

**JOINT MEETING OF THE CMS INTERGOVERNMENTAL TASK FORCE ON  
ILLEGAL HUNTING, TAKING AND TRADE OF MIGRATORY BIRDS IN THE  
EAAF AND THE EAAF TASK FORCE ON ILLEGAL HUNTING, TAKING AND  
TRADE OF MIGRATORY WATERBIRDS**

*(Brisbane, Australia, 12 March 2023)*

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**PROGRAMME OR WORK  
OF THE  
INTERGOVERNMENTAL TASK FORCE TO ADDRESS ILLEGAL HUNTING, TAKING  
AND TRADE OF MIGRATORY BIRDS IN THE EAST ASIAN-AUSTRALASIAN FLYWAY**

*(Prepared by the CMS Secretariat)*

Summary:

Following decisions made at the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties to CMS, the Terms of Reference for the Intergovernmental Task Force to Address Illegal Hunting, Taking and Trade of Migratory Birds in the East Asian-Australasian Flyway, was adopted through CMS Resolution 11.16 (Rev.COP13), and the Task Force convened.

This document presents a Programme of Work for the Task Force for the period 2023-2027, discussed at this joint meeting, with edits incorporating comments from members and participants.

## Background

1. The illegal hunting, taking, and trade of wild birds has caused significant population declines throughout the East Asian-Australasian Flyway (EAAF), including in endangered species. The impact that direct overexploitation has had on bird populations is still largely unknown in the EAAF, as data on many species are lacking. Additionally, legal frameworks and enforcement actions for providing tangible protection to these species are often weak. The priority need to address these issue was recognized, and the Task Force was set to be created under the mandate of Resolution 11.16 (Rev.COP12)<sup>1</sup> *The Prevention of Illegal Killing, Taking and Trade of Migratory Birds*, adopted by the 12<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Conference of the Parties of CMS.
2. The transboundary nature of migratory birds means that multilateral partnerships and a diverse set of stakeholders are needed to make effective conservation management decisions. To that end, in 2022, the Secretariats of CMS and of the East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership (EAAFP) have invited representatives of Range state Governments, NGOs, expert and technical advisory groups to join the Task Force.
3. This document presents a draft Programme of Work for the Task Force for the period 2023-2027 (see Annex), for discussion and further development and endorsement by the Task Force members. The proposed actions in this draft Programme of Work aim to strengthen the legislative framework and enforcement actions against wildlife crime, provide an opportunity to fill in many essential data gaps on hunting and other forms of taking of migratory birds, and improve communication pipelines between stakeholders for better collaboration at varying scales.
4. The development of this draft Programme of Work has benefitted from guidance developed under similar, earlier established processes and their activities and experiences, particularly from the *Intergovernmental Task Force on Illegal Killing, Taking and Trade of Migratory Birds in the Mediterranean (MIKT)*<sup>2</sup>. However, nothing in this preliminary draft Programme of Work should be taken for granted and all its content will be discussed and amended as necessary by the members of the Task Force.

## Recommended action:

5. A meeting is recommended to review and comment on the annexed draft, as appropriate, with a view to agree on a Programme of Work for the Task Force.

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<sup>1</sup> Revised by COP13.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.cms.int/en/taskforce/mikt>

## ANNEX

**PROGRAMME OR WORK 2023- 2027  
OF THE  
INTERGOVERNMENTAL TASK FORCE TO ADDRESS ILLEGAL HUNTING, TAKING  
AND TRADE OF MIGRATORY BIRDS IN THE EAST ASIAN-AUSTRALASIAