

## 3<sup>d</sup> Meeting of the Sessional Committee of the CMS Scientific Council (ScC-SC3)

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### REPORT FROM THE SECRETARIAT ON IMPLEMENTATION OF COP12 RESOLUTION AND DECISIONS ON THE CONSERVATION OF AFRICAN-EURASIAN VULTURES

*(Prepared by the Secretariat)*

**Summary:**

CMS Resolution 11.14 on the *Programme of Work on Migratory Birds and Flyways* established a mandate to develop a species action plan for all African-Eurasian Vultures. The Multi-Species Action Plan to Conserve African-Eurasian Vultures (Vulture MsAP) was developed in the triennium following COP11 (November 2014) and subsequently adopted at CMS COP12 in October 2017 by means of CMS Resolution 12.10.

The present document reports on developments after COP12, fulfilling a requirement of CMS Decision 12.39.

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### Background

1. CMS Resolution 11.14 on the *Programme of Work on Migratory Birds and Flyways* established a mandate to develop a species action plan for all African-Eurasian Vultures (except Palm-nut Vulture (*Gypohierax angolensis*)), under the auspices of the Coordinating Unit of the CMS Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of Migratory Birds of Prey (Raptors MOU). The Multi-species Action Plan to Conserve African-Eurasian Vultures (Vulture MsAP)<sup>1</sup> was developed in the triennium following COP11 (November 2014) and subsequently adopted at CMS COP12 in October 2017 by means of CMS Resolution 12.10<sup>2</sup>.

### Progress

2. Operational paragraph 5 of Resolution 12.10 *'[r]equests the Secretariat, through the Coordinating Unit of Raptors MOU, to facilitate continuation of the Vulture Working Group and its associated structures (Vulture Steering Group and proposed Regional Implementation Committees) and team of coordinators, including by continuing to encourage engagement, communication, cooperation and collaboration between the stakeholders, by means of (regional) meetings and workshops, subject to the availability of funds'*. Funding is urgently required to support these Coordinator roles.
3. As an interim measure, the organizations<sup>3</sup> that hosted the original four Coordinators generously agreed to continue to support these roles, but with significantly reduced capacity. Accordingly, André Botha continues as Acting Overarching Coordinator; Jovan Andevski continues as Acting Coordinator for Europe and Central Asia; Chris Bowden continues as Acting Regional Coordinator for the rest of Asia; and Masumi Gudka continues as Acting Regional Coordinator for Africa. In addition, Mohammed Shobrak (on behalf of Saudi Wildlife Authority) has agreed to act as the Regional Coordinator for the Middle East. The Coordination Team, established to support implementation of the Vulture MsAP, includes the aforementioned Acting Coordinators plus: Roger Safford (BirdLife International), José Tavares (Vulture Conservation Foundation), Nicola Crockford (Royal Society for the Protection of Birds); and Jenny Renell and Nick P. Williams (Coordinating Unit of the CMS Raptors MOU).
4. In February 2018, the Coordinating Unit wrote to all 128 Range States covered by the Vulture MsAP, members of the Vulture Working Group, other stakeholders and interested parties inviting contributions via an online Questionnaire in both English and French. The aim of this Questionnaire was to gather information to provide a concise but comprehensive update on conservation activities completed within the last 12 months, or planned over the next three years (2018–2020) for any of the 15 species of Old World vultures covered by the Vulture MsAP. More than 100 responses were received but available resources have not yet enabled these to be fully analysed. However, the results will be used to inform development of a draft Vulture MsAP Implementation Plan 2018-20.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.cms.int/raptors/en/publication/multi-species-action-plan-serve-african-urasian-vultures-vulture-msap>

<sup>2</sup> CMS Res.12.10 <http://www.cms.int/en/document/conservation-african-urasian-vultures-0>

<sup>3</sup> Endangered Wildlife Trust (South Africa), Hawk Conservancy (UK); Vulture Conservation Foundation (Switzerland); Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (UK); and BirdLife International, respectively.

5. In addition, the Coordination Team has begun developing a suite of Flagship Project Proposals, which will be shared with the Vulture Steering Group in due course. These too will be integrated into the planned draft Vulture MsAP Implementation Plan 2018-20. In the meantime, several partners and stakeholders are already developing project funding proposals aimed at implementing various aspects of the Vulture MsAP.
6. Decision 12.38 states: *'The Secretariat shall convey this Decision to the secretariats of other multilateral environmental fora, in particular the United Nations Environment Programme, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), seeking their support, contributions, cooperation and collaboration in the implementation of the Vulture MsAP, subject to the availability of resources'*. This task has been completed.
7. According to CMS Decision 12.39, *'[t]he Secretariat, through the Coordinating Unit of the Raptors Memorandum of Understanding, shall report to the next Meeting of Signatories of the CMS Raptors Memorandum of Understanding and subsequent meetings of the Sessional Committee of the CMS Scientific Council'*. This report meets this requirement.

#### Next steps

8. The *Summit for the Flyways* taking place on 23-26 April 2018 in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, will be an opportunity to promote the Vulture MsAP. This event, convened by BirdLife International and hosted by the International Fund for Houbara Conservation, incorporates a full day allocated to the Vulture MsAP (Tuesday, 24 April 2018). The Coordination Team is actively supporting BirdLife International in preparing the programme. The conservation of Old World vultures is also on the agenda of the Annual Meeting of the Raptor Research Foundation, scheduled to take place in November 2018 in South Africa.
9. The Coordinating Unit of the Raptors MOU is in the process of developing Terms of Reference for a consultancy to assist in developing a draft Vulture MsAP Implementation Plan 2018-20. The aim is to convene the Vulture Steering Group via an international online teleconference later in the year, as soon as a draft Implementation Plan is available.

#### Recommended Actions

10. The Sessional Committee is recommended to:
  - a) Take note of this progress report, including plans for further action in advance of CMS COP13 and ScC-SC4;
  - b) Referring to Decision 12.37, engage with the Coordinating Unit of the Raptors MOU, as and when requested.