

**Range States Meeting on the Institutional Framework and
next steps for the Central Asian Flyway**

New Delhi, India, 02 – 04 May 2023

UNEP/CMS/CAF4/Doc.5

**ROADMAP FOR AN UPDATE OF THE CENTRAL ASIAN FLYWAY ACTION PLAN FOR THE
CONSERVATION OF MIGRATORY WATERBIRDS AND THEIR HABITATS**

(Prepared by the CMS Secretariat)

Summary:

This document outlines the steps needed for updating the Central Asian Flyway Action Plan for the Conservation of Migratory Waterbirds and their Habitats. It summarizes steps taken to date and provides additional information to support the CAF Range States in their decision to determine the Action Plan's scope with regard to taxa and types of habitats beyond waterbirds, its alignment with other existing plans and frameworks, and implementing its actions.

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Background

1. The conceptual basis for developing the currently existing Central Asian Flyway Action Plan for the Conservation of Migratory Waterbirds and their Habitats was discussed at an international workshop in the frame of the Tashkent Meeting on the Central Asian-Indian Flyway¹, held in 2001. At that meeting, official Range State delegates and representatives from various intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations reviewed and commented on the first draft of the Action Plan.
2. This draft Action Plan was further developed by Wetlands International on behalf of the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) and the African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement (AEWA), and was subject to further discussions and amendments at the Meeting to Conclude and Endorse the Proposed Central Asian Flyway Action Plan to Conserve Migratory Waterbirds and Their Habitats² (New Delhi, 2005).
3. Following the New Delhi meeting, and based on the inputs received, Wetlands International in consultation with the CMS Secretariat, incorporated the comments and added some pending technical information provided by the Range States. In June 2005, Wetlands International, in consultation with the CMS Secretariat, produced the document "[Proposals to implement the Central Asian Flyway Action Plan to conserve migratory waterbirds and their habitats: Options for consideration](#)", that already, in its Annex I, provided a list of priority actions that could be implemented once the action plan would be approved.
4. Through Resolution 8.5 *Implementation of Existing Agreements and Development of Future Agreements*³, the Conference of the Parties to CMS at its Eighth Meeting (COP8, Nairobi 2005) welcomed the finalization of the Action Plan. In January 2008, after final consultations with the Range States, the [Action Plan](#) was adopted⁴.
5. Furthermore, Resolution 12.11 *Flyways*, adopted by the Conference of the Parties at its 12th Meeting (Manila, 2017) welcomed "the kind offer of the Government of India to develop, in consultation with the CMS and AEWA Secretariats and Central Asian Flyway (CAF) Range States, a mid-term plan for further development and operations of the Central Asian Flyway Action Plan for Waterbirds."
6. CMS COP13 (Gandhinagar, India, 2020), through Resolution 12.11 (Rev.COP13) *Flyways*, welcomed the progress made by the Government of India to establish the institutional framework and to develop a mid-term plan for further development and operations of the CAF Action Plan for the Conservation of Migratory Waterbirds and their Habitats, in consultation with the CMS and AEWA Secretariats and the Range States. CMS COP13 also congratulated India for its National Action Plan on the CAF for migratory birds, and for progress in implementing the Action Plan.

¹ Tashkent Meeting on the Central Asian-Indian Flyway: <https://www.cms.int/en/meeting/tashkent-meeting-central-asian-indian-flyway>

² <https://www.cms.int/en/meeting/meeting-conclude-and-endorse-proposed-central-asian-flyway-action-plan-protect-migratory>

³ Repealed; superseded by Resolution 12.8 *Implementation of Articles IV and V of the Convention*: <https://www.cms.int/en/document/implementation-articles-iv-and-v-convention>

⁴ See Document CMS/CAF3/Doc.5 Developments since last meeting (New Delhi 2005): <https://www.cms.int/en/document/developments-last-meeting-new-delhi-2005>

7. With a view to guiding implementation during the intersessional period, COP13 adopted the action-oriented Decision 13.46 c)⁵, requesting the Range States of the CAF to:
- “contribute to an inter-governmental meeting of the Range States of the Central Asian Flyway organized by the Government of India and the CMS Secretariat to agree on the modalities of the framework by COP14, to update the CMS Central Asian Flyway Action Plan for the Conservation of Migratory Waterbirds and their Habitats, and to consider supporting the process with resources, as applicable.”*
8. Since COP13, several activities have been undertaken to foster international cooperation in the CAF and identify the needs of the Range States in the conservation and sustainable management of migratory birds and their habitats.
- a. On 6-7 October 2021, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India, with support from the CMS Secretariat, organized an online workshop to initiate dialogue and gather support from CAF Range States to share information on activities taking place within CAF and to take forward the CMS Decision 13.46.
 - b. In February 2022, the CMS Secretariat invited all Range States to participate in an online questionnaire to further explore interests, priorities and needs with regards to capacity-building and shape the planning of the CAF process and for the CAF Action Plan. Five Range States (Georgia, Iraq, Maldives, Pakistan, Sri Lanka) submitted their responses to the Secretariat.
 - c. From July 2022 to March 2023, BirdLife International (BLI) successfully raised resources and launched an online questionnaire for compiling a Conservation Situation Analysis of the CAF Region. The result of this consultation is available as document UNEP/CMS/CAF4/Doc.3.4.
 - d. In March 2023, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India, in cooperation with the CMS Secretariat, announced the 4th Meeting of the CAF Range States, to take place in New Delhi, India, from the 2nd to the 4th of May 2023. This meeting is foreseen to be a major step forward in implementing the CMS COP Decision 13.46 by discussing the results of the CAF situation analysis produced by BLI, agreeing on conservation priorities and measures to support Parties with the implementation of conservation action for migratory birds and their habitats and further strengthening the implementation of CMS and its avian-related instruments. Concrete steps needed to produce an update of the CAF Action Plan for the Conservation of Migratory Waterbirds and their Habitats should be considered.

The need to update the existing Action Plan

9. The existing Central Asian Flyway Action Plan for the Conservation of Migratory Waterbirds and their Habitats developed in 2005 only considered waterbird species. More specifically, it assessed the conservation status and threats of 280 migratory waterbird populations of 182 species. Overall, the Central Asian Flyway is home to 606 species of migratory birds of 84 families, which include populations that are migratory. The CAF Action Plan on waterbirds has not been revised since its endorsement in 2008. As the updated Action Plan should serve as an effective tool guiding implementation under a new institutional CAF framework and its governance mechanisms, it is necessary not only to update information on the status of species, populations, habitats and threats according to the current situation, but also determine the Action Plan’s scope with regard to taxa and types of habitats, potentially beyond waterbirds, and its alignment with other existing plans and frameworks, namely AEWA, the Raptors MOU and the Action Plan for Migratory Landbirds in the African-Eurasian Region (AEMLAP).

⁵ See <https://www.cms.int/en/page/decisions-1341-1346-flyways>

10. Because of this need to adjust the scope of the Action Plan, the range and status of habitats and threats assessed in the current CAF Action Plan need to be revised. It is expected that a good proportion of the proposed actions for waterbird habitats and associated threats will still be valid, but additional conservation actions and identified threats will be added.
11. An updated Action Plan would set the agenda for enhanced regional environmental cooperation across the CAF Range States, with the final objective of improving the conservation status of its migratory species. A renewed Action Plan needs to build upon the work already defined in the 2005 document, but also incorporate the priorities and key actions identified by other CMS instruments, other Multilateral Environmental Agreements, the work of the development agencies and that of international conservation NGOs.
12. A new CAF Action Plan to conserve migratory birds and their habitats would provide a flyway level mechanism to:
 - a) Build on, coordinate and complement existing conservation measures taken by Range States individually and bilaterally,
 - b) Provide opportunities to link existing national and local activities done by governments and non-government organisations,
 - c) Provide a framework for coordinated new activities to be developed and implemented at flyway level, and
 - d) Promote regional, national and international cooperation, with a special focus to benefit from synergies that could integrate and strengthen biodiversity values into sustainable development policies.

