

Convention on Migratory Species

Standing Committee 28

Oceania Regional Report

Regional input to CMS implementation report

As the regional representative, Australia approached Oceania members for input to this regional report, on their implementation of the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS).

Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP)

Australia is proud to report that since the CMS Conference of Parties 7 (CoP7), significant progress has been made to implement the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP). Having come into force on 1 February 2004, the Agreement has 11 signatories – Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, France, New Zealand, Peru, South Africa, Spain and the United Kingdom. Of these, Australia, Ecuador, New Zealand, South Africa, Spain and the United Kingdom have ratified ACAP.

The 1st Meeting of the Parties to ACAP (MoP1) was held in Hobart from 10-12 November 2004. It was preceded by an informal scientific meeting from 8-9 November, also in Hobart. At the Meeting, Australia presented an offer to host the Secretariat permanently in Hobart, which was unanimously supported. An Advisory Committee was also established at the MoP to provide scientific, technical and other advice to the Meeting of Parties; and a work program for this Committee was endorsed. A core budget was agreed for the next 2 years, along with a scale of contributions from the 6 Countries which are currently Parties to ACAP. Further ratifications by important range states are urgently required to ensure the budget is supplemented by contributions from additional Parties. The next session of the Meeting of the Parties to ACAP will take place late in 2006.

Migratory waterbird conservation

Australia with the Government of Japan and Wetlands International has been progressing development of a migratory waterbird partnership initiative in the East Asian – Australasian region under auspices of the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development. The partnership builds on the Asia-Pacific Migratory Waterbird

Conservation Strategy and its component action plans for Anatidae, cranes and shorebirds. It will include activities to conserve these and other migratory waterbird species groups. All countries in the East Asian – Australasian flyway were approached to be involved in partnership discussions held in the Republic of Korea in November 2004. The Australian government is providing secretariat to a working group responsible for drafting a partnership text and action plan which will be finalised in late 2005.

South Pacific Marine Mammal Memorandum of Understanding

Australia and New Zealand strongly support the development of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for marine mammal conservation in the South Pacific under the CMS. The second workshop on CMS and Marine Mammal Conservation in the South Pacific held in Apia, Samoa, March 2004 established a drafting group for the MoU, and agreed to use the existing Secretariat for the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) action plan for whales and dolphins as the basis of an action plan under the CMS MoU. Australia and New Zealand assisted in the preparation of a draft MoU that is serving as the basis of discussion for the development of a final MoU. Some issues to be resolved before the adoption of the MoU include geographical and species coverage of the MoU and the status of Territories in any future arrangement under CMS. Australia and New Zealand remain committed to the development of a mechanism under the CMS to assist Pacific Island states in any initiatives for the conservation of marine mammals in the South Pacific.

Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation and Management of Marine Turtles and their Habitats of the Indian Ocean and South East Asia & National Turtle Recovery Plan

In Australia, all marine turtles are listed as threatened under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act). The Recovery Plan for Marine Turtle in Australia was made by the Australian Government Minister for the Environment and Heritage, in July 2003, to assist marine turtle population recovery. The Recovery Plan aims to reduce turtle mortality, improve monitoring of populations, protect nests and habitats, and collaborate with neighboring countries with the overall objective of improving populations of marine turtles to a level where they are no longer threatened.

Australia is a signatory state of the IOSEA Turtle MoU and as such works with neighboring countries to implement the IOSEA Conservation and Management Plan. The Australian Government provides financial support for Secretariat operations and pledged funds to promote the 2006 Year of the Turtle campaign, including on-ground actions. The Australian Government has also provided travel assistance to non-signatory developing countries and the Chair of the Advisory Committee to attend the meeting of the signatory states.

Developing a Regional Dugong Arrangement

Australia is making arrangements to sponsor an Indian-Ocean South East Asian (IOSEA) dugong conservation workshop. The workshop is to be held in Thailand in late August. The aim of the workshop is to develop a non-legally binding Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for dugong conservation, similar to the IOSEA Turtle MoU. The development of such an arrangement would fulfill Resolution 7.7 and Recommendations 7.1 and 7.5. Australia requests assistance from the CMS Secretariat to help dugong Range States develop an IOSEA dugong conservation arrangement.

Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Fauna and Flora (CITES) listing of great white shark

The great white shark is listed on Appendix I and II of the CMS. Australia is therefore proud to have jointly nominated the great white shark to Appendix II of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Fauna and Flora (CITES). The listing, which took effect in October 2004, imposes strict conditions on CITES Parties wishing to trade in great shark products such as fins, teeth and jaws. Protecting the great white shark from being indiscriminately targeted for trade complements the species' listing under the CMS and gives this formidable creature a fighting chance of survival in the wild.

New Zealand is currently revising its legislation to come into line with both the CMS and the new listing under CITES with regard protection for great white sharks. It is envisaged that the great white shark will receive full protection within New Zealand waters and trade restrictions before the end of 2005.