Tunisia in April 1999. During that time the animals have experienced many difficulties in their new environment. We made several trips to visit them to see how they were coping with the hard living conditions. We have observed them in their search throughout the NP to find the best grazing in the at times poor, dry vegetation during the very hot summer, with temperatures around 45° C. They have also increased the size of the group with the addition of several offspring.

Age and sex structure of released group:

According to the dynamics of each species, the age structure and size of a reintroduced herd will produce a given survival probability over a specified time period (Saltz 1996). For each species that is considered for reintroduction, it should be possible to identify the age structure that will produce the lowest extinction probability (EP) and, hence, increase the chances of survival of reintroduced populations. The group released into Sidi Toui included 3 adult (about 4-5 years) experienced females. All three females came from the same zoo, which proved to be an advantage later; the females brought a clear hierarchy into the herd, stabilised the social structure and so made it possible to release the group a short time after their arrival in Tunisia.



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Present living conditions:

Only 100 mm of rain fell in 1999 and 65 mm in 2000. Therefore, in autumn the animals had to be fed with hay. Water is provided for them in water troughs beside the pre-release area. The regular use by the animals of this part of the park makes it possible to check their physical condition and the status of the herd. It also maintains contact between the animals and humans, which we think is important during the first stages of post-release observation. Apart from the new calves, each animal is tagged to enable their identification in order to keep a record of the breeding history. However, there have already been several mistakes in identification, and later, when the population increases, it will be harder to keep proper studbook data.



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Breeding:

The 3 adult females were pregnant before being transported to Tunisia. Two of them gave birth in December of the year of transportation but only one calf survived. Until now, 9 calves have been born, and only one was lost to jackals, but steps have been taken by the park staff to reduce this risk further by isolating females in the acclimatisation pens a few weeks prior to giving birth. The mother and calf are kept there until the calf is at least 2 weeks old to ensure that it is not at risk. With such a small release group and the importance of the genetic contribution of each founder individual, this is a useful precaution, even though it may limit the natural movements of the group for a short time.

Predators:

It is clear that predation can pose a significant risk to very small populations or groups even when predators are relatively uncommon. *Dunham* (1997), monitoring mountain gazelle (*Gazella gazella*) reintroduced in Saudi Arabia, reported that 32% of the mortality of released gazelles was accounted for by predators, either wolves or feral dogs. Interestingly, older released gazelles (>3 years) were more likely to be killed than younger ones.

During our last visit in November 2000, several changes had been noticed. First, two calves born in August and September were both found to be in very good condition. Two other females in the last stage of pregnancy were separated in the acclimatisation pens to avoid any loss of new-born calves. This resulted in regular visits by the other females of the herd and later, we suppose, the splitting of the original group into several groups. The largest new group was the "nursery group", which comprised all the mothers with their offspring, together with the young animals; this group was protected by the breeding male. The other females, which were either not pregnant or in the early stages, were running between the nursery group and the acclimatisation pens where the two oldest, pregnant females had been placed. This raises the question of how in the future the group will be able to cope with such a strong influence by humans on their social structure. Obviously the females in the non-nursery group were confused by such a change within the herd. However, we can suppose that male calves born in the park may, after reaching the right age, establish new breeding groups with potentially available female groups, which will lead to the second generation of offspring born in Sidi Toui.

PROGRESS IN THE WEST AFRICAN CETACEAN RESEARCH AND CONSERVATION PROGRAMME (WAF CET II)

by Koen Van Waerebeek, Coordinator

CMS/WAF CET-2 field studies of dolphins, porpoises and whales in Senegal and The Gambia were finalized in late December 2000, and the results are currently being analysed. In Senegal, research concentrated in the *Parc National du Siné-Saloum* (PNdS) and around Joal and Fadiouth, two nearby artisanal fishing communities on the Petite Côte. Long-term collaboration between *Parcs Nationaux du Sénégal* (CMS Focal Point) and the NGO COREWAM (Conservation & Research of West African Aquatic Mammals) was formalised in a Letter of Agreement. The LoA guarantees scientists access to national parks with marine and riverine habitat and facilitates joint activities with park rangers, while COREWAM provides training in aquatic mammal data collection and arranges for the necessary equipment. CMS/WAF CET-2 provided PNdS with a Global Positioning System (GPS) and binoculars to secure accurate recording of sightings of rare At-

lantic hump-backed dolphins (*Sousa teuszii*) and help park rangers with surveillance to combat illegal fishing and poaching.

Survey effort from small boats suggests a year-round presence, and possible site fidelity for an Atlantic hump-backed dolphin community of some 40 animals in the southern Saloum delta. Attempts at photo-identification have been inauspicious so far due to the near-absence of recognisable skin lesions and nicks. Apparently hump-backed dolphins in PNdS remain unaffected by collisions with boat propellers and are free from pollution and skin diseases. Hump-backed dolphins approach the mouths of creeks from deeper, coastal water only with rising tides, most likely both an optimal foraging strategy and a way to avoid stranding on the numerous and treacherous sand banks. Bottle-nosed dolphins (*Tursiops truncatus*) are the only other cetacean who commonly share the same general area, but no mixed schools have been confirmed. Some habitat segregation is apparent: hump-backed dolphins occupying near-shore waters of the outer Gambia estuary and Saloum

delta creeks, while bottle-nosed dolphins feeding preferentially in the Gambia estuary's deeper water channels. The latter also penetrate high upstream, up to the Bambatenda ferry crossing, during the dry season, in synchrony with strong seawater intrusion and the seasonal movements of fishermen.

The cause of death for one hump-backed and three bottle-nosed dolphins found stranded at different times in PNdS could not be established due to advanced decomposition. Other reported dolphin carcasses had long been utilized before we could examine them. Locals admit gillnet entanglements occasionally occur and cetacean meat is being consumed mostly within the community. Artisanal fish-

ermen from the near-by ports of Joal and Fadiouth indeed landed two harbour porpoises (*Phocoena phocoena*) and two long-beaked common dolphins (*Delphinus capensis*), from which we collected samples. No new evidence of minke whale presence became available but in May 2000 a calf Bryde's whale live-stranded at Ngazobil. The injured animal died on the beach and the small



Group of bottenlose dolphins; © Dr. Koen Van Waerebeek

skull was conserved for later study. Mitochondrial DNA fragments sequenced by geneticist Dr. Luis Pastene match those of ordinary type Bryde's whale *Balaenoptera edeni* cf. *brydei*. Only one other Bryde's whale record (in 1955) is fully documented for Senegal, but several others may have gone undetected.

COREWAM also established promising collaboration with the *Centre de Recherche Océanographique de Dakar-Thiaroye* (CRODT), mainly thanks to president Dr. Mamadou Diallo, a senior CRODT Officer. Support, in the form of use of an all-terrain vehicle for visits to the Saloum delta, was highly welcomed.

Despite Senegal's well-organised nationwide observer network for artisanal fisheries (directed by CRODT), hardly any cetacean by-catches are reported. This is understandable from fishermen's deeply ingrained habit of hiding carcasses and denying any takes. Virtually all our fisheries-cetacean interaction data were disclosed through chance encounters in the field by COREWAM researchers and collaborating park rangers, underscoring the by-catch problem.

A similar situation exists in The Gambia and a series of other countries (e.g. Chile, Ecuador, Peru, India, Philippines) where both cetacean captures are illegal (with no distinction for by-catches), and thus potentially penalised, and where freshly dead cetaceans have monetary value because they can be utilised either for food or bait. This severely hampers the ability of biologists to gather much-needed catch statistics and biological samples to evaluate population status. No doubt monitoring would benefit if landings of by-caught cetaceans were decriminalised.

However, how precisely this should be effected without causing a recrudescence of uncontrolled direct fishery for small cetaceans, will require careful planning. Considering current globalisation in fisheries practices, preferably an international forum involving cetologists, fisheries managers, fishermen and policymakers should address this issue.

The question whether underreporting of by-catch may also be addressed through training of port-based fisheries observers in basic aspects of aquatic mammal management is currently being tested in The Gambia. In a smaller country the input process is simpler and any enhanced information should become available sooner. If positive, we will recommend larger-scale training in Senegal and other African nations. To date, low reporting motivation was prevalent among boat-based observers, the result of their being contracted typically for a single voyage only. Training is superficial and is useless for building expertise.

In The Gambia, a two-step approach was chosen, in which an expert lectures to senior instructors, who in turn teach a simplified course to fisheries observers. On 28 September 2000, the Department of Fisheries (DoF) and the Cetacean Working Group of the Department of Parks and Wildlife Management (DPWM) jointly organized a one-day workshop at DoF Banjul headquarters. A selected group of 10 officers and senior fisheries agents were invited.

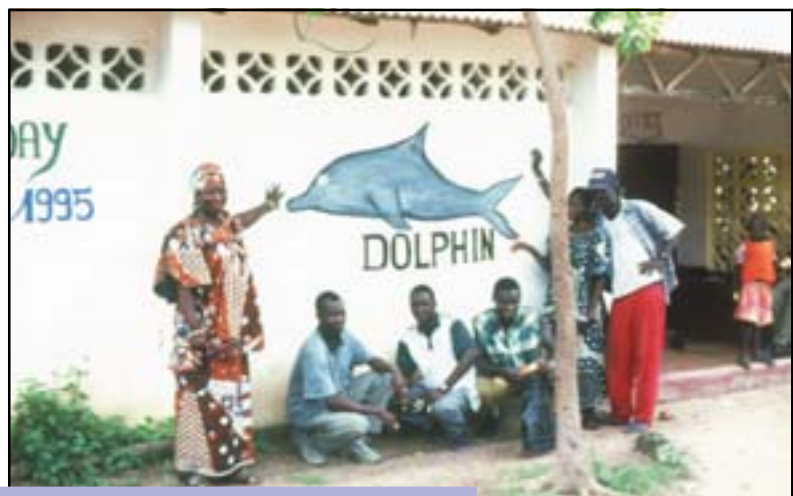
Van Waerebeek presented a "Briefing on Data Collection Methods in Whale and Dolphin Field Research" and DPWM provided each participant with a copy of the 50 pages draft course, featuring an easily readable text, relevant sections of which may be readily inserted into the existing observers training programme.

Audiovisual material illustrating whale and dolphin species from Gambian waters, as well as aspects of marine mammal biology, proved immensely useful in transmitting new concepts concerning unfamiliar animals. The workshop was well received.

A full-time cetacean scientist may be as yet unfeasible in many African socio-economic contexts. The WAF CET-2 project had to compete for attention from well-trained marine biologists overloaded with other responsibilities due to their expertise being in high demand to address critical issues in national fisheries and aquaculture. Therefore, several part-time scientists shared tasks; and although organisationally complicated, it is somehow bearing results.

The project objective to establish functional in-country institutions to address cetacean research and conservation issues has been fulfilled in Senegal with COREWAM and in The Gambia with the DPWM Cetacean Working Group (CWG), both poised to expand activities. Researchers in Accra have already indicated their wish to link up with a COREWAM Ghana Chapter.

On 14 December 2000, Lt. Col. Jammeh, President of The Gambia, signed the instruments for ratification of the Convention on Migratory Species. A major goal of WAF CET-2 was achieved by, DPWM chief Dr. A. Camara and other CWG members who had long and vigorously advocated with State House to further strengthen The Gambia's wildlife conservation policies through CMS. Congratulations The Gambia!



Briefing of fisheries observers on dolphins at Tanji, The Gambia

© Dr. Koen Van Waerebeek

KEY NEGOTIATIONS AHEAD ON MARINE TURTLES

Two important intergovernmental meetings of Marine Turtle Range States are to take place under CMS auspices in the coming months: one will bring together all countries of the Indian Ocean and South-East Asia, while the other concerns about 25 countries of the Atlantic coast of Africa extending from Morocco to South Africa.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) of the Philippines will host a follow-up to the July 2000 meeting in Malaysia which saw the conclusion of the *Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation and Management of Marine Turtles and their Habitats of the Indian Ocean and South-East Asia*. The conference, planned to be held in Manila from 19-23 June 2001, has the following objectives:

- Elaboration and conclusion of a comprehensive Conservation Plan to accompany the Memorandum of Understanding adopted in Malaysia;
- Agreement on the location of a secretariat to help co-ordinate the MoU activities;
- Prioritization of key areas of work to be undertaken during the next three years of the MoU's operation;
- Initiation and/or further development and refinement of conservation activities at the sub-regional level;
- Identification of further sources of funding for implementation of the MoU; and
- Agreement on the timing of the first formal meeting of the signatory States.

The Federal Ministry of Environment of Nigeria will host a similar conference in the Nigerian capital of Abuja in July 2001. It will build upon the successful May 1999 conference in Abidjan which resulted in the *Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of Marine Turtles of the Atlantic Coast of Africa*, which has now been signed by 12 countries.

The Abuja conference is expected to finalize a Conservation Plan, a revised draft of which was circulated by the Secretariat in December 2000 in the form of a publication titled: *Conservation Measures for Marine Turtles of the Atlantic Coast of Africa* (CMS Technical Series No. 5). The Plan aims to: (1) improve basic knowledge of species and migration routes; (2) reduce direct and indirect causes of marine turtle mortality; (3) engage local communities and others in conservation efforts; (4) enhance co-operation and co-ordination within and among Range States; and (5) secure funding to initiate or continue marine turtle conservation programmes.

The Abuja conference will provide an opportunity for a majority of the remaining States concerned to sign the Memorandum of Understanding, and to discuss activities to be undertaken in selected countries under a project being developed for submission to the French GEF (FFEM) programme.

CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT OF STURGEONS

STURGEONS

Sturgeons are migratory fish and which regularly cross international borders in their migrations. Several species have high commercial value both for caviar and meat, and have been and are the object of intensive commercial exploitation. Several sturgeon populations have already disappeared due mainly to past over-exploitation and habitat loss. Most of the existing species are currently under threat with numbers rapidly declining. As a response to international concern on their survival, 23 species of sturgeons have been listed in Annex II of CITES (meaning all international trade would be strictly controlled by both importing and exporting countries). Likewise 19 species were included in Appendix II of CMS by the last Conference of the Parties, which also issued a recommendation for the development of cooperative actions in favour of those species.

The German Ministry of Environment, in close consultation with the CMS Secretariat, took the lead in an effort to develop, as a joint venture between the German Government and the secretariats of CITES and CMS, an MoU which should aim at a transboundary international coordination of research and monitoring of sturgeon and their habitat worldwide, including *in situ* and *ex situ* conservation and the establishment of a global database.

With the assistance of IUCN-Environmental Law Centre an informal meeting of Range States was held during CITES COP11 in Nairobi, April 2000, where the initiative was presented and elicited positive reactions. However, since then the initiative has been deferred to avoid interference with the "Significant Trade Review" developed under CITES and following notification from the CITES Secretariat that they were not in a position at that moment to follow up the initiative.

The last few months have seen an increase in interest on the issue of conservation and sustainable management of sturgeons, focussing on the Caspian Sea region. The main trigger for this interest has been the recommendation of the Animal Committee of CITES for a substantial reduction of the export quotas of sturgeons and their products, notably caviar, from the riparian countries of the Caspian, Black and Azov seas and the Amur River drainage system.



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**IUCN/SSC Open Meeting on Priorities for Conservation of Sturgeons
(Moscow, 10-11 February 2001)**

An open meeting was convened under the auspices of the Sturgeon Specialist Group of IUCN, and was held in conjunction with the meeting of the IUCN Specialist Group. The programme included a review of the current status of sturgeon populations, a presentation of ongoing conservation initiatives and identification of priorities for conservation and management. Available data on legal catches from several countries, notably Russia, China, Romania and Azerbaijan in the last decades confirmed rapid decline in stocks, despite efforts of re-stocking through release of fry from hatcheries. Many causes for this decline were discussed.

In the short term, poaching and illegal trade, low efficiency of re-stocking programmes and lack of international and regional cooperation were identified as issues to be addressed as a matter of priority. In the longer term, problems such as habitat degradation (mainly caused by pollution and mining, but also destructive fishing techniques) and impediment to migration as a consequence of dam construction appear critical for the maintenance of viable wild populations.

Progress on several international initiatives related to the conservation of sturgeons were presented. The representative of the German Ministry of Environment reported on its initiative aimed at the elaboration of a global Memorandum of Understanding under the auspices of CMS. An illustration of the different tools developed under CMS to foster international cooperation was given by the representative of the CMS Secretariat. While the complex nature of issues facing sturgeon conservation and the existence of important gaps in knowledge was recognized, the meeting was able to produce a set of recommendations for future action.

**Inter-Agency meeting of sturgeon stakeholders
(Geneva, 15-16 February 2001)**

The meeting was convened by UNEP (Division of Environmental Conventions and Regional Office for Europe) and was directed to international bodies/agencies dealing with sturgeon conservation or trade issues in the Caspian region. The main objectives were to examine current or planned initiatives and roles of the different agencies, and to design a co-ordinated approach to the governments of the 5 littoral states of the Caspian Sea. It also aimed at advising and assisting countries to satisfy CITES requirements and implement effective measures to conserve sturgeon resources.

Main issues considered by the meeting included, the need for a co-ordinated fishery management regime for the Caspian Sea; the need for scientific assessment of sturgeon population levels; issues affecting the Caspian ecosystem; and the necessity of reducing organized criminal involvement in the caviar trade. The discussions resulted in an agreed list of proposals and potential areas of assistance to the Caspian littoral states. These included in particular the support towards the conclusion of the Fisheries Agreement which is currently being negotiated through the EU programme TACIS (Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States). A potential leading role of CMS was acknowledged in undertaking a global review of the conservation status for all sturgeon species. The proposals are expected to be presented at a high level meeting with the participation of Caspian littoral states and international agencies, scheduled to be held in Baku, Azerbaijan.

AGREEMENTS

ACCOBAMS GAINS MOMENTUM:
ENTRY INTO FORCE 1 JUNE 2001

Interim Secretariat
"Villa Girasole"
16, Boulevard de Suisse
98 000 Monaco
Tel. (+377) 93154229
Fax (+377) 93509591
email:
mcvanklaveren@gouv.mc

Four years after its conclusion and endorsement by an impressive number of Range States of the Mediterranean and Black Seas, ACCOBAMS will enter into force on 1 June 2001. The Government of Malta submitted its instrument of ratification with the Depository, the Government of the Principality of Monaco, on 23 March 2001. Parliamentary procedures for ratification of ACCOBAMS and accession to CMS by Albania and Georgia have also been completed.

The Government of Monaco has already set the date for the First Session of the Meeting of the Parties (MOP). It will take place in Monaco from 14-16 February 2002. Dr. Marie-Christine van Klaveren, Interim Secretary, acting on behalf of the responsible Minister, H.E. Mr Bernard Fautrier, visited the CMS Secretariat in March 2001 to discuss with CMS and the co-located Agreement Secretariats matters related to the preparation of MOP1. The invitations to the Parties, Range States, IGOs and NGOs will be sent out soon. Considerable preparatory work has to be carried out by the Interim Secretariat, for instance preparing a budget proposal and consulting on the establishment by the First Meeting of the Parties (MOP) of a permanent secretariat and the other relevant bodies, and on the location of the secretariat.

The Interim Secretariat has already been very active anticipating the implementation of ACCOBAMS and establishing contacts with international organisations such as related multilateral agreements and institutions (e.g. the Barcelona Convention, the Bern Convention, ASCOBANS and UNEP). ASCOBANS is especially relevant, and mutual consultations should regularly take place in the future. The development and increasing use of low frequency sonars for military purposes and oil exploration, detonation of bombs, rockets and other explosives dropped in the sea during military activities, highspeed ships with detrimental effects on all sorts of marine mammals, pollution by waste deposits, the growing risks by the increasing transport of dangerous goods and, of course, accidental catches and competition with fishing activities are just a few of the global problems which could be highlighted by ASCOBANS and ACCOBAMS together.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

The year 2001 marks the 10th anniversary of the signing of the Agreement and therefore was declared "International Year of the Bat". A wide range of activities to promote bat conservation and to increase public awareness is expected to take place throughout the Agreement area and beyond.

EUROBATS continues to grow considerably. In 2000 Croatia and Romania acceded and, in the first quarter of 2001, Malta and Moldova. The Agreement now counts with 23 Parties.

The 6th Meeting of the Advisory Committee took place at the generous invitation of the Government of Portugal in Sintra from 19 to 21 March 2001. The participants from 31 countries enjoyed outstanding hospitality offered by the Instituto da Conservação da Natureza.

The Meeting focussed on the implementation of the wide-ranging work programme, which the previous Session of the Meeting of Parties had assigned to the Committee. Further details can be found on the EUROBATS website: www.eurobats.org



55 participants from 31 countries enjoyed the Meeting in the beautiful city of Sintra

© EUROBATS


 ASCOBANS


 20th anniversary
1991 - 2001

8th MEETING OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE, NYMINDEGAB, DENMARK FROM 2 – 5 APRIL 2001

At the invitation of the Danish Government, the Eighth Meeting of the Advisory Committee to the Agreement on the Conservation of Small Cetaceans of the Baltic and North Seas (UNEP/ASCOBANS) took place in Nymindegab, Denmark from 2 - 5 April 2001. Representatives of the 8 Parties to ASCOBANS, of

two Non-Party Range States and Portugal, as well as a number of intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations attended the meeting.

The Committee dealt with various issues related to the implementation of the resolutions adopted by the 3rd Meeting of Parties, held in Bristol last year. Three *ad hoc* working groups were established. The first working group dealt with bycatch mitigation, the second with survey and research (population census and bycatch monitoring) and the third discussed issues relating to the Baltic Sea, in line with the general agreement at both the 7th Meeting of the Advisory Committee to ASCOBANS (Bruges, Belgium, 16 – 18 March 2000) and the Third Meeting of Parties to ASCOBANS (Bristol, UK, 26 – 28 July 2000) that further measures were needed to promote ASCOBANS objectives in the Baltic region.

The Committee again stressed fact that bycatch rates in the Agreement area needed to be reduced if a favourable conservation status for small cetaceans was to be achieved and maintained. Integration of these concerns into the Common Fisheries Policy of the European Community, currently under reform, is deemed to be vital in this context. The Meeting considered the report on potential mitigation measures for reducing bycatch of small cetaceans in ASCOBANS waters. This report by Andrew J. Read of the Nicholas School of the Environment, Duke University, USA, was commissioned by ASCOBANS in 2000 and was circulated, in January 2001, to ASCOBANS Parties and Range States as well as the European Commission for discussion at the national level. All Parties welcomed the report, but more time will be needed to study it fully. A further discussion will therefore take place at the 9th Meeting of the Advisory Committee in Sweden next year.

The Advisory Committee discussed a projected survey of small cetacean abundance in the North Sea and Adjacent waters, "SCANS II". The first SCANS was carried out in 1994 and the need for a new survey, which should be extended to cover the Baltic Sea and the area west of the British Isles, which were not or only partially included in the 1994 survey, is evident. Preliminary preparations for this survey will now begin.

With regard to the Baltic Sea, the Committee considered the final report of the ASCOBANS Baltic Discussion Group (ABDG). The ABDG, which was established in February 1998 to assess research needs and options for the Baltic Sea met in Copenhagen in January of this year. The recommendations contained in this report will be taken into consideration in drafting a recovery plan for Baltic harbour porpoises. This long-standing ASCOBANS project has received fresh impetus. Preparations for a workshop aimed at drafting the plan have now begun. A steering group is being established to promote this project. The workshop is scheduled to take place in Poland in January 2002.

Other issues discussed by the Committee included the extension of the Agreement area to take in Ireland, Portugal and Spain. Portugal, which was represented at the meeting, and Spain have expressed an interest in acceding to the Agreement.

New ASCOBANS Website and Brochures

The ASCOBANS website has been revamped entirely. In addition to information on the Agreement and the species it covers, it now encompasses an overview of ASCOBANS news and events and a publications page. Moreover, ASCOBANS documents can now be downloaded from the website: www.ascobans.org.

New ASCOBANS brochures have also been printed and are available from the Secretariat upon request.

TENTH MEETING OF THE CMS SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL

At the kind invitation of Scottish Natural Heritage, the Meeting will be held in Edinburgh, Scotland, U.K., from 2-4 May 2001. The CMS Scientific Council will hold its Tenth Meeting. Fifty delegates have already registered as at 20 April 2001, well above the number of participants at previous meetings, expressing the interest inside and outside the Convention in the work of the Council.

The purpose of this tenth meeting of the Scientific Council is to provide advice on and to facilitate implementation of the programme which was agreed by the sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (Cape Town, 10-16 November 1999) and the ninth meeting of the Scientific Council (Cape Town, 4-6 November 1999). It will also address the preparatory work for the organization of the seventh Conference of the Parties (Bonn, Germany, September 2002).

The meeting is expected to provide advice to the Parties and guidance to the Secretariat on action under the Convention on a number of important issues, in particular concerted action for Appendix I species and cooperative action for Appendix II species, notably those newly identified by COP6; development of new Agreements under Art. 4 of the Convention; identification of projects to be funded through the CMS Trust Fund; measures in respect of by-catch of migratory species in fisheries, notably sea birds, marine turtles and cetaceans; impact on migratory species of climate change and artificial barriers to migration. A few proposals to amend the CMS appendices will also be considered for possible submission to the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

The fourth meeting of the Range States to the CMS MOU concerning conservation measures for the Siberian Crane takes place in Baraboo, Wisconsin, USA from 20-24 May 2001. Reviewing and updating the conservation plan as it affects the western, central and eastern populations will be the main items on the agenda. The meeting will also provide an opportunity for final touches to be put to the GEF project before it is finally submitted.



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FIRST MEDITERRANEAN CONFERENCE ON MARINE TURTLES

The secretariats of CMS, Bern Convention and Barcelona Convention (RAC/SPA) are jointly convening the first Mediterranean Conference on Marine Turtles. The conference will be held in Rome, Italy, from 24 to 28 October 2001. ICRAM (Central Institute for Scientific and Technological Research Applied to the Sea - Italy) is providing technical and financial support for the organization of this event.

The Conference's primary aim is to provide to marine turtle scientists and conservationists working in the Mediterranean a forum for presenting and sharing the most recent scientific and technical knowledge and management experience on marine turtle biology and conservation issues in the region. While the focus is on Mediterranean issues, participation is open to all interested persons, as this will provide an opportunity for exchange of experiences with other regions and experts.

The provisional programme of the conference provides for four thematic sessions: (1) Identification and conservation of critical habitats; (2) Population dynamics and genetics; (3) Interaction of marine turtles with fisheries and (4) Biology and ecology. In addition there will be a poster session and three workshops. Further information can be obtained from the following Web site: www.medturtleconf.net.

NEW PARTIES

Since the Publication of our last Bulletin the number of Parties to CMS has risen to 74 with the accession of the following countries:

JORDAN - Jordan has a great variety of wildlife despite its relatively small size (90,000 sq km). The country includes the Dead Sea, the lowest point on the Earth's surface (400 m below sea level) and mountains reaching altitudes of 1600 metres. Habitats around the mountains range from Mediterranean oak forests to semi-tropical vegetation; much the country characterized by dryland and arid ecosystems.

MALTA - The State of Malta is made up of three islands covering an area of approx. 300 sq km situated in the Mediterranean Sea, between Sicily and Libya. Malta is the largest island, the others being Gozo and Comino. Malta's coastline is indented with many bays and inlets, the landscape on the main island is largely flat and the topography is dominated by limestone formations; conversely Gozo is hillier and greener. Malta has a typically temperate climate, with warm summers influenced by dry winds from Africa. The wettest months are November to February, and annual rainfall is low.

MOLDOVA - Moldova is a land-locked country covering 33,700 sq km between Romania and Ukraine. The topography is varied, ranging from steppe in the north and south with highlands reaching 430 metres in the centre. The Danube and Dniester rivers are important features. The climate is continental - with short winters and long warm summers.

TAJIKISTAN - The land-locked and mountainous country of Tajikistan covers 143,000 sq km in central Asia. Its climate varies greatly according to the altitude. Ninety three % of the country lies above 1500 metres, and 50% lies above 3000 metres including 10,000 sq km of glaciers. The average population density is 40.5 persons per km², and ninety 90% of the populations is concentrated in just seven % of the land.

AROUND THE REGIONS: SOUTH-EAST AND EAST ASIA

In the framework of efforts to recruit new Parties in South-East Asia, a series of CMS briefing sessions has been organized over the past 4-5 months with relevant Government ministries in Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam. The sessions have served to explain to senior staff of various ministries responsible for environmental policy and implementation the relevance and benefits of CMS membership. The briefings in Cambodia and Vietnam, in November 2000 and February 2001, respectively, were particularly well-received and numerous areas of potential collaboration in migratory species conservation were identified. Later this year, CMS will be co-sponsoring important project activities relating to conservation of Sarus cranes and Marine turtles. Senior officials of both Governments indicated, on behalf of their respective Ministries, their wholehearted endorsement of CMS membership.

The success of the missions can be attributed to the excellent cooperation of all the ministries concerned and the helpful logistical support provided by the regional offices of Wetlands International Asia-Pacific.

Another opportunity to enhance the visibility of CMS within the region came in December 2000 when the Environment Agency of Japan hosted a symposium on multilateral bird treaties, which highlighted for the first time in the Japanese context the relevance and possible application of the Convention on Migratory Species and associated Agreements, such as the African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement. The well-attended public symposium was organized by the Wild Bird Society of Japan, and featured presentations from David Pritchard (Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, speaking on the AEWA), Heidi Luquer (speaking on the reinvigorated Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network) and Douglas Hykle, speaking on behalf of the Convention on Migratory Species.



WORKING TOGETHER TOWARDS A JOINT WORK PROGRAMME BETWEEN CMS AND THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY



Acknowledging the importance of migratory species as a key component of global biodiversity, significant discussions and recommendations were held during the recent meeting of the SBSTTA (the scientific body of the CBD) held in Montreal from 12 to 16 March.

These potentially far-reaching recommendations build upon previous CBD and CMS decisions and resolutions and also respond to Decision V/21 of the CBD COP, which requested the development of a proposal on how migratory species could be integrated into the work programme of the CBD and the role CMS could play in the implementation of that proposal.

In this regard, delegates at SBSTTA 6 expressed in their interventions their strong and clear support for further collaboration, co-operation and synergies between the two conventions. Furthermore, the CBD Parties unanimously recommended to the next CBD COP (The Hague, May 2002), that:

- (1) CMS be recognized as the lead partner in the conservation and sustainable use of migratory species over their entire range while recognizing that CMS provides an international framework through which Range States can cooperate on migratory issues;
- (2) CBD Parties report through their national reports on the extent to which they address migratory species at the national level, and on their cooperation with other Range States;
- (3) An assessment be made of the financial resources needed to support capacity building and specific projects aimed at incorporating the conservation and sustainable use of migratory species and their habitats.

The SBSTTA also requested the CBD Executive Secretary in close collaboration with the CMS Secretariat develop for the consideration of the CBD / COP a joint programme of work for the Conventions which would be implemented at all levels. This joint work programme addresses areas of common interest, namely, protected areas, indicators, monitoring and assessments, sustainable use, public education and awareness. It will also include priority areas for action and time-frames; identify key actors and the ways and means to implement it; and address financial considerations. The CBD/CMS joint work programme will be further discussed at the CBD COP scheduled for May 2002.

The SBSTTA also invited the CBD Executive Secretary to generate in collaboration with the CMS Secretariat and relevant organizations, guidance for the integration of migratory species into the national biodiversity strategies and action plans and ongoing and future programmes of work under the CBD.

SIBERIAN CRANE / WETLAND GEF MEETING

The second meeting of the Steering Committee of the GEF Project "Conservation Strategies for Wetlands and Migration Corridors required by Siberian Cranes and Other Migratory Waterbirds in Asia" was held at the Gan Jiang Hotel in Nanchang, China from 11-15 December 2000.

Jim Harris, President of the International Crane Foundation, chaired the meeting, with the discussions being led by Project Manager, Claire Mirande and the Project Consultant, Crawford Prentice. The Chinese State Forestry Administration had organised the venue and other associated facilities and provided administrative support of high quality, ensuring that the meeting ran smoothly.

The meeting reviewed progress achieved in the four participating countries (Russia, Iran, Kazakhstan and China). It also prepared further paper work required by the GEF for the application procedures of a full project. The ICF representatives declared their satisfaction with progress made and are confident that a full GEF project will be approved.

The participants also enjoyed a one day field trip to the Poyang Lake complex, where many of the 2,000 birds of the Eastern flock spend the winter alongside numerous other water bird species.



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ANDEAN COUNTRIES MEET TO DISCUSS TRANSBOUNDARY ECOSYSTEMS AND THREATENED SPECIES

Organized by the Andean Community of Nations, more than 90 governmental and

non-governmental delegates of Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela met in Lima, Peru from 26 to 28 March.

The delegates discussed how to best integrate matters related to transboundary ecosystems and threatened species into the proposed elaboration of a regional strategy for the conservation of biodiversity. CMS was the only Convention invited and made a presentation on the importance of migratory species in the region, how to best use them to promote concrete cooperation and synergies among countries and among conventions for the Andean countries. Countries, who had not done so, were invited to join CMS.

Among the many recommendations, the plenary made a strong request that Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador and Venezuela join CMS and that all countries address matters and promote projects aiming at regional cooperation and synergies which include migratory species.

CMS was represented at the 21st *Symposium on Sea Turtle Biology and Conservation*, held in Philadelphia in late February. The symposium is an annual gathering attracting about 800 participants from the USA, Latin America/Caribbean, and other regions. The symposium was well organized, with many informative presentations and posters. This year's meeting proved to be especially productive for CMS in terms of the contacts made and the interest generated by CMS sea turtle activities.

CMS had a display stand in the main exhibit hall which was a gathering point for delegates interested in learning more about the Convention. The new report *Biogeography and Conservation of Marine Turtles of the Atlantic Coast of Africa* (mentioned elsewhere in this Bulletin) generated considerable interest.

A number of side-events were of particular relevance to CMS. A meeting of delegates interested in marine turtle work in West Africa was organized by consultant Jacques Fretey. Participants identified basic starting points for coordination of activities within the framework of the CMS *Memorandum of Understanding concerning Conservation Measures for Marine Turtles of the Atlantic Coast of Africa* — for example, the need to develop protocols for genetic sampling, tagging and other data collection, and above all to facilitate communication within the region. A resolution emerged from these discussions, which was later adopted by the plenary of the symposium.

A well-attended workshop on international instruments for marine turtle conservation, facilitated by Jack Frazier, served as a good platform for presenting CMS's work. The most lively debate was generated by a presentation raising concerns with the Inter-American Sea Turtle Convention, which will enter into force in May 2001. Some of the criticisms leveled in relation to that new instrument merit examination in the CMS context as well, such as the extent of involvement of local communities in decision-making and implementation, and the practical application of the prohibition of virtually all harvesting of turtles and their eggs.



Douglas Hykle (CMS), David Olendo (KESCOM, Kenya)



Luis Lopez-Jurado (Canary Islands), Neca Marcovaldi (Brazil)

Also in the margins, a small working group met to explore the potential for a holding a workshop for Portuguese-speaking African countries, in order to benefit from Projecto Tamar's extensive experience in community-based conservation in Brazil. Countries to be invited would include Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Sao Tome and Principe, Equatorial Guinea and Angola. A proposal will be formulated to encourage the Government of Cape Verde to host the workshop by the end of 2001, and funding sought from within the European Union.

Another side-meeting was arranged to discuss various initiatives, aimed at collecting and, where appropriate, mapping global data on marine turtles. These initiatives include the CMS-WCMC web site on Indian Ocean nesting beaches, Scientific Councillor Colin Limpus's extensive data from Asia-Oceania, as well as an American proposal to develop a more comprehensive database. It was agreed that CMS would take the lead in organizing a working group meeting to develop a basis for pulling together these disparate initiatives.

The margins of the symposium also provided ample opportunity to discuss many marine turtle initiatives in which CMS has a direct interest, such as the nearly-completed fisheries by-catch and tagging project being run by the Turtle Conservation Project in Sri Lanka; possible collaboration with the US National Marine Fisheries Service in the organization of a workshop in 2002 on marine turtle by-catch, which would fit well within the remit of CMS Resolution 6.2 on by-catch mitigation; progress towards the organization of a national workshop in Vietnam in July 2001; as well as a number of other worthy marine turtle conservation projects that merit review by the Scientific Council for possible funding.

A two-day gathering of WIDECAS heard country reports which highlighted problems with legislation and enforcement in many Caribbean countries, including some Parties to CMS. This general theme should be picked up in the COP7 review of implementation of CMS in relation to marine turtles.

Next year's symposium will be organized in Miami, Florida, in April 2002, under the able chairmanship of Earl Possardt, of the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

MULTILATERAL ENVIRONMENTAL AGREEMENTS (MEAs)

The Rio summit in 1992 suggested an enhanced and strengthened role for UNEP and its Governing Council. In that regard policy guidance and coordination in the field of environment should take into account the development perspective. Moreover, it was stated that UNEP should further develop "international environmental law, in particular conventions and guidelines, promote its implementation, and coordinate functions arising from an increasing number of international legal agreements, including, the functioning of the secretariats of the Conventions":

Immediately after the 22nd session of the UNEP Governing Council (Nairobi, February 2001), UNEP's Executive Director called together the heads of Secretariats of the global conventions in the field of environment and some of the regional Sea Conventions and Action Plans under UNEP's aegis. Dr Töpfer informed us that the Governing Council had taken a decision on international environmental governance. An open-ended inter governmental group of ministers has been established "to undertake a comprehensive policy-oriented assesement of existing institutional weakness as well as to identify future needs and options for strengthened international environmental governance, including the financing of UNEP."

A final report should be submitted to the Rio + 10 Meeting in South Africa next year, via the next Global Ministerial Environmental Forum. The Executive Director also expressed his wish to prepare and submit a summary report of the Conventions in the field of environment. Based on an exhaustive questionnaire, all convention secretariats were requested to provide information on the aims, purpose, instruments and stage of implementation of MEAs. CMS and its related Agreements made their respective contributions.

The draft report was submitted by UNEP Executive Director to the First Meeting of the Intergovernmental Group of Ministers who met on 18 April 2001 in New York.

The Executive Secretary of CMS would like to draw the attention of this report to the CMS focal points. The working documents on international environmental governance, including the second draft of the MEAs report and the first draft of the Executive Directors report, as well as other relevant documents for the Ministers' meeting can be found on the UNEP Website: <http://www.unep.org> under "International Environmental Governance".

Cooperation among Conventions

An interesting agenda item was the report of the Convention Secretariats on their actual and future fields of action with other Conventions. It became evident that the convention's own efforts to cooperate and synergize with each other have developed quite well in the past few years. The CMS Secretariats will have to consider with CMS Parties and the respective CMS bodies which priorities in the further development of cooperation with other MEA's, in particular regional conventions, should be taken forward. In addition to the on-going cooperation with other legally-binding treaties like CBD and Ramsar, the conventions for the Mediterranean and Black Seas as well as the Caribbean region might be candidates for cooperation in the immediate future.

Support to Convention Secretariats administered by UNEP

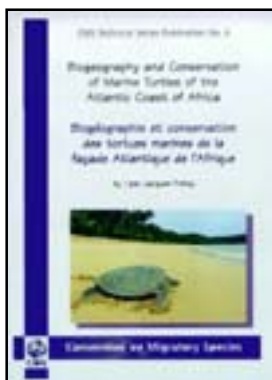
In a third Agenda item of the discussion, the secretariats were requested by UNEP to submit their ideas and wishes as to how UNEP, as well as the United Nations Offices at Nairobi (UNON) could increase and improve their administrative support for the conventions.

As part of the impressive number of substantive proposals, it was noted that contrary to the situation of the secretariats of the Climate and Desertification Conventions, some of the UNEP administrated Convention Secretariats are lacking clarification of their legal and institutional status.

It is foreseen that the next stage is likely to be an independemnt review of the administrative services provided by central UN bodies to the environmental conventions, including the scope for further decentralisation and cost effectiveness.

PUBLICATIONS

NEW CMS PUBLICATION ON MARINE TURTLES



The Secretariat is pleased to announce the publication, in April 2001, of an invaluable new reference which will be of interest to marine turtle specialists, conservationists and decision-makers on the African continent and beyond. The bilingual (English-French) *Biogeography and Conservation of Marine Turtles of the Atlantic Coast of Africa*, the sixth volume in the CMS Technical Series, is the product of author Jacques Fretey's many years of passionate interest in the continent's marine turtles.

In a sense, Africa has been one of the last frontiers in marine turtle research and conservation where, until now, no attempt had been made to compile systematically or to synthesize in a useful format whatever information existed on the status and distribution of marine turtles. This publication not only presents a vast number of references from published and gray literature, going back over one hundred years, it provides a snapshot of what is known about marine turtles in the waters of each and every Range State – extending from Morocco to South Africa. Complemented with photographs taken from throughout the region as well as detailed maps of each country's principal nesting beaches – painstakingly prepared by graphic designer Michel Hoareau – the report is the most comprehensive guide to marine turtles along Africa's Atlantic coast.

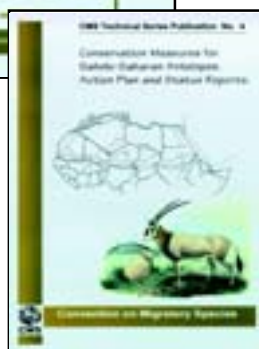
Drawing on decades of experience working in the field of marine turtle conservation, in Africa and elsewhere, and benefitting from an impressive network of contacts, the author summarizes the current state of knowledge pertaining to each of Africa's six marine turtle species. These unique insights are then translated into thoughtful recommendations as to how and where to prioritize conservation actions, with full appreciation of the enormity of the task ahead. Still, the author readily admits that his oeuvre remains a work in progress, so large are the gaps in information that have yet to be filled. The 429-page publication will be made available, free of charge for the time being, to those on the Secretariat's mailing list and on request.

CMS TECHNICAL SERIES



UNEP/CMS. ed. (1998). Proceedings of the Seminar on the conservation and restoration of Sahelo-Saharan Antelopes. CMS Technical Series Publication No. 3, UNEP/CMS Secretariat, Bonn, Germany. (Reprinted). Also available in French.

Five of the Sahelo-Saharan antelopes, namely, *Oryx dammah*, *Addax nasomaculatus*, *Gazella dama*, *Gazella leptoceros* and *Gazella cuvieri* are in immediate danger of extinction, and *Gazella dorcas* is in serious decline. These species are therefore considered under Appendix I of the CMS, and identified as important for concerted actions.

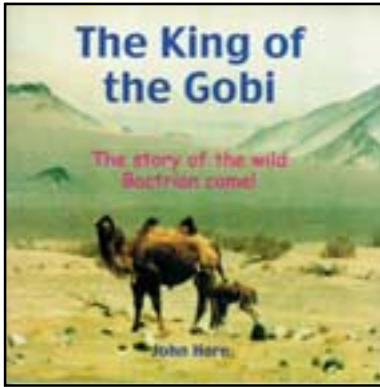


This publication reports on the results of a workshop on the conservation and restoration of the above-mentioned 6 Sahelo-Saharan species held Tunisia in 1998. This meeting produced the Djerba Declaration which emphasizes matters related to the conservation of the Sahelo-Saharan ungulates. The meeting also revised and updated the action plan and presents the national reports presented by the Range States. It also includes information on the on going restoration programmes for Tunisia, Morocco and Saudi Arabia.

UNEP/CMS. ed. (1999). Conservation measures for Sahelo-Saharan antelopes. Action Plan and Status Reports. CMS Technical Series Publication No. 4, UNEP/CMS Secretariat, Bonn, Germany. (Reprinted).

As a follow-up of the workshop on the conservation and restoration of the 6 Sahelo-Saharan ungulates and the CMS Technical Series 3, this publication presents in detail the Action Plan for the conservation of the Sahelo-Saharan antelopes and reports specifically on the status and perspectives on *Oryx dammah*, *Addax nasomaculatus*, *Gazella dama*, *Gazella leptoceros*, *Gazella cuvieri* and *Gazella dorcas*.

HELP SAVE THE LAST WILD CAMELS OF ASIA



Wild Camel Protection Foundation, Jane Goodall Institute & the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) join forces.

Just a few hundred individuals of the wild *Bactrian camel* species are left on earth. Why such an exceptional species inhabiting some of the most remote areas of the world is becoming so rare? Even closer to extinction than the Panda? Despite their incredible adaptability to extreme climatic conditions?

The Bactrian camel is a remarkable wild species which has lived for many thousands of years in the deserts of China and Mongolia. Hunting pressures and taking from the wild for economic or other purpose may be important factors; disturbance of the animals by human activities in the desert, the desert's increasing degradation, the use of all water resources for livestock and human consumption are others.

The Wild Camel Protection Foundation is preparing two internationally funded "ecosystem conservation" projects - each of them strictly limited to areas in Southern Mongolia and Northern China. Through the efforts of its director, Mr. John Hare, Ministers for Environment of the People's Republic of China and Mongolia have signed a letter of intent in which they agree to undertake coordinated and concerted action for the Bactrian camels which regularly migrate across their common border.

One of the first common activities under this letter of intent is a joint venture to raise the public awareness and to educate the young people of the region to protect the camels which play a dominant role in the character and tradition of their region and are a unique component of global biological diversity. John Hare has developed a brochure and with the kind support of the responsible authorities it will be distributed and used for educational purposes in the schools of both Mongolia and China. He has arranged for a translation to be made into the language of Northern China and the brochure is now ready to be printed. CMS has arranged for a Mongolian translation.

CMS is now seeking funds to have the brochure printed and widely distributed.

CMS invites every organisation, company and generous individuals to assist us and the *Wild Camel Protection Foundation* in our efforts. Any amount contributing to the funds needed (USD 50,000) to provide the substantial number of brochures would be welcome. Naturally every sponsor donating USD 2,500 or more will be duly acknowledged in the brochure.

For further details and transfer information, please address:

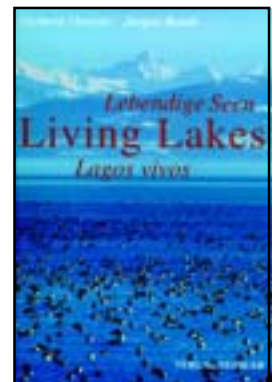
Mr. John Hare, Director
The Wild Camel Protection Foundation
School Farm
Benenden, Kent TN17 4 EU England

Tel: 44 (0) 15 80 241 132
Fax: 44 (0) 15 80 240960
E-mail: harecame@aol.com
website <http://wildcamels.com>

LIVING LAKES

This book depicts a series of lake and fresh water landscapes which are key distribution points of migratory birds. Across the world, 50 billion birds migrate every year. The Global Nature Fund's partner organisations on the ground look after these water bodies within the framework of the Living Lakes Project. As a result they see themselves as active supporters and advocates of international conventions. They have adopted a strategy of cooperation rather than confrontation with authorities and business.

This book describes several lakes and freshwater landscapes of Africa, Asia, Europe and North and South America; it highlights how they emerged, their settlement by humans, as well as their importance for birds and the problems faced in trying to protect them.



Thielcke, G. & J. Resch (2000). *Lebendige Seen, Living Lakes, Lagos vivos*. Published by Stadler. 192 pages; 175 colour pictures. Text in three languages: English, German and Spanish. Cost DM 49.80

CMS FAMILY

80 YEARS YOUNG

The CMS Secretariat has the pleasure to announce and celebrate the 80th birthday of one of CMS's long-standing contributors, French translator Jacques Gronier. For the better part of a decade Monsieur Gronier, as he is fondly known within the Secretariat, has faithfully translated from English into French all manner of texts that have been vital for the Convention's work over the years. Working together as a team from their home in Perpignan, in southern France, he and his wife, Françoise, have experienced all of the exciting developments and changes in the Convention, as well as its Secretariat, since the early 1990s.



Jacques Gronier was born on 18 April 1921 in Amiens, France. He graduated in Chinese and in Siamese (nowadays Thai) languages from the Institute of Oriental Languages in Paris; he also has a Masters degree in Law from the University of Paris.

He worked several years during his active life for the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, NATO, and UNIDO, then, after his retirement, in the Conference Service of several international organisations (FAO, E.C. for Africa, ADB (Africa), European Court of Justice, UNEP, Habitat, World Bank, European Patent Office, etc.).

As much as they are appreciated for their valuable contribution to the work of the Convention on Migratory Species, the Groniers often remind us that "they love the international atmosphere and are very grateful to CMS for giving them the opportunity to work and for showing confidence in them in spite of their age in a world and at a time when the worship of youthfulness is at its peak".

On behalf of the Convention membership, particularly our francophone colleagues who have benefited from his translation services, all staff members of the CMS Secretariat would like to extend their very best wishes to Monsieur Gronier on the occasion of his eightieth birthday, and wish him good health and prosperity for the years ahead.

DR BOERE'S FAREWELL TO MOSCOW

On 2 March 2001, Dr. Gerard C. Boere's long term involvement in the bilateral co-operation between the Russian Federation (formally the USSR) and the Netherlands in the field of nature conservation formally came to an end, because of his secondment, last year, by the Netherlands Government to Wetlands International.

Gerard made his first trip to the former USSR in August 1976, when he attended an international scientific conference on migratory birds in Novosibirsk. Conservation of the Arctic Breeding Migratory birds became the leading theme in his work when the bilateral contacts were formalised in 1989. Many expeditions into the Arctic and also to important wetlands in West Siberia took place and in several of them Gerard participated (see photo).

He facilitated many NGO developments, including the establishment of the Russian Bird Conservation Union. He was a strong supporter of CMS interests in the Russian Federation because of the importance of the Russian Arctic for many flyway activities around the world.

He facilitated the development of the bilateral co-operation into one of the largest support pro-

grammes in the field of nature conservation bringing about USD 500.000 - annually.

This all was recognised in the many speeches from the side of Government Agencies, NGO's, the Academy of Sciences and many other institutions, at the farewell symposium celebrating 10 years of bilateral co-operation.

Gerard Boere received an award for his work from the joint Russian Environmental NGO's and a special award from WWF Russian Programme. The very lively farewell reception, offered to him by the Dutch Ambassador in Moscow, Mr. Tiddo Hofstee, was attended by almost 150 people. This, together with dozens of presents received, clearly expressed the appreciation for his work.

Gerard will remain involved in Russian nature conservation issues because within his secondment to Wetlands International, global flyways remain his most important field of work. CMS is looking forward to continue the close working relationship with him.



Dr. Gerard C. Boere in Western Siberia during the Slender billed Curlew expedition of 1997

GOLDEN ARK FOR THE MARINE BIOLOGIST: PETRA DEIMER

On Friday, 30 March 2001, at the Sestijk Palace, Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands awarded the Golden Ark to the President of the Society for the Conservation of Marine Mammals (GSM - Gesellschaft zum Schutz der Meeressäugetiere), biologist and journalist Petra Deimer. The award was in recognition of her tireless efforts, both nationally and internationally towards the protection of whales, dolphins, seals and their environment. The distinction was created by Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands in 1971 and has since been awarded to 320 people in the world of nature and species conservation.

“In these fast-moving times in which our seas are polluted and plundered, ecosystems destroyed, wild animals sold off and working animals abused, this honour will give me renewed strength,” Petra Deimer said. “I accept the Golden Ark with the deepest gratitude and I will think of it as a request to continue my efforts for the survival of the animals, like Noah in the biblical story.”

The Executive Secretary of CMS would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Petra Deimer on this award and acknowledge her engagement in the promotion and further development of CMS and related Agreements.

UNEP/CMS Secretariat,
 Martin-Luther-King-Str. 8,
 D- 53175 Bonn, Germany;
 Tel. (+49 228) 815 2401/02;
 Fax (+49 228) 815 24 49;
 e-mail: cms@unep.de
<http://www.wcmc.org.uk/cms>



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

DATES	TITLE	VENUE	ORGANISED BY
2 - 4 May	CMS 10 th Scientific Council Meeting	Edinburgh, Scotland	CMS
6 - 10 May	15th Annual Conference of the European Cetacean Society	Rome, Italy	ECS
7 - 11 May	2nd Meeting of UN Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on ACEANS	New York, USA	UN
20 - 24 May	4th Siberian Crane Range State Meeting	Baraboo, Wisconsin	CMS
19 - 23 June	Conference on the conservation and Management of Marine Turtles of the Indian Ocean and South-East Asia	Manila, Philippines	CMS/DENR
26 - 29 June	Ramsar 10th Scientific and Technical Review	Gland	Ramsar
July	2 nd International Conference on Marine Turtles of the Atlantic Coast of Africa	Abuja, Nigeria	FEPA, CMS
8 - 13 July	4th International Symposium on Sturgeons	Wisconsin, USA	
16 - 27 July	COP at its sixth session (resumed)	Bonn, Germany	UNFCCC
24 - 28 July	National Marine Turtle Workshop	Vietnam	MoFi, IUCN
5 - 9 August	12th International Bat Research Conference	Bangi, Malaysia	IUCN /CSG
2002			
1 - 15 September	CMS COP 7 (including AEWA MOP 2)	Bonn, Germany	CMS / AEWA