Proposed next steps towards an updated CAF Action Plan

13. The definition and implementation of a CAF Action Plan (CAF AP) is linked to the agreement of the Range States on the Institutional Framework for the CAF (see Document UNEP/CMS/CAF4/Doc.4) and to the constitution of the CAF Secretariat.
14. As an initial step, the CAF Secretariat will be commissioned with preparing the First Draft of the updated CAF AP. To do so, it will combine the three key CAF Flyway Documents produced so far: a) the existing CAF AP b) *Proposals to implement the Central Asian Flyway Action Plan to conserve migratory waterbirds and their habitats: Options for consideration*⁶ and c) the Central Asian Flyway Situation Analysis report elaborated by BirdLife International (See Document UNEP/CMS/CAF4/Doc.3.4). The CAF Secretariat will also incorporate any other relevant scientific documents or reports published that could be incorporated into this Draft.
15. The resulting document, Draft 1 of the updated CAF AP, will be subject to consultation with all CAF Range States and CAF stakeholders (such as other CMS instruments, other MEAs, NGOs, etc). Once the first round of consultations is completed, Draft 2 of the updated CAF AP will be produced.
16. Draft 2 of the updated CAF AP will be subject to final discussion at, ideally, an in-person meeting of Range States, organized by the CAF Secretariat. The final outcome of this meeting will be an approved updated CAF AP.
17. Diagram 1 below summarizes the steps proposed and suggests a potential timeline including all necessary actions.

⁶ See https://www.cms.int/sites/default/files/document/doc_07_Implementation_Plan_insession_0.pdf

Recommended actions:

18. The meeting is recommended to
- a) take note of and comment on this document, as appropriate;
 - b) review the proposed next steps for developing and implementing the updated CAF Action Plan.
 - c) agree on a proposed timeline for the steps to be taken to update the CAF Action Plan and provide further guidance on the way forward, as appropriate.

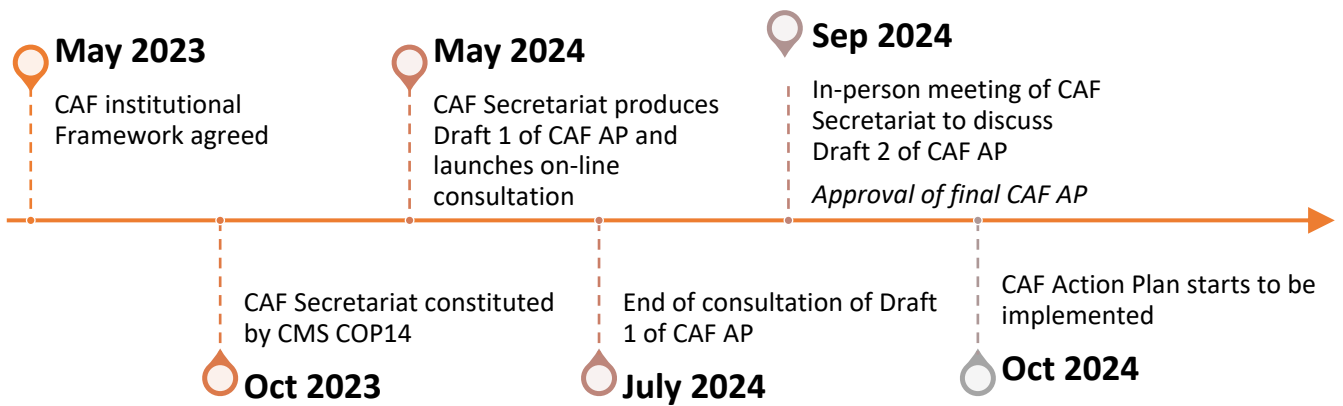


Figure 1. Proposed next steps towards the update and implementation of the CAF Action Plan.