



CMS

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Bulletin

CMS GATHERS MOMENTUM IN 2002

The 2002 balance of the Convention's implementation and further development is positive. CMS is growing and increasing in importance. CMS COP7 is an excellent example of this.

Editorial:	1
COP7: The Most Successful CMS COP Ever	3
New Species Listed under CMS	3
Tackling Oil Pollution	5
Minimising Electrocution Risks for Birds	6
Wind Turbines: New Barriers to Migration	7
CMS Links to Millenium Ecosystem Assessment	8
Closer Cooperation with Other Bodies	8
Scientific Council	
11 th Meeting of the CMS Sientific Council	10
New Standing Committee	11
COP Events	
CMS COP7 Events	12
"Save The Albatross Campaign" Launched By Birdlife International	13
New Exhibitions Accompany The COP	14
Species News	
Range States Consider Survival Strategy For The Saiga Antelope	15
Siberian Crane News Update	16
Living On The Edge: The Snow Leopard	18
Threatened Giants: Whale Sharks	20
Bats: Study Assesses Next CMS Steps	22
New Mou Planned For The Dugong	23
Agreements	
• News on AEWA: MOP2	24
• EUROBATS: We Are Your Friends	25
• ACCOBAMS: Bottlenose Dolphin	26
• ASCOBANS:News	27
Meetings	
First Meeting Of The IOSEA Marine Turtle Signatory States	28
Closer Ties between CMS and CITES	28
Second International Fishers Forum	29
New Parties and Upcoming Accessions	29
New Publications	31
News On Seal Mortality In Denmark	32
Welcoming Address Of HRH The Prince Of Wales To CMS COP7	32

Approximately 300 participants came to Bonn, the seat of the CMS Secretariat, at the generous invitation of the German Ministry for the Environment, between 17 to 24 September. They represented 66 Parties and 38 non-Parties as well as 17 International Governmental Organisations (IGO) and Non Governmental Organisations (NGO) from all over the world. The turn out topped that of COP6 (Cape Town, 1999).

CMS represents global action for migratory species and the work of the Conference of the Parties (COP) is but one impressive example of this. Fifteen Resolutions and seven Recommendations, some of them containing very comprehensive and far-reaching important items, were developed and adopted. Forty-one proposals concerning thirty-seven species were accepted for listing. Of these twenty-one species were included in Appendix I, while nineteen species and the remaining populations of another already listed species were added to Appendix II. Four species were listed on both Appendices.

It is my pleasure to take this opportunity to give special thanks to the CMS Scientific Council and its Chairman, Professor Colin Galbraith. Both did an outstanding job assessing the proposals during the Council's 11th meeting that preceded the COP. The Councillors diligently worked through the days, nights and weekends. The result was well-structured recommendations for the COP, enabling the Plenary to take well-informed and well-balanced decisions.

Furthermore, it is also a pleasure for me to thank, on behalf of the Convention, all chairpersons, in particular Dr. Gila Altmann, the Parliamentary State Secretary of the German Environment Ministry and Chair of the Conference as well as Mr. Demetrio L. Ignacio, Deputy Minister for Environment of the Philippines, Chair of the Committee of the Whole, for their leadership and good work. Thanks also must go to all chairpersons and members of the Working Groups and Committees who invested, not only a lot of their time and energy, but also their expertise and enthusiasm. The results visibly justify the input made.

*For more detailed information and regular news please visit the website of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals:
<http://www.wcmc.org.uk/cms>*

A number of guests were invited to speak during the joint CMS and AEWA opening ceremony. Minister Jürgen Trittin, our host, underscored Germany's commitment to the Convention, its related Agreements and the Secretariats co-located in Bonn. UNEP's Deputy Executive Director Shafqat Kakakhel acknowledged CMS' role in linking migratory species conservation and development. Claude Martin, Director General of WWF International, described the strong and natural support that the NGO community provides CMS. H.R.H. the Prince of Wales highlighted the importance of CMS and called upon the world community to save the Albatrosses and Petrels.

It is worth highlighting a few of the COP's decisions. The decision on the listing of a number of great whales and other marine species shows impressively the tradition and culture of negotiation and consensus building within CMS. The final declaration of a representative of one CMS Party, who expressed the concern and objection of his country against a number of proposals for marine species, but who thereafter did not insist on a vote, is and will remain an historical event.

Other highlights include: the identification of species for concerted and co-ordinated action of the Range States; a new programme to implement Agreements concluded and to the develop new Agreements and Memoranda of Understanding (MoU); the initiation of a process to update the Strategic Plan for the Convention's future implementation; the decision on a well-structured CMS Information Management Plan and the inclusion of the Global Register for Migratory Species (GROMS), which was handed over to CMS by the German Ministry of Environment; and decisions on regional priority species such as dugong and small cetaceans.

The four decisions on thematic cross-cutting issues - those on, impact assessment, electrocution, wind turbines in terrestrial and coastal areas, as well as the prevention of oil pollution - are remarkable. Hopefully they will have diplomatic consequences for long-term conservation of migratory wild animals and the habitats and migration routes upon which they depend.

Naturally the COP was the big event for CMS in 2002, but many other events took place this year which support the notion that CMS is moving in the right direction and is growing. They are important to mention. For example, we had in early 2002 the First Meeting of the Parties to ACCOBAMS, the Agreement on Cetacean Conservation of the Mediterranean and Black Seas, hosted by the Government of the Principality of Monaco. This Agreement has made a fast opening start in terms of implementation, membership and awareness of State authorities, scientific institutions and NGOs. AEWA's Second Meeting of the Parties, held in conjunction with CMS COP7, produced convincing results with a large number of bird species added to its Appendices. Moreover the growth in membership both for CMS and in almost all Agreements is an extremely good result.

2002 also brought with it the new CMS MoU and Action Plan on the Bukhara Deer and the adoption of the Conservation Plan for the MoU on Marine Turtles of the African Atlantic Coast. Importantly, a basic decision has now been taken that the big project funded by the French Government for the recovery of the Sahelo-Saharan Antelopes can be implemented as of early 2003. The CMS Secretariat will be the administering international organisation. This project will not only be a new challenge for the CMS Secretariat but it will usher in a new era of CMS implementation. It is a visible sign that the developing world, in this case of Northern Africa, is a priority area for CMS. We will also work hard to strengthen our relationships with international organisations and processes such as CITES and the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment and to contribute to the global environment and development agenda identified in Rio and Johannesburg.

With the feeling of accomplishment that 2002 has given us, the small staff of the CMS Secretariat sees the stage set for an even busier, more challenging 2003. Agreement development will be a high priority as the Secretariat works to complete "agreements in progress" such as the Houbara Bustard Agreement, the Saiga MoU, the Aquatic Warbler MoU, and most likely, an instrument on the Northern African antelopes. New exploratory work on bats and snow leopard will be initiated.

It has indeed been a satisfying year. Many thanks to all of those States, organisations and individuals, including the CMS Secretariat staff, who have helped CMS gather momentum, gain visibility and make tangible progress to conserve migratory species.

Best wishes for a healthy, happy, peaceful and prosperous New Year.

COP7: THE MOST SUCCESSFUL CMS COP EVER

The Seventh Meeting of the CMS Conference of the Parties (COP) and its associated meetings were held from 18-24 September 2002 at the invitation of the German Ministry of the Environment in the former federal capital of Bonn. Approximately three hundred delegates from 66 Parties and 38 non-Parties as well as 17 IGOs and NGOs from all over the world attended.



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Signing of the new CMS Headquarters Agreement: Ambassador Y.G. Luy, German Foreign Office, J. Trittin, German Environment Minister, S. Kakahel, Deputy Executive Director of UNEP, U. Müller-Helmbrecht, CMS, (from r. to l.); assisted by the Executive Secretaries of the in Bonn based Agreements.

The COP was preceded by a signing ceremony for the Headquarters Agreement between the Federal Republic of Germany, the United Nations and the CMS Secretariat. The Agreement places the CMS Secretariat on an equal legal footing with other Bonn-based UN agencies, guarantees delegates privileges and immunities and extends, with their approval, to the Agreement secretariats co-located with CMS.

A joint opening ceremony with the African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement followed the Headquarters Agreement signing ceremony. Special guests included His Excellency Jürgen Trittin, German Minister for Environment, Bonn's Lady Mayor Bärbel Dieckmann and Claude Martin, Director General of WWF International.

After the opening ceremony delegates got down to business. The Parties assessed twenty-four proposals to list species in Appendix I and 20 proposals for Appendix II. Ultimately, twenty-one species were listed in Appendix I, while 19 species and the remaining populations of a previously listed species were listed in Appendix II. Twenty-two resolutions and recommendations were adopted. Of these four address specific threats to migratory species such as oil pollution for marine species, electrocution, wind turbines and by-catch. A new resolution on impact assessment directs the Scientific Council to review existing international guidance on biodiversity impact assessment to determine the need for new supplementary guidance on migratory species.

In addition to species conservation measures, delegates took decisions on the implementation of the CMS Strategic Plan and the Information Management Plan. The implementation of existing Agreements was reported upon. The need to accelerate the development of future Agreements was emphasised. Cooperation with other international bodies and processes figured prominently. CMS will affiliate itself with the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment. In an evening signing ceremony the CMS Secretariat signed two new memoranda of understanding with the CITES Secretariat and UNESCO. In all it was a very busy four and a half days.

NEW SPECIES LISTED UNDER CMS

The Seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to CMS (Bonn, September 2002) considered 24 proposals for inclusion of species in Appendix I and 20 proposals for Appendix II. The proposals, submitted by ten different Parties, concerned species belonging to a wide range of taxa, including aquatic and terrestrial mammals, birds and fishes. As is customary, the proposals had been thoroughly reviewed by the Scientific Council at its 11th meeting, just before COP7. The Conference eventually retained 21 of the proposals for the amendment of Appendix I, and all 20 proposals for Appendix II.

Aquatic Mammals

The proposals made by the Government of Australia to list six species of great whales (the Antarctic minke whale *Balaenoptera bonaerensis*, the Bryde's whale *Balaenoptera edeni*, the Fin whale *Balaenoptera physalus*, the Sei whale *Balaenoptera borealis*, the Pygmy right whale *Caperea marginata* and the sperm whale *Physeter macrocephalus*) in both Appendices focused most of the COP's and Council's work in relation to amendment of the Appendices. Mainly on the account of gaps in information and some technical inaccuracies in the proposals, the Scientific Council could not support the inclusion of three of the proposed species (the Antarctic minke whale, the Bryde's whale and the Pygmy right whale) in Appendix I.

The Council recognised, on the other hand, the conservation needs of these species and agreed that all the proposed whale species would have benefited of transboundary cooperative action, and therefore expressed itself in favour of their inclusion into Appendix II. The views of the Council were eventually retained by the Australian delegation, which withdrew the proposals for inclusion of three species in Appendix I. The remaining proposals were endorsed by the COP. By Resolution 7.15, COP7 also called on Parties that are Range States for Antarctic minke, Bryde's and Pygmy right whales to take action to identify the status of the populations of these great whales, to determine the nature and scope of threats to those species and, in doing so, to address the key data and information gaps in the proposals for listing them in Appendix I of the Convention, with a view to revising the proposals for future consideration by the Scientific Council. Australia also expressed its intention to work towards the conclusion of a regional agreement for the conservation of whales in the South Pacific.

Two further cetacean species were the object of listing proposals. On the basis of a formal proposal by the Government of India, and as already recommended by the Scientific Council at its 9th and 10th meetings, COP7 agreed to include the Ganges river dolphin (*Platanista gangetica gangetica*) in Appendix I, the species being already listed on Appendix II. On a proposal from the Government of Australia, the Conference also agreed to list on Appendix II all populations of the Killer whale *Orcinus orca* not already listed (the Eastern North Atlantic and the Eastern North Pacific populations were already included).

The Conference also endorsed proposals for listing two sirenians, the West-African manatee *Trichechus senegalensis* and the Amazonian manatee *Trichechus inunguis*, and two otariids, the South American sea lion *Otaria flavescens* and the South American fur seal *Arctocephalus australis*, in Appendix II.

Terrestrial Mammals

The proposal to list the Bactrian camel (*Camelus bactrianus*), in Appendix I received strong support. The species, assessed as Critically Endangered by IUCN, is thought to number less than 1,000 individuals in its residual distribution area shared between Mongolia and China. The Asiatic wild ass, "a species" complex including three different specific entities (*Equus hemionus*, *E. onager* and *E. kiang*), was included in Appendix II, as were the Goitered (*Gazella subgutturosa*) and the Mongolian (*Procapra gutturosa*) gazelles, and the Saiga antelope (*Saiga tatarica tatarica*). This latter species, assessed by IUCN as Critically Endangered, is already regarded as candidate for future listing on Appendix I.

Birds

Fifteen species of birds have been newly included in Appendix I, from the Asian and the South American regions. Particularly noteworthy are the Chinese crested-tern (*Sterna bernsteini*), considered extinct and only recently rediscovered, also designated for Concerted Action under the Convention, together with the Black-faced spoonbill *Platalea minor* and the Spoon-billed sandpiper *Eurynorhynchus pygmeus*. The three species overlap in range and use similar habitats. Four species have been listed in Appendix II, including three grassland passerines from South America (*Sporophila ruficollis*, *Pseudocolopteryx dinellianus* and *Polystictus pectoralis pectoralis*), also designated for Cooperative Action, and the European turtle dove, the only listed bird from Europe and Africa.

Fishes

COP7 agreed on the proposal from the Government of Australia to list the Great white shark on both Appendix I and II. This testifies to the general change of attitude towards this giant of the sea, long feared as a ruthless killer, but now recognized as being threatened, mainly as a result of unsustainable direct and incidental fishing.



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TACKLING OIL POLLUTION

A tanker spill off the Spanish coast is the latest man-made disaster to wreak havoc with natural systems and migratory species. Oil has washed up along the coast and birds and other wildlife have been contaminated. But this was not an isolated incident. Oil pollution is omnipresent and poses a continuous threat. An unknown number of waterbirds die every year in coastal areas as a result of increasing oil pollution. Significant numbers of migratory wildlife are killed, unnoticed, every year in aquatic and terrestrial environments due to slowly progressing contamination. When animals depend on food resources that are contaminated by accidental spills of crude and refined oils, they are exposed to lethal and chronic toxicity. The negative effects on nature and on different components of biodiversity are well known.

Increased commercial shipping with dangerous cargo on the oceans could trigger a natural disaster at any time. When an oil tanker runs aground or breaks for other reasons, entire habitats for migratory species may be devastated for decades and thousands of animals perish.

Action to combat the negative impacts of oil pollution caused by human activity is overdue. The CMS Conference of the Parties (COP) adopted a resolution on oil pollution proposed by Germany, which also addresses oil pollution from onshore activities. Measures to prevent the accidental release and to regulate the intentional release of crude and refined oils are to be taken. In a first step, a comprehensive monitoring programme should be initiated. Then, governmental bodies are called upon to develop and apply comprehensive environmental protection legislation. Oil refineries should not be constructed near critical habitat for migratory species, and oil pipelines must bypass such habitats. In case of accidental oil spills, it is incumbent on the authorities to provide adequate facilities and trained personnel to minimize disastrous effects on wildlife and nature.

Government agencies are urged to arrange for immediate coordinated action with the private sector to address the effects of oil pollution. Oil-affected animals need to be treated in order to rehabilitate the individuals involved. Partnerships with industry ought to be based on the “polluter pays principle” whereby industries are required to pay for environmental damage and biodiversity loss. As habitat degradation also affects non marine-aquatic and terrestrial areas, countries must take action in order to enforce such legislation at sea, in freshwater systems and on land.

CMS could play an important role in efforts to combat the negative impacts of oil release on an international level. The actual impacts of oil pollution will be investigated by exchange of international experience and existing monitoring programmes. The Scientific Council is called upon to explore the role of CMS in relation to the future location of oil installations, taking into account the precautionary principle. Existing plans to address oil pollution will be reviewed according to the results of scientific surveys.

Oil pollution is a clearly transboundary threat that requires international cooperation. The Conference of the Parties (COP) calls upon all relevant international, regional and national organizations and bodies to join CMS’ efforts to safeguard migratory animals and their precious habitats.

MINIMISING ELECTROCUTION RISKS FOR BIRDS

Electrocution is a major mortality factor among migratory bird species. Many birds use electricity structures for perching and vantage points, nesting, obtaining shade, and sensing air currents. Electrocution occurs when the bird makes simultaneous contact with two conductors or conductor and pole.

While electricity companies in some developed countries are responding to new environmental legislation by abolishing dangerous types of poles and constructing new power facilities that are harmless for birds, there is a severe problem in other developed countries, developing countries and those with economies in transition. For example in Poland, Estonia, Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia due to the rapid economic growth in the last ten years, the network of power-lines has considerably increased in density, multiplying the electric poles that are dangerous to birds. The construction of overhead transmission lines along railway tracks, favourite perch and roosting sites for birds, is particularly dangerous. Yet these countries contain the major breeding areas, migration routes and resting sites for many threatened bird species and are important flyways of migratory Eurasian birds.

Recognizing the seriousness of the threat, the CMS Conference of the Parties (COP) adopted Resolution 7.4, which calls on governments to reduce the political risks for endangered bird species. Prepared by the Federal Ministry for the Environment of Germany together with the German Society for Nature Conservation (NABU), the resolution urges all Parties and non-Parties to neutralize existing towers and parts of medium-voltage transmission lines and associated towers constructed along the flyways of migratory birds. Furthermore the construction of new bird safe poles should help to prevent mass death of birds due to electrocution on a global scale.

Germany has already provided an example with its recently amended Federal Nature Conservation Act, which entered into force in April this year. Newly erected power poles of medium voltage range must be constructed according to a "bird-friendly" technique. Power poles, which are already in use, are to be retrofitted in order to guarantee the protection of birds against electrocution. In a further step it is recommended to divert power lines from areas that migratory birds use as flyways or breeding sites.

NABU has indicated which technical standards are necessary for construction and mitigation within the medium voltage range. A couple of years ago, electric utility companies in Germany decided to lay medium voltage power lines underground which is the best way to avoid losses. Another possibility to minimise bird electrocution is the installation of insulated cables directly attached to the pole.

The CMS Secretariat is particularly satisfied that dedicated bird conservationists have managed in the recent past to make some electricity lines, which killed large numbers of birds because the lines went through bird mainstems. CMS refers to successful projects in Slovenia and in Kazakhstan but hopes that the COP Resolution will raise awareness and encourage targeted action throughout the globe.



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For more information on bird-safe practices see the NABU publication *Caution: Electrocution! Suggested Practices for Bird Protection on Power Lines*, available on the CMS website: COP7, Pre-Session Document Inf.7.21

WIND TURBINES: NEW BARRIERS TO MIGRATION

A new resolution on wind turbines and migratory species has been adopted by the Conference of the Parties. Resolution 7.6 recognizes wind power as a renewable source of energy that is likely to facilitate a substantial reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. Wind turbines, especially those in marine areas, represent a new technique of large-scale energy production. Nevertheless they present a new, unpredictable threat to migratory birds and marine mammals as well as to their food sources and habitats. Wind turbines' actual effects on nature and on different components of biodiversity cannot be fully assessed at present. The environmental impact wind parks in offshore areas therefore need to be considered.

Increased collision risk emanates from offshore wind turbines, which are obstacles in flyways. The rotors, particularly at night or in fog, are the most obvious threat. Migratory and water birds could be exposed to collision by several hundred offshore wind parks with heights up to 150 metres. Fatal injuries may result. Migratory routes may be altered as well. Disturbed birds avoid the affected area and, as a consequence, lose feeding and resting and breeding grounds. For marine mammals and fishes, disturbance due to noise and vibrations of the sea means reduced habitats, altered behaviour and stress. Artificial magnetic and electric fields produced by electric cables potentially interfere with near- and long-distance orientation and feeding mechanisms.

Resolution 7.6 recognises the wide range of potential impacts and calls for the adoption of a precautionary approach in decision-making about wind parks. In particular, it calls on Parties to study the impacts of both offshore and onshore wind farms. This could benefit not only birds but also migratory marine mammals such as dolphins, porpoises and whales.

Parties are urged to identify areas where migratory species are vulnerable to wind turbines. A thorough environmental impact assessment is advisable prior to selecting appropriate building sites and issuing construction permits. Once potential negative ecological impacts of wind turbines on migratory species are assessed, new wind turbines are to be developed according to environmental impact data. The Scientific Council will develop guidelines for the development of offshore wind turbines.

Through this innovative resolution, CMS is providing the international legal framework for concerted action with a view to reducing obstacles for migratory species and minimising possible adverse effects of new technology on nature.

CMS LINKS TO MILLENIUM ECOSYSTEM ASSESSMENT

The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA) is seeking the nominations of social and natural scientists versed in migratory species to participate as lead authors, chapter review editors or expert reviewers in the MA process. The MA is a path breaking international assessment designed to meet decision-makers' needs for scientific information on the consequences of ecosystem change for human well-being. Available response options to address undesirable changes will be proposed.

Recognising that migratory species are components of the ecosystems being studied, and rely on the integrity of habitats across their migratory range, the CMS Conference of the Parties invited the MA to integrate migratory species and their habitats into the further design and execution of the Assessment. CMS Parties involved with the MA's sub-global and other assessments are invited to integrate migratory species considerations into their work.

The COP also urged CMS Parties to nominate experts on migratory species to the MA. The MA was invited to collaborate with the CMS Scientific Council to examine more closely how the MA could benefit CMS and its Parties. Parties and the CMS Scientific Council were invited to review the MA's outputs when they are available in 2004-2005.

The MA focuses on ecosystem goods and services, the intrinsic value of ecosystems and their biodiversity, and the consequences of ecosystem changes for health, livelihoods, food security and other elements of well-being. The MA will provide information and it will also build human and institutional capacity to provide information.

The CMS Secretariat, and the Chair of the Scientific Council, Prof. Colin Galbraith, have already entered into initial consultations with the MA Secretariat in anticipation of defining how the MA may be able to satisfy some of CMS's information and assessment needs.

For more information on the MA and the call for nominations see the MA website at <http://www.millenniumassessment.org/en/>

CLOSER COOPERATION WITH OTHER BODIES ON THE HORIZON



At its Seventh Meeting, the Conference of Parties (COP) paid special attention to CMS' relationship with other international bodies to foster synergy between the main global biodiversity-related conventions. It emphasised the need for CMS to strengthen institutional linkages with partner organizations to gain efficiencies and maximise synergy. The COP also reaffirmed CMS' interest in developing strong collaborative arrangements with other biodiversity-related instruments and international organisations.

The CMS Secretariat has been busy developing a number of cooperative memoranda and work plans with other organisations such as the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), UNESCO and CITES.

The CBD/CMS Joint Work Programme (see UNEP/CMS/Inf.7.13 on the CMS website) is the most ambitious activity yet undertaken by CMS to build synergies. It has been welcomed and endorsed by both the CBD and CMS Conferences of the Parties.

Work was guided by the various CBD thematic and cross-cutting work programmes and the work programmes of the CMS Instruments, as well as the CMS Strategic Plan (2000-2005).

Common interest areas are addressed such as protected areas, indicators, monitoring and assessments, sustainable use and public education and awareness. The joint work programme lists priority areas for action, time frames, as well as ways and means, and closer collaboration between the instruments' scientific bodies is proposed.

The joint work programme also identifies main actors responsible for undertaking the activities. CBD and CMS Contracting Parties have the primary responsibility to implement the joint work programme, with the active involvement of other actors, such as scientific bodies, the CMS and CBD secretariats and other international organisations.

CALL FOR CASE STUDIES

CMS COP Resolution 7.5 invites CMS Parties and international organisations to submit case studies on topics related to migratory species to support the CBD/CMS Joint Work Programme.

Case studies are sought on the following topics:

- Relationship between migratory species and the prevention of introduction, eradication or control of invasive alien species, pursuant to the format annexed to CBD COP decision V/8;
- Relationship between the ecosystem approach and the conservation and sustainable use of migratory species taking into consideration the migratory range approach;
- Use of migratory species as indicators of biological diversity and their use in assessment and monitoring programmes; and
- Sustainable use of migratory species and their economic value to support the development of CBD principles and guidelines for the sustainable use of biodiversity.

Case studies can describe ongoing or completed projects and should be submitted with a Case Study Summary Sheet (found on the CMS WWW site).

Case studies should be submitted no later than 31 March 2003. They will be compiled for the 9th Meeting of the CBD Subsidiary Body on Scientific Technical and Technological Advice. They can be sent by mail, facsimile, or e-mail to:

Secretariat of the Convention on Migratory Species, Martin-Luther-King-Strasse 8, 53175 Bonn, Germany, Fax: (+49) 228 815-2449, E-mail: cms@unep.de

The Seventh Meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP7) also provided the backdrop for the signing of two important memoranda of understanding.

The CMS Secretariat signed a memorandum of understanding with UNESCO. The document will provide a new avenue for work with UNESCO's World Heritage Centre and Man and Biosphere Programme on a number of scientific biodiversity programmes, activities and networks relevant to the implementation of CMS. Research, monitoring, education, *in situ* conservation and sustainable use are all possible topics for collaboration.

Many of the species already listed under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) appear on the CMS Appendices. What's more, a growing number of these are the subject of specific activities under both conventions – so many, in fact, that a memorandum was considered desirable to commit both Secretariats to strengthen their collaboration. Possible collaborative areas include policy development, institutional cooperation, exchange of information and experience, and coordination of work programmes.

When supplemented, in early 2003, by a more detailed joint work programme, the memorandum signed on 18 September 2002 will serve as a basis for further enhancing the complementarity of these two mutually reinforcing conventions.

11th Meeting of the CMS Scientific Council - Highlights



Happy after a busy and extremely successful meeting time: the CMS Scientific Council

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SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL

The Scientific Council held its 11th meeting (ScC11) in Bonn, just before COP7, from 14 to 17 September. The three and a half days scheduled for the work of the meeting turned out to be barely sufficient for the Council to go through an ambitious agenda.

The primary aim of ScC11 was to provide COP7 with scientific and technical advice on the numerous issues on its agenda. In particular, the Council considered proposals for the inclusion of 36 new species in the CMS Appendices; reviewed progress on the implementation of Concerted and Cooperative Actions for a number of Appendix I and Appendix II species, and issued recommendations for the designation of further species under these tools of the Convention. The Council also reviewed and provided input to several draft Resolutions and Recommendations and issued recommendations on several conservation projects to be funded under the CMS Small Grant Programme. The accomplishment of these tasks absorbed a substantial amount of the meeting's time.

Under the guidance of its Chair, Professor Colin Galbraith, the meeting managed to address a number of other issues directly related to the working practice and functioning of the Council, beginning reflection, and in some cases making already important decisions likely to have a profound impact on its future work.

The meeting agreed the need to improve the overall efficiency of Council meetings and to increase the effort and momentum of the Council intersessionally. Having as a basis for discussion a paper prepared by the Chair, the Council considered different options for revising its *modus operandi*, with an orientation towards the establishment of regional, taxonomic and cross-cutting working groups with clear and focussed mandates. It agreed to further develop these reflections intersessionally and to consider the issue in depth at its 12th meeting.

The meeting recommended the development of a strategy to guide the scientific and conservation work of the Council, leading to the identification of clear priorities and to serve as a reference for measuring the success of the Council's work. It was agreed to convene a workshop in order to develop a draft strategy to be considered by the Twelfth Meeting of the Council.

The Council’s practice concerning the identification and implementation of Concerted Actions for Appendix I species was substantially revised. It was also agreed to undertake a similar exercise for the Cooperative Actions for Appendix II species at the next meeting.

A new format for project proposals submitted for funding by the Convention and the procedure for their submission were finalized and recommended for future use. The meeting recommended that the Scientific Council develop a pro-active approach, indicating clear priority areas for future project funding which would target key issues for the conservation of species under the Convention.

The meeting also considered the implications for CMS of the new IUCN Red List Categories and Criteria. A position paper was finalised on this subject, of direct relevance to the future consideration of proposals for amendment of CMS Appendices.

The meeting re-confirmed Professor Colin Galbraith and Mr. John Mshelbwala in their respective offices of Chair and Vice-Chair of the Council. A special tribute was paid by the meeting to Dr. Mike Moser, who stepped down after 12 year of service as Appointed Councillor for birds, and to Prof. Vaz Ferreira (Uruguay) for their important contributions to the work of the Council and the development of the Convention. The Conference of the Parties subsequently endorsed the appointment of Mr. John O’Sullivan as the new Appointed Councillor for birds.



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CMS STANDING COMMITTEE

CMS Standing Committee met for its 24th and 25th Meetings just before and after COP7. The following members have been elected at COP7:

REGION	AFRICA	ASIA	AMERICA / CARIBBEAN	EUROPE	OCEANIA
MEMBER	1. Kenya 2. Morocco**	Sri Lanka	Chile	1. United Kingdom* 2. Ukraine	Australia
ALTERNATE	1. United Republic of Tanzania 2. Chad	Saudi Arabia	Peru	1. Monaco 2. Hungary	New Zealand

* Chair

** Vice-Chair

CMS COP7 EVENTS

Marine Turtles of Africa

Two more Range States - Cameroon and Côte d'Ivoire - signed the Memorandum of Understanding concerning Conservation Measures for Marine Turtles of the Atlantic Coast of Africa. Ambassador H.E. Melega of Cameroon and Ambassador H.E. Atse Amin of Côte d'Ivoire signed on behalf of their respective Governments. The membership of Cameroon and Côte d'Ivoire strengthens the MoU's coverage in the Gulf of Guinea and the Congo Basin, and represents an important step in CMS' drive to conserve one of the earth's oldest species groups.

Great Bustard

Germany signed the Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation and Management of the Central-European Population of the Great Bustard bringing the number of signatory States to twelve. The Great bustard's Middle European population has declined dramatically in Brandenburg and Saxony-Anhalt. The contributions of Birdlife International, the International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation and IUCN, which have signed the MoU as well, are particularly valuable. The Memorandum aims at strengthening international cooperation between Range States with a view to preventing the bustard's extinction.

Bukhara Deer

The Ambassador of Uzbekistan, H.E. Norov, signed the Memorandum of Understanding concerning the Conservation and Restoration of the Bukhara Deer, concluded in May 2002. Uzbekistan is the fourth Range State to sign the MoU and joins Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan, the three other Bukhara deer Range States. Arnulf Müller-Helmbrecht, Executive Secretary of CMS, said that the MoU was concluded in record time: "It is an outstanding example of cooperation between Central Asian countries." Dieter Schramm, President of the International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation (CIC), added his signature to the document on 26 September.



Bukhara Deer

© WWF International, Dr. Olga Pereladova

“SAVE THE ALBATROSS CAMPAIGN”

LAUNCHED BY BIRDLIFE INTERNATIONAL

The campaign to save albatrosses and petrels from becoming entangled and killed on fishing hooks was spearheaded by the Prince of Wales on the eve of the CMS Conference of the Parties.

It is estimated that more than 300,000 sea birds, are killed annually by baited hooks of long lines, which can measure up to more than 100 kilometres. This figure includes 100,000 albatrosses.

Prince Charles called upon countries to follow the example of Australia and New Zealand, which have already ratified the agreement. As by-catch remains the major threat for albatrosses, governments of Range States and those with fishing fleets operating in their territorial waters are urged to ratify the Agreement to save the symbol of the Southern Ocean from extinction. In his welcoming address, Prince Charles stated: “I have taken particular note of the recent development, under the leadership of the governments of Australia and South Africa, of an Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels. These sea-wanderers have developed their astounding powers of navigation over millions of years, but are now threatened by man in particular, by use and abandonment of non-selective fishing gear and by incidental mortality as a result of commercial fishing activities”. (Please see the entire text of the welcoming address of HRH the Prince of Wales on page 31 of this edition.)

Dr. Klaus Töpfer, the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), backed him in his plea, highlighting that the populations of many of the 24 species of albatross have been declining. For example, the Amsterdam Island Albatross has been depleted to less than 100 individuals. According to BirdLife International, 17 out of 24 albatross species are threatened by long-lining. Potential solutions include a device, that sets the baited hooks below the surface, out of reach of scavenging seabirds. As a result of a sharp increase in long-line fishing of the Patagonian toothfish in the Southern Ocean, as well as other fishing activities in the North Pacific, seabird by-catch is a truly international issue that concerns many governments. Also, only consistent internationally agreed concerted actions can tackle the problem of illegal long-line fishing.

Recognising the seriousness of these threats, the Conference of the Parties (CMS COP7) adopted Recommendation 7.2 on by-catch, reinforcing its earlier commitment to tackle the problem by way of Resolution 6.2 adopted in Cape Town in 1999.

The Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels aims to improve the conservation status of sea birds in the Southern Hemisphere, where the majority of albatross and petrel species occur. Key Range States such as Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Chile, New Zealand, Peru, South Africa and the United Kingdom have already committed themselves to rigorously conserve these species and their habitats, such as the Antarctic islands and coastal areas used by the birds to breed. It is now vital that all countries conducting commercial fishing in the Antarctic seas accept an obligation to protect these species by becoming a Party to the Agreement. The Interim Secretariat of ACAP is optimistic that the remaining three ratifications needed to bring the Agreement into force will be reached by mid-2003.

*Buller's Albatross*

© BIOS

EXHIBITIONS ACCOMPANY THE COP – CMS AND AGREEMENT SECRETARIATS LAUNCH NEW COMMON EXHIBITION

Colourful exhibitions displayed in the entrance hall of the Conference building were a major attraction at the venue of the Conference of the Parties. On the invitation of CMS, almost 30 national and international non-governmental organizations, research institutes and conservation societies informed the public on their projects by means of posters, panels, publications, audiovisual presentations and interactive media.

NABU's exhibit demonstrated a new way of constructing power lines that are safe for birds, making use of insulators to reduce risk of electrocution. IUCN addressed AEWA projects of habitat rehabilitation and waterbird management in western Africa. The World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP – WCMC) made use of its large exhibition booth to present numerous UNEP programmes and projects highlighting the International Year of the Mountain. A special UNEP poster drew the attention to the current situation of the highly endangered Mountain gorillas in the Great Lake region. The Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society, which backed Australia's proposal to list six whale species on Appendix I, distributed comprehensive fact sheets on various whale and cetacean species. *Euronatur* presented a picture series documenting the joint reconstruction of an ancient gallery by German and Polish military personnel to create a new home for bats. In addition, the Chiropterological Information Centre, Polish Academy of Sciences, presented impressive pictures of bats in action.

The *Pannonische Gesellschaft Großtrappenschutz* contributed an exhibition on the rare Great bustard. The series of unique pictures highlighted the beauty of these big birds. Although this exhibition was set up only for two days, many delegates used the coffee breaks for a longer visit. The International Snow Leopard Trust and NABU organized a common exhibition inviting support for the Asian wild cat. They displayed press kits, posters and offered picture material for TV broadcasts. John Hare and the International Camel Foundation informed on their efforts to save the last Bactrian camels. In addition to several panels on the Lesser white-fronted goose, the organisation *Aktion Zwerggans* showed an impressive film on their activities of breeding these animals and their efforts to release them in the wild. The Global Register of Migratory Species (GROMS), which the Ministry of the Environment of Germany turned over to CMS at the Conference of the Parties (COP), was on public display for the first time. UNFCCC, the Global Nature Fund, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), the Frankfurt Zoological Society, the Helsinki Commission and Wetlands International informed with their exhibitions on their wide range of activities and projects. A special exhibition on Peru's migratory species was shown by the *Instituto Nacional de Recursos Naturales*.

As a joint initiative between CMS and its related Agreements, a new exhibition illustrating the conservation activities of AEWA, ACCOBAMS, ASCOBANS, EUROBATS, the Wadden Sea Seals Secretariat and CMS was launched at the beginning of the Conference of the Parties. Attractive pictures of flagship species accompany texts that offer concise information on major threats facing the species, and their current conservation status. Separate panels present the broad range of activities of the Agreements, Action Plans and Memoranda of Understanding. This common exhibition will be taken "on tour" across the globe.

Interested organisations are invited to make use of the common exhibition of CMS and its Agreements at their own events. Any costs of freight, insurance etc. must be met by those organisations. Use of the exhibition will be granted on a "first come, first served" basis. For more information please contact Ms. Lenarz (+49-228-815 2409 or e-mail: vlendarz@cms.unep.de).

COP EVENTS



RANGE STATES CONSIDER SURVIVAL STRATEGY FOR THE SAIGA ANTELOPE

SPECIES NEWS

Since international experts met in May this year for a CMS co-sponsored workshop in Elista, Russian Federation, efforts have accelerated to improve the conservation status of the little antelope with big eyes and a bulky nose. The Saiga antelope (*Saiga tatarica tatarica*), a nomadic herding antelope that lives on the semi-arid rangelands of Central Asia, has dwindled in number in Kazakhstan, Russia, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. It is now threatened with extinction.

At the beginning of October 2002, IUCN released its update to the IUCN Red List indicating that the Saiga antelope was critically endangered. This was not completely unexpected. Rural poverty and unemployment are high in the Saiga Range States; State authority is weakening continuously. Consequently, the species has been subject to severe population declines over the last decade as poaching for meat and for export of male horns for Chinese traditional medicine has surged. Saiga horn has been used in Chinese traditional medicine for centuries, often in combination with other horn, like rhino. Now that rhino populations have declined, and there are greater national and international controls over the rhino horn trade, the exploitation of Saiga has increased.

Male Saiga are targeted for their horn. Their loss may create reproductive bottlenecks in the herds. What's more, the meat of both male and female Saiga is consumed by local communities. Whereas in 1993 the total population was estimated at over one million, it had decreased to less than 200,000 by 2000. By now less than 50,000 animals remain in the wild.

Saigas migrate long distances between summer pastures in steppe grassland and winter pastures in desert areas. In the wintering grounds males gather a harem of about 12 females during the rut. Fierce fights break out among rival males, which often result in death. Especially during severe winters the mortality rate among males rises. While male animals start their seasonal migration in spring heading for the North, females give birth in large congregations on their way to the summer pastures. The calves and their mothers then set off after the males, forming large herds of up 100,000 animals. In autumn, the Saiga starts its mass migration back south.

The Elista workshop provided the opportunity to compile, update and share the state of knowledge on Saiga. A major focus of the meeting was a draft CMS Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and Action Plan, which aim to coordinate activities to conserve, restore and, where appropriate, sustainably use the antelope.

The CMS Conference of the Parties (COP) was another milestone in the race to save the Saiga. It was one of four terrestrial mammals to be listed in CMS Appendix II by the COP upon Uzbekistan's proposal.

Immediately before the COP, the CMS Secretariat circulated the draft MoU and Action Plan to the Range States for official comment. By this time, the comments from the experts at the workshop and at the CITES Secretariat had been incorporated into the draft. The Saiga is listed in CITES Appendix II, and the species has been the subject of a CITES Significant Trade Review as well.

There has been excellent cooperation on the Saiga between various national and international organizations so far. CMS has been working closely with the Russian Man and Biosphere Programme on the draft MoU and Action Plan. The Secretariat expects to have an even better collaborative relationship with the CITES Secretariat on the Saiga in 2003 in light of the new Memorandum of Understanding between the two Secretariats signed during the CMS COP. Finally, UNEP has been exploring with the Range States and the United Nations Development Programme the possibility of developing a proposal for a project under the Global Environment Facility.



Saiga-Antelope

© CMS

SIBERIAN CRANE NEWS UPDATES

Hang glider-assisted Migration takes off

by the International Crane Foundation

Last spring the CMS website announced an exciting new project to teach critically endangered Siberian cranes (*Grus leucogeranus*) a migration route across Central Asia (go to <http://www.wcmc.org.uk/cms/>, select Siberian Crane/News). The goal was to test whether it would be possible to teach a group of captive-reared Siberian Cranes to migrate across Asia using a hang glider.

International Crane Foundation (ICF) staff and Russian scientists teamed up with Angelo D'Arrigo, a world record hang glider who was in the midst of a four year quest to learn to "fly like a bird, think like a bird" (*Metamorphosis*, www.angelodarrigo.com). Angelo designed a hang glider to climb in thermals at the same rate as the cranes. He uses a small "mosquito" engine, to take off and land in short distances on rough terrain and to alter his speed, allowing him to stay with the flock.

The Oka Crane Breeding Center in Russia constructed isolation pens and trained six Siberian crane chicks. By mid-August, all were following a human in a costume pulling a mosquito engine on the ground. Two birds had even begun to take short flights behind Angelo in the hang glider. In mid-August, the birds were transported by truck, plane and helicopter to the release site west of the Kunovat Nature Reserve on the Ob River of Siberia. The local farmers were fascinated and helped prepare a training camp.

On arrival the project was struck with a huge obstacle. The water levels had reached a 100-year record of 1.5 meters above normal. Numerous helicopter, boat, and ground explorations were conducted to seek suitable take off and landing sites amidst extensive flooding. The initial weather was often rainy with low cloud cover limiting ability to conduct local training flights and to strengthen the birds.

After two weeks, the team headed south. The distance between dry and suitable landing sites was too long for the initial flights of the inexperienced birds, so they were placed in crates and transported by boat to the next landing site. They followed the Ob and Irtysh Rivers, and then traveled overland to the Belozerski Nature Reserve near the Kazakhstan border (see map). The birds gradually increased their flight strength by taking local practice flights.

The full migration route was not attempted this first year. In spite of the challenges, valuable lessons were learned. The flight strength of the young birds steadily improved and by the time they reached Belozerski, they were flying 2-3 times per day with Angelo for the last week of the experiment. They soared and glided with agility in thermals. These highly-specialized aquatic birds also showed a helpful ability to adapt to a variety of habitats and natural foods along migration.



Three of the birds have returned to Oka. We hope that they can be transported to Iran later this winter and released at Bujagh National Park on the shore of the Caspian Sea. Here Angelo will fly with them locally to acclimate them to the site and to heighten local awareness for the plight of the species. The other three birds were released at the Belozerski Reserve where they joined four other Siberian cranes that had been reared at Oka. All seven became wary of humans and departed south with the wild cranes.

For more information, see the following websites:

<http://www.savingcranes.org/SCFC/NewsBriefs.htm>

<http://www.angelodarrigo.com/htm/eng/sib.htm>

<http://www.fondsterkh.yamal.org> (Russian language only)

GEF Grant Approved

ICF and CMS are pleased to announce the approval of a Global Environment Facility (GEF) grant on “Development of a Wetland Site and Flyway Network for Conservation of the Siberian Crane and Other Migratory Waterbirds in Asia”. GEF will contribute a total of US\$10 million over a 6-year period. An additional US\$12.7 in co-financing has been committed. The project will be carried out by ICF, under the aegis of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and in cooperation with CMS, and the Governments of China, Islamic Republic of Iran, Kazakhstan and Russian Federation. The project will focus specifically on the conservation of the international network of wetlands upon which the Siberian crane depends, together with a wide range of other wetland biodiversity. The results of this project will provide a basis to expand the wetland site networks and more widely apply the approaches that have been developed in each participating country.

The project area covers the flyways used by populations of the Siberian crane in Western- Central Asia and in East Asia, targeting key wetland sites located in China, Iran, Kazakhstan and Russia. It does not cover the Central/Southern Asian Flyway of the Siberian crane outside Russia and Kazakhstan due to the nature of the threats to the few remaining birds. Parallel activities under the existing CMS Siberian Crane Memorandum of Understanding will address this population.

Poyang Lake Research

As with breeding and staging areas, Siberian cranes are dependent upon natural wetlands for survival on their winter grounds. Climatic variations cause large fluctuations in food distribution and abundance. So the size of available wetlands must be large if they are to support crane populations over decades. The Poyang Lake system supports 99% of the world’s Siberian crane population as well as large proportions of the world’s swan geese, white-naped cranes, tundra swans and other waterfowl. Yet Poyang Lake Nature Reserve covers only 10% of the lake area so most of the wetlands that are important to these water birds are not protected.

As China develops its economic capacity, the number of water development projects is increasing and these projects have the potential of greatly impacting natural wetland systems like Poyang Lake. Better management of hydrological projects may mitigate these impacts so that they are operated to meet multiple objectives and not just single functions like flood control. CMS-funded research is now focused upon understanding how much habitat these cranes need, where those habitats are located, and what threats face these natural wetlands. If we are successful, we have the potential of protecting important wetland systems well into the 21st Century and beyond.

LIVING ON THE EDGE: THE SNOW LEOPARD



Snow Leopard

© International Snow Leopard Trust

The Snow leopard (*Uncia uncia*) spends most of its solitary life at altitudes between 2500 and 6000 meters in Central Asia's harsh and rugged mountains. Habitat destruction, decimation of their natural prey, and poaching have driven the Snow leopard to the brink of extinction. It is estimated that this species, which is included in the IUCN Red List, comprises as few as 3500 to 7000 wild individuals.

Snow leopards are well adapted to a natural habitat characterised by cold, arid and semi-arid shrub land, grassland or even barren areas. Its range covers about 1,230,000 square kilometres and includes the Himalayas in the westernmost part of China (Tibet), in Bhutan, Nepal, and India; the Hindu Kush in Northern Pakistan to Afghanistan; the Altai mountains in southern Mongolia to Russia and Kazakhstan; and other mountain ranges extending to the Kyrgyz Republic, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan.

Encroaching ever more deeply into, and fragmenting, the large cats' habitat, human activities have triggered a vicious circle which is probably the main culprit for their steady decline. Pastoralism, the dominant land use, continues to reduce the numbers of prey animals, which are scarce at high altitudes anyway, so that the cat is forced to also turn to livestock such as domestic sheep or goat, horses or young yaks for food. In retribution, herders shoot any Snow leopard they find. Seven of the 12 Range States already have more than a quarter of their total land area under permanent pastures.

The politically instable situation in the region adds further pressure. Military conflicts along the borders cutting through vital Snow leopard habitats have destroyed mountain biodiversity. The Snow leopard has been a victim of serious poaching over the past decade. In the former Soviet Union nature reserves were strictly protected: rangers patrolled in the sanctuaries where scientists had been closely monitoring the populations. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, the economic and administrative basis was scattered. Direct hunting, which is prohibited in all Range States, has become a major threat to the leopard's survival. The poachers are not only seeking the cat's magnificent pelt, which fetches high prices in the illegal international fur trade, supported by a great demand particularly in Central Asia, Russia, and Eastern Europe, but also its bones and other body parts for use in traditional Asian medicine. Border guards frequently take part in the illegal hunt to supplement their meagre incomes.

The Snow leopard was listed in CMS Appendix I as early as 1985 upon the proposal of Germany. The CMS Secretariat participated in the Snow Leopard Survival Summit in Seattle, June 2002, to provide information on the possibilities through CMS for coordinated conservation approaches across the 12 Range States. Participants were introduced to the tools of CMS: Agreements, Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) and Action Plans and how these could further conservation actions among the Range States to help prevent the Snow leopard from becoming extinct in the wild.

Five Snow leopard Range States are CMS Parties: India, Mongolia, Pakistan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. The Snow leopard's Appendix I listing requires these countries to take strict protection measures. The Snow leopard is fully protected by law in these countries and all other countries within its range. Mongolia and Pakistan have gone one step further. They are the only CMS Parties to have undertaken comprehensive management plans for the species. The Russian Federation and Nepal, non-Parties to CMS, are developing action plans as well.

Tajikistan, in cooperation with the International Snow Leopard Network, a network of more than 50 Snow leopard experts from 17 countries, took the first steps to catalyse further action for the species. It submitted a report to the 11th Meeting of the CMS Scientific Council making the case for elevating the Snow leopard to a concerted action species (see ScC.11/Doc.15 available on the CMS website). The Scientific Council's recommendation for concerted action, which highlighted that Tajikistan's scientific councillor should be the species' designated focal point, was endorsed by the Conference of Parties (COP). The contours of the concerted action have yet to be defined. However, it opens the door to CMS-funded projects. It also could lead to a CMS Agreement or MoU, with an accompanying Action Plan, that would provide an international legal framework to anchor all Snow leopard conservation activities, including the regional Snow Leopard Survival Strategy being developed by the International Snow Leopard Network.

Close cooperation between CMS and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) would ensure that trade-related measures would be well integrated into a range-wide initiative. At the recent CITES Conference of the Parties in Santiago, Chile, in November, India's proposal on the conservation of and trade in tigers and other Asian big cat species was adopted, despite China's opposition. Thus, the Snow leopard and other cats listed in CITES Appendices will benefit from the same CITES-based trade measures as the tiger.

The CMS and CITES actions are path breaking events as the "International Year of Mountains", proclaimed by the UN General Assembly, comes to a close. The CMS Secretariat will contact the Range States in early 2003 to assess the desirability of a CMS Agreement or MoU and Action Plan as a first step to save this magnificent species from extinction.



© International Snow Leopard Trust

THREATENED GIANTS: WHALE SHARKS



Whale shark

© FotoNatura, Doubilet

SPECIES NEWS

As a consequence of a substantial decline in its numbers, the Whale shark has in the last few years found a prominent place in the agenda of both CMS and CITES. *Rhincodon typus* was listed on Appendix II of the CMS by the Sixth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP) in 1999 upon the proposal of the Philippines. The same meeting also designated the species for Cooperative Action under the Convention. India and the Philippines successfully introduced a joint proposal to list *Rhincodon typus* on Appendix II at November's CITES COP12 in Santiago, Chile. Its inclusion in Appendix II will lead to regulating and monitoring international trade in whale sharks and their parts. At CMS COP7 in Bonn the Philippines announced their intention to promote the conclusion of a Memorandum of Understanding under CMS for the species, and India offered to host an international workshop on Whale shark fisheries and the international trade in Whale shark meat, sponsored by CMS.

Capture and trade for human consumption appears to be the main cause of the species' decline. Its meat and fins are highly valued for culinary purposes particularly in Asia. Notwithstanding the continuous decrease in number and the legal protection granted by a growing number of countries, the high demand and consequent high commercial value contribute to maintaining active fisheries, either legal or illegal.

This harmless plankton eater derives its common name from its dimensions which make many a whale look small: it grows to be 14 metres long, its elegantly curved tail measures up to four metres in height, it has two-metre pectoral fins, a huge mouth up to 1.50 meters wide, its skin can be up to 10 cm thick, and it can weigh as much as 15 tons. Although they are found in all tropical oceans, normally between the equator to about 30-40° latitude, many aspects of their biology are still poorly known. Normally solitary creatures, they congregate at certain seasons in certain places including the waters around the Philippine islet of Pamilacan, the Gulf of California, the coasts off Mozambique and Belize, and the Ningaloo Reef in northwestern Australia.

Scientists believe they gather either to mate or to take advantage of a seasonally rich food supply. The latter reason might at least explain the annual aggregations of Whale sharks at Ningaloo Reef. Between April and May, the corals release myriads of eggs and sperm into the water. The Whale sharks suck in the nutrient rich waters night and day, processing up to 6,000 litres of water each hour. The gentle giant is one of the three filter-feeding species of shark (the other two being the basking and the megamouth sharks) but, unlike Basking sharks, it is an active filter feeder. Whale sharks produce suction and then filter out the food, which consists mostly of plankton and also of small crustaceans, small and medium-size fish such as sardines, mackerels, and even small tuna. When feeding, the animals swim directly below the water surface, at times even in a vertical position.

Among the many aspects of the Whale shark's life that are still poorly understood, are the migration routes by which they reach the gathering places each year, the functioning of their internal clocks allowing them to arrive at a given place at the same time, or their whereabouts during the rest of the year. It is unknown whether it is animals of the same species or discrete populations coming together at the regional aggregations. There is also a lack of knowledge regarding their life span, their development until sexual maturity, and their mating behaviour.

It is precisely their mysterious congregations that prove fatal to them. Since they do not fear humans as a predator, being indifferent to humans and even letting divers touch them, they are easy prey to fishermen. Their fine camouflage, a pattern of yellow-white stripes and dots allowing them to visually melt with their environment when swimming below the water surface, fails them here. Fishermen of three villages in India killed some 1000 Whale sharks in one year alone until the government provided strict protection in August 2001 by banning and punishing the hunt and killing of the animals. In doing so, India has followed countries such as the USA, Australia, and the Philippines, which have already prohibited the trade in Whale shark products some time ago. Up until recently, the Pamilacan islet located near Bohol in the Philippines was a dead end for the gentle giants. In the brutal hunt, they were made to suffer a slow and cruel death over as long as three days: fishermen thrust a heavy iron hook into the animal's body and then pulled it ashore to cut it into pieces alive. Two years ago, the islanders started to be retrained as tourist guides to provide them with an alternative source of income. In converted fishing boats the former hunters now take tourists watching the occasional Whale shark and around eleven species of cetaceans.

The great economic potential for taking advantage of Whale sharks in a harmless way has also been recognized elsewhere. The sharks in the government protected Ningaloo Reef have become a magnet for tourists. The diving excursions yield about ten million dollars each year. Still, the fish continues to be hunted down globally. Additional pressure comes from trawls and gillnets in which Whale sharks die as bycatch. For the populations it is hard to recover from these losses because Whale sharks are extremely slow to reproduce, as are most shark species.

As a highly migratory species, the Whale shark is a shared resource, which needs international collaborative management measures to survive. The development of a Memorandum of Understanding under CMS would constitute a decisive step in that direction, providing a framework for the identification and implementation of agreed measures to halt and revert the decline of the largest fish on earth.

BATS: STUDY ASSESSES NEXT CMS STEPS

A study commissioned by the CMS Secretariat has helped the 11th meeting of the Scientific Council and the Seventh Meeting of the CMS Conference of the Parties (COP7) define CMS' next steps on bats (see ScC/Doc.7 on the CMS website). Tony Hutson, co-chair of the IUCN Chiroptera Specialist Group, and the study's author, presented his findings to the Scientific Council. Hutson was asked to: (1) identify at least one biogeographical area for a future CMS Agreement on bats (both migratory and non-migratory); (2) identify migratory bat species that could qualify for listing in the CMS Appendices; and (3) identify experts and interested organisations that could support further work by CMS on possible bats Agreements.

He found only two international programmes on bat conservation in the world. One is CMS' EUROBATS Agreement focusing on European migratory bat populations. The other is the Program for the Conservation of Migratory Bats of Mexico and the United States (*Programa para la Conservación de Murciélagos Migratorios de México y Estados Unidos de Norteamérica*).

Agreement development is one CMS' key operational tools. The Secretariat has been interested in building on the success of EUROBATS in other parts of the world. Hutson selected four regions to investigate as being possible regions within which a CMS-initiated bat Agreement could contribute significantly to bat and biodiversity conservation. South America, southern Africa, South Asia and South-East Asia made the list. They are areas where there is existing knowledge of bat migration or at least significant indication of such migration.

Hutson concluded that all regions studied include species that are appropriate for an Agreement and where such an Agreement would bring benefit to bat species other than the target species and to other aspects of biodiversity. All regions appear to have the organisational capacity to carry forward an Agreement.

Species listings help to drive conservation action under CMS. Apart from the species included in EUROBATS, only one bat species is included in the CMS Appendices. This is *Tadarida brasiliensis* (family Molossidae), a widespread New World species included in Appendix I. This is despite the fact that of the world's approximately 1100 bat species, about 22 percent are considered threatened, and a further 25 percent are considered near threatened. Hutson concluded that seven additional species could be potential candidates for listing in CMS Appendices. These are *Eidolon helvum* (Appendix II), *Pteropus vampyrus* (I), *Choeronycteris mexicana* (II), *Leptonycteris curasoae* (I), *Leptonycteris nivalis* (I), *Miniopterus schreibersii* (II), *Otomops martiensseni* (II). The status of *Tadarida brasiliensis* could be reviewed.

The study and Tony Hutson's presentation were well received by the Scientific Council. They resulted in the COP encouraging the Secretariat to continue its activities in this field, including exploring the potential to develop further CMS Agreements on bats. The Scientific Council was invited to have a substantial discussion on bats at its next meeting, while Parties were invited to consider developing and submitting proposals to list additional bat species in the CMS Appendices.

As a first step to making listing proposals an interested Contracting Party may wish to submit a proposed list to the CMS Secretariat. This could then be forwarded to the IUCN Chiroptera Specialist Group for review and possible assistance for further developing listing proposals.

Your help is needed:

Tony Hutson is updating the Bats study. He would be very happy to receive information on migratory bats species throughout the world, including in the four study areas: South-east Asia, South Asia, Africa and South America. Please contact him at: hutsont@pavilion.co.uk

NEW MOU PLANNED FOR THE DUGONG

The outcome the Second International Conference on the Marine Mammals of Southeast Asia in Dumaguete, Philippines (22-26 July 2002), (see Bulletin No. 16), directly impacted the recommendations of the Seventh Meeting of the Conference of the Parties. COP7 delegates adopted a recommendation on the regional coordination for small cetaceans and dugongs of Southeast Asia and adjacent waters, and another recommendation towards the conclusion of a Range State Agreement for Dugong conservation. The species is listed in Appendix II of CMS and spans nearly 40 riparian countries and territories of the Indian and Pacific Oceans.

Dugongs inhabit shallow, tropical and subtropical coastal and inland waters throughout the Indo-Pacific region. The so-called sea cows are more closely related to elephants than to other marine mammals, such as whales and dolphins. Their closest aquatic relatives are the manatees, which inhabit similar habitats in the Atlantic region. Dugongs can grow up to three metres and may weight as much as 400 kilograms. They swim using their whale-like fluked tail and they rely on their front flippers for balance and turning. Unlike other aquatic mammals such as some whales, dolphins and porpoises, Dugongs cannot hold their breath under water for a very long time. They must surface frequently to breath. Dugongs have poor eyesight but acute hearing. They find and grasp sea grass with the aid of coarse, sensitive bristles. Males use their ivory tusks to fight each other during the mating season and to uproot sea grasses.

Female Dugongs give birth underwater to a single calf every three to seven years. Birth takes place in shallow water and the baby Dugong is able to swim to the top of the water for its first breath. The calf stays with its mother until 18-24 months of age. Dugongs reach adult size between 9 and 17 years of age, and have a lifespan similar to humans. The low reproductive rate and high investment in each offspring makes the species especially vulnerable to over-exploitation. Dugongs are slow moving and have little protection against predators. Being large animals, however, only large sharks, crocodiles and orcas are a danger to them.

Illegal and indiscriminate catch of large marine animals in South East Asian countries jeopardizes the integrity of the marine ecosystem. The sharp decline in Dugong numbers is due mainly to unsustainable mortality from human related causes. Dugongs are not only threatened by indigenous hunting for their meat, oil and the production of medicaments and other products. They are also killed incidentally in commercial fishing nets and shark nets. Moreover cetaceans and Dugongs are affected by habitat loss or degradation, pollution, and suffer lethal injuries from boat strikes.

The Conference of the Parties recommended that all Range States develop and conclude a memorandum of understanding and an action plan for the conservation and management of Dugongs. CMS calls on international organizations, NGOs and the national governments to raise public awareness and strive for better law enforcement. The Dugong has already vanished from many of its habitats in the Indian Ocean and South China Sea, and is on the brink of extirpation from the Indian Ocean off East Africa.

Worldwide, the Dugong is listed under the 2002 IUCN Red List as being vulnerable to extinction. In Australia they are protected because they are 'listed migratory' and a 'listed marine' species. All populations of the species are listed under Appendix I of CITES.

NEWS ON AEWA



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AGREEMENTS

The Second Session of the Meeting of the Parties to AEWA took place from 25-27 September 2002 in Bonn, Germany, immediately after the Seventh Meeting of the CMS Conference of Parties. Approximately 200 delegates, representing 33 Contracting Parties, 62 non-Contracting Parties and 26 IGOs/NGOs attended the conference. During an exhaustive series of positive and stimulating opening statements, it became clear that many non-Contracting Parties recognise the importance of AEWA, and have the intention to join the Agreement in the near future. With the accession/ratification of Ukraine, Lebanon, Israel and Equatorial Guinea the number of Contracting Parties grew to 37. It is expected that before the end of this year Hungary and Syria will also have deposited their instruments of accession, bringing the total number of Parties to at least 39.

The Meeting was informed on the progress made regarding the implementation of the International Implementation Priorities 2000-2004. The Secretariat secured funds, through voluntary contributions, for 12 projects of the 33 that had been listed. From the remaining projects, 11 will be included in the African-Eurasian GEF project. Regarding the latter, the meeting was informed that Wetlands International is currently finalising the full-size project brief to be submitted to the GEF Secretariat in early 2003. The Secretariat is confident that, particularly due to the generous offer made by the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany on the occasion of the opening ceremony for MOP2, to contribute an amount of EURO 1 million to this project, the full-size project of US \$12 million will be approved sometime in the second half of next year. The implementation of this GEF project could probably start at the beginning of 2004. It is clear that this initiative will mean a huge step forward in the implementation of the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar) and AEWA.

In total, 13 Resolutions and one Recommendation were adopted by MOP2. It is worth mentioning the resolutions on Financial and Administrative Matters, Contributions in-kind and the amendments to the Annexes to the Agreement.

To start with the last one, after MOP1 the Technical Committee (TC) reviewed the Annexes to the Agreement. It was recognized that listing of the species included in the Agreement as laid down in Annex II was not very consistent. For example, species with a favourable conservation status were listed, whereas other species with an unfavourable conservation status were not. The reasons for this are that when AEWA was drafted only groups of species mentioned in Appendix II to CMS could be included in the Agreement. When it entered into force, AEWA became an independent Multilateral Environmental Agreement (MEA), which meant that the MOP, as governing body, could decide to include any species. As recommended by the Technical Committee, MOP2 decided to include an additional 65 species so that the total number of species included now is 237.

MOP2 also adopted a Resolution on a provision to pay contributions in-kind in lieu of cash. So far no other MEA has made such a provision, which is meant for developing countries or countries with economies in transition that can prove they are not in a position to pay their annual contribution to the Agreement. Hopefully, this will solve the problems foreseen by some non-Contracting Parties regarding accession to the Agreement.

The budget proposal for 2003-2005 was discussed in a pleasant and constructive atmosphere. The main problem for the Secretariat is lack of staff. Currently the Secretariat consists of two full-time staff members namely the Executive Secretary and his Assistant. In addition UNON provides free of charge an Administrative and Fund Management Officer to be shared among CMS, ASCOBANS, EUROBATS and AEWA. It is clear that the support for administrative and financial issues is very limited. The AEWA Secretariat regrets that the CMS Secretariat has not been able to convince its Parties to agree to increase the number of staff members for the Administrative Unit. Taking into account that CMS will become the executing agency for the Sahelo-Saharan Antelope project, funded by the *Fonds Français de l'Environnement Mondial*, it is of the opinion that the situation will deteriorate in the near future. Nonetheless, the AEWA Secretariat is pleased that the AEWA Parties adopted the budget and agreed to recruit a Technical Officer as of mid-2004.

Furthermore, the Parties agreed to freeze the annual contributions between 1 January 2003 and 31 December 2005. This means effectively that the addition of new Parties as of 1 January next year will not lead to a reduced contribution for all Parties. Instead, the Parties agreed to set aside the contributions accrued from new Parties and gave a mandate to the Secretariat to use these contributions to finance some special projects.

Finally, the second in a series of special AEWA Newsletter issues will be published in due course. This issue will report on the outcome of MOP2. The first issue addresses the lead shot problem for hunting waterbirds in wetlands. Both issues may be ordered free of charge from the AEWA Secretariat.

WE ARE YOUR FRIENDS - BATS



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Together with the Liberian artist and producer Ernest Clinton, the EUROBATS Secretariat has produced a unique CD combining original sounds of bats with attractive music. Delegates to the CMS Conference of the Parties clapped their hands and sang along with Ernest Clinton as he performed the title track "We are your friends" live.

The CD is available from the EUROBATS Secretariat at a non-profit rate to ministries, nature conservation agencies, natural history museums, and other institutions involved with bat conservation as an attractive item for public awareness raising. NGOs may resell the CD to benefit their valuable work with bats.

At the same time the CD is being distributed to all important European radio stations. Explanations are provided on its background. It is hoped the stations will play the songs from

time to time and that listeners will be intrigued enough to ask questions when they hear that the songs are about bats and the need to protect them. The radio stations may also take the opportunity to report about bats in their countries and on the institutions that work for bat conservation.

For further information please contact us via e-mail: euobats@euobats.org



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STRONGER CONSERVATION MEASURES FOR THE BOTTLENOSE DOLPHIN



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The first ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee meeting was held in Tunis in October 2002. It was a very fruitful meeting. Participants adopted several recommendations and new action plans to implement ACCOBAMS' international priorities.

Just after the Scientific Committee meeting, efforts to support the Bottlenose dolphin shifted to the 12th Meeting of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) Conference of Parties where there was a proposal to uplist the

dolphin's Black Sea population from Appendix II to Appendix I. The proposal supported a recommendation adopted by the first session of the ACCOBAMS Meeting of Parties.

Despite very strong support by NGOs, particularly the Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society (WDCS), the proposal failed by a narrow margin in Committee I. Several delegations expressed their concern about this, while those countries that had abstained from the vote were persuaded to revise their position by a group of dedicated lobbyists who provided relevant information on the spot. As a result, the debate was reopened in the plenary with an amended proposal aimed at maintaining the species in Appendix II, but imposing a zero export quota and omitting the taxonomical specification *T. t. ponticus*. A large majority approved the amended proposal after extensive debates.

The annotation to the Bottlenose dolphin's Appendix II listing now reads: "A zero export quota has been established for live specimens removed from the wild from the Black Sea population of *Tursiops truncatus* for primarily commercial purposes". According to an explanatory note by the WDCS, this quota means that the decision taken by CITES Parties fulfils the objectives of ACCOBAMS Resolution 1.12 and highlights the synergy between CITES and the CMS family. It also supports the memorandum of understanding between the CMS and CITES Secretariats signed in Bonn on 18 September 2002 (see story this Bulletin).

The Russian Federation stated that it would join efforts with Range States and ACCOBAMS to establish a monitoring program for this population. The amendment will enter into force 90 days after the session. Up until this date, any Party may submit a reservation.

This success would not have been possible without the preparatory work of the task force created just after the CITES COP 11. We appreciate the valuable contribution of Alexei Birkun and Ada Natoli in preparing pertinent technical and scientific documents. The presence of WDCS, as well as the active lobbying of other NGOs, paved the way for the zero quota. These results are also due to Georgia's strong commitment, the support of Monaco and a number of Parties worldwide, as well as to the expert advice provided by the European Commission.

Personnel news: In September 2002, Ms Ebru Francourt, a biologist in the Turkish Ministry of Environment, was seconded to the ACCOBAMS Secretariat for a six month period. Ms Francourt is very familiar with international organizations. The Secretariat welcomes her expertise and collaboration.

ASCOBANS NEWS



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“SCANS II”

The Third Meeting of the Parties, held in Bristol, United Kingdom, in July 2000, acknowledged the need for a new abundance survey of the Agreement area as a whole. Preparations for such a new, large-scale abundance survey of small cetaceans in the ASCOBANS area, and possibly contiguous areas, (“SCANS II”) are progressing. While ASCOBANS is unable to shoulder this daunting task on its own and a concerted effort by a number of institutions will be needed, the Agreement and its Parties are contributing substantially to bringing this project to fruition.

ASCOBANS Welcomes the Bailiwick of Jersey!

On 26 September 2002, the Secretary General of the United Nations, as depositary of ASCOBANS, received the notification that the United Kingdom ratified the Agreement on behalf of the Bailiwick of Jersey.



ASCOBANS Exhibition – Now in Estonia

Our exhibition “Harbour Porpoise in Distress” will be on display at the Estonian Museum of Natural History in Tallinn until 10 January 2003. Yet another reason to visit Estonia’s lovely capital!

Meetings in 2003

As the year 2002 draws to an end, ASCOBANS is beginning to prepare for two important meetings scheduled for 2003. The 10th Meeting of the Advisory Committee will take place in Bonn, Germany, from 9–11 April 2003. Denmark will host the 4th Meeting of the Parties, which will be held in Esbjerg from 18–22 August 2003. These meetings, and in particular the upcoming Meeting of the Parties, will chart the course for the Agreement’s next triennium.

FIRST MEETING OF THE IOSEA MARINE TURTLE SIGNATORY STATES

The CMS Secretariat is pleased to announce the convening of the First Meeting of the Signatory States to the Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation and Management of Marine Turtles and their Habitats of the Indian Ocean and South-East Asia. It will be held at the United Nations Conference Centre in Bangkok, Thailand, from 22-24 January 2003. The CMS Secretariat is organizing the meeting in its capacity as interim secretariat for the MoU, in collaboration with the UNEP Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, with which the future secretariat for the Memorandum of Understanding is to be co-located.

The conservation of marine turtles, which migrate over vast distances, calls for close cooperation between the signatory States. CMS therefore considers the first meeting to be an important step for the implementation of joint activities to grant a better conservation status for marine turtles and their habitats. A Conservation and Management Plan annexed to the MoU addresses habitat protection, management of direct harvesting and trade, reduction of threats including bycatch, and information exchange.

The Memorandum, which took effect on 1 September 2001, has now been signed by twelve States: Australia, Comoros, Islamic Republic of Iran, Kenya, Mauritius, Myanmar, Philippines, Sri Lanka, United Republic of Tanzania, United Kingdom, United States of America and Vietnam

CLOSER TIES BETWEEN CMS AND CITES

The Twelfth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES, held in Santiago, Chile, from 3-15 November 2002, afforded a rare opportunity to highlight the complementarity between CMS and its sister convention.

Addressing the meeting in its plenary session, Deputy Executive Secretary Douglas Hykle drew attention to the need to elaborate a joint work programme, to reinforce the recently concluded MoU between CMS and CITES. He urged the Parties to both conventions to take account of decisions taken at the recent CMS COP7 (Bonn, September 2002) in order to ensure a consistent approach.

Of special importance to CMS, the CITES COP recognised the regional collaboration already being undertaken or envisaged within the framework of the Convention on Migratory Species for a number of species or groups. This recognition was achieved by way of a formal CITES COP decision that was drafted in collaboration with the Danish delegation, and co-sponsored by the European Union and Monaco. This excellent result augurs well for the future collaboration between the two organisations.

The decision directs the CITES Standing Committee to keep the new Memorandum of Understanding between the CMS and CITES Secretariats under review. It will, in particular, receive information from the CITES Secretariat on the steps taken to implement a more detailed work programme with CMS. Furthermore, it acknowledged that CITES initiatives for species or taxonomic groups enumerated in the decision should complement, reinforce and benefit from the regional collaboration already undertaken or envisaged within CMS. These include: Saiga antelope, Snow leopard, West and Central African populations of the African elephant, Marine turtles of the African Atlantic Coast, the Indian Ocean and South-East Asia and the Pacific Ocean, Whale sharks, Great white sharks, and Sturgeons.

SECOND INTERNATIONAL FISHERS FORUM (IFF2)

The International Fishers Forum is a unique gathering of individual fishers, industry representatives, government, IGOs, NGOs coming to together to discuss ways to mitigate by-catch in long-line fisheries. The first forum, held in New Zealand two years ago, focussed exclusively on seabird by-catch, whereas sea turtle by-catch figured prominently in the second conference (IFF2), held in Honolulu from 19-22 November. The conference was organized by the Western Pacific Fisheries Management Resource Council, which has taken a keen interest in resolving problems of fisheries interactions with marine species.

CMS Deputy Executive Secretary, Douglas Hykle, and John Cooper (South Africa) were invited as keynote speakers on the topic of "International Agreements/National Approaches" in relation to by-catch mitigation for sea turtles and seabirds, respectively. There was a good mix of informative presentations, frank discussions with industry representatives, and stimulating brainstorming sessions about how to tackle this persistent problem.

Generally speaking, a consensus is emerging that there are workable mitigation techniques for seabirds, and these are gradually being taken on board by fishers and are being implemented with success. At present, however, a comparable "technological fix" for sea turtles remains elusive. Experimentation is continuing, though, with several promising avenues being actively pursued — among them, gear and bait modification. An expert international workshop to be held in early 2003 will focus more closely on this important ongoing research.

At the close of the meeting, participants adopted a resolution which, among other things, invites CMS to consider how best to reflect the findings of the Forum in the further development of existing and planned instruments for the purpose of conserving marine turtles and seabirds on a global scale.

NEW PARTIES AND UPCOMING ACCESSIONS TO CMS

With the accession of Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, the number of Parties to CMS has risen to 80 since the publication of the last Bulletin.

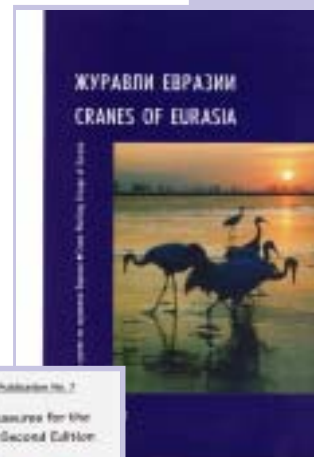
Libya is located in northern Africa, between Tunisia and Egypt. Whereas a Mediterranean climate prevails along the coast, its heartland is extreme desert. Natural fresh water resources are therefore very limited. A large underground pipeline network, the "Great Man-made River Project", is under construction to bring water from large aquifers under the Sahara to coastal cities.

Libya hosts 20 migratory species currently listed in CMS Appendix I, and more than 90 species listed in Appendix II. Of particular interest to CMS, Libyan coasts offer important nesting beaches for the Mediterranean population of the Loggerhead sea turtle, *Caretta caretta*. The country still holds significant populations of endangered Sahelo-Saharan Antelopes, notably the Slender-horned Gazelle, *Gazella leptoceros*, and the Dorcas Gazelle, *Gazella dorcas*. Libya also has important staging, breeding and wintering sites for a number of bird species migrating across the Mediterranean between Eurasia and Africa. These include the Lesser kestrel, *Falco naumanni*, and the Ferruginous duck, *Aythya nyroca*, both listed in Appendix I and II and benefiting from concerted actions under the Convention.

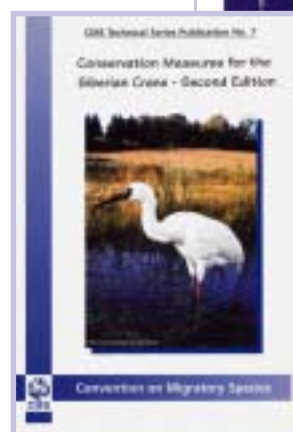
On the occasion of the 7th Conference of the Parties to CMS, representatives of several non-Parties informed the Meeting, in their opening statements, about the status of the process of accession to CMS. In some cases, plans are still under consideration, but in others the procedure are quite advanced. Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, Syria, Viet Nam and Yemen indicated that ratification/accession process is already well under way. Burundi, Islamic Republic of Iran, Liberia and East Timor expect to accede to the Convention in about two years time. The Secretariat would be very pleased to welcome these countries at the next COP as new Parties to CMS!

NEW PUBLICATIONS

“Cranes of Eurasia” is the title of the first volume of the Crane Working Group of Eurasia, which was published in Moscow this year. The bilingual (English – Russian) publication reflects the interest of ornithologists in crane studies and provides for a comprehensive scientific exchange between Russian-speaking experts on the current status, distribution and conservation of cranes. The range of issues in the collection of articles and the survey’s geographical range are very broad. The latter stretches from Europe, across Siberia and Central Asia to the Far East of Russia. Breeding of rare crane species and their reintroduction into nature for restoration of already extinct populations have a high priority.



“Conservation Measures for the Siberian Crane” (2nd edition) is the latest publication in the CMS Technical Series. Its main focus is on the Memorandum of Understanding concerning Conservation Measures for the Western, Central and Eastern Populations of the Siberian Crane. Although scientific knowledge about the birds’ migratory behaviour is still incomplete, undiscovered breeding, stopover and wintering areas might point the way for its future survival. The report of the Fourth Meeting of Range States, held in Wisconsin in May 2001, as well as country reports of seven Range States, is included in the publication. This volume is available from the CMS Secretariat.



A review report on small cetacean distribution, behaviour, migration and threats, prepared by Prof. Boris Culik under consultancy to CMS, is being made available on the CMS Web Site. It constitutes a revised version of a report produced by the same author in 2001. This was originally presented to the Tenth Meeting of the CMS Scientific Council and distributed to selected experts for a first review. The present document incorporates comments received and takes into account new information appearing in the literature since then. The purpose of making it available online at this stage is to submit it for review by a wider audience, in order to obtain further comments and suggestions. The report covers species of the order Cetacea, suborder Odontoceti with the exception of the Sperm Whale *Physeter macrocephalus*. It is organised in individual species

accounts, summarizing available information on the distribution, population, biology and behaviour of relevance for the conservation of the species, migration, threats, and recommendations on research and conservation needs for the species.

The Government of Germany, in its capacity as Depositary to the Convention, announced in its report to COP7 that the Convention text will be made available in all seven languages. With the collaboration of the CMS Secretariat the English, French, Spanish, German, Arabic, Chinese and Russian versions will be posted on the CMS website, and a brochure will be produced as well. It is hoped that this positive development will facilitate the accession of new Parties to the Convention.

NEWS ON SEAL MORTALITY IN DENMARK

Editor's note

With reference to the coverage of the phocine distemper epidemic among seals in our previous CMS Bulletin, 21,000 dead common seals have been registered to date in the Danish-Swedish-Norwegian Kattegat/Skagerrak area, the Limfjord, the Baltic Sea, the Wadden Sea and the North Sea. With the onset of winter, it appears the epidemic is over. The population is not at risk of becoming extinct. For more information please see Wadden Sea Newsletter 2002 at website: <http://cwss.www.de>



Common Seal

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WELCOMING ADDRESS OF HRH THE PRINCE OF WALES TO CMS COP7

HRH The Prince of Wales honored the Conference with the following welcoming address:

"The Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals, or simply the CMS, has for more than 20 years now been a splendid champion of those species, often especially vulnerable, which cross and re-cross the planet on their regular migrations. In carrying out this work, the Convention was one of the first of a handful of global treaties that focus on the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and play a major role in helping to maintain the natural base of human life. For these reasons, the CMS deserves the full support of us all, and I am delighted to be able to send this message of support at the beginning of its Seventh Meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

The CMS came into being thanks to the leadership of the Federal Republic of Germany, with the mandate of the United Nations Environment Programme and with the assistance of the World Conservation Union. Germany, and the city of Bonn, have continued to make a generous commitment to the Convention, acting as the Depositary, housing the Secretariat since its establishment in 1984 and hosting the first Meeting in 1985. Now the Conference of the Parties has returned to the city of Bonn once more, and I am confident that its business will prosper as a result.



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So, what has been achieved in these 20 years or so? Clearly, a great deal. We have only to look at the several Agreements reached under the Convention, and the direct conservation action that they have enabled. As one example, I would cite the Agreement on the Conservation Seals in the Wadden Sea – that biologically rich, marine area shared by Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands. In the late 1980's, the Agreement played a vital role in helping to control the ravages of distemper, which regularly affects this population of seals. Indeed, the continuing efforts of the Agreement are needed again now as the disease has recurred this year.

(continued)

Executive Secretary of CMS, A. Müller-Helmbrecht, congratulates HRH The Prince of Wales to the receipt of the EURONATURE Environment Award 2002, Lübeck, Germany, 11th June 2002.

(continued)

Other successful Agreements covering mammals, concluded over the years, are those on European Bats and on Small Cetaceans of the Baltic and North Seas, and these are acting as models for the creation of regional agreements in other parts of the world, such as an Agreement on the Cetaceans of the Mediterranean and Black Seas.

Birds have certainly not been neglected. The African Eurasian Waterbird Agreement is the largest and most important instrument of flyway conservation worldwide, and a model of how an international treaty can gain momentum in its implementation. Its second Meeting of the Parties will follow immediately on from this meeting of its parent convention here in Bonn.

I have taken particular note of the recent development, under the leadership of the governments of Australia and South Africa, of an Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels. These sea-wanderers have developed their astounding powers of navigation over millions of years, but are now threatened by man – in particular, by (and I quote the Preamble of the Agreement) “use and abandonment of non-selective fishing gear and by incidental mortality as a result of commercial fishing activities”. BirdLife International has had my support for its campaign to find solutions to these problems. I am pleased to sustain that support by calling upon the world community, and especially the governments of the Range States and those with relevant fishing fleets, with the help of international organisations, to ratify the Agreement and to get it working so as to reduce as soon as possible the factors which have brought these splendid birds to the brink of extinction.

The development of these Agreements, and a great deal of other work, relating to both endangered and non-endangered migratory species, is greatly to the credit of the Convention. There is, however, a lot more to do. Of some five thousand known migratory species, only a few hundred so far benefit from the organised, cross-border approach of the CMS. Furthermore, as we are all aware, the pressure on the natural world is growing relentlessly. According to the estimates of a recent study, the biosphere now needs a year and three months to renew what humanity takes from it in a single year. Whatever the accuracy of such estimates, I have the feeling that the trend indicated is correct. All countries should do their utmost, for the sake of our children and grandchildren, to reverse that trend and to return to a situation where we keep our consumption within the Earth’s regenerative capacity – in other words, to return to sustainability.

CMS has a prominent role to play in this, by working to guarantee the survival of migratory species. It can help to conserve vital habitats, combat over exploitation and guard against man-made obstacles along the migration routes. It can bring species back to favourable conservation status, both for their own sakes and so that they may contribute to humanity’s need, including poverty alleviation and equal and shared use of natural resources in a world at peace. Your work is of vital importance to all who care about the planet.

My best wishes go to those assembled at this seventh Conference of the Parties – from governments, international organisations, NGOs, and other bodies. Your energy and determination is urgently needed to ensure the future of our migratory species.”

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Please see regular updates on the website of the Convention
<http://www.wcmc.org.uk/cms>

CMS Calendar for 2003

We would like to draw your attention to the fact that due to intensive preparations for the Conference of the Parties, the Secretariat did not have the capacity to prepare a calendar for 2003.

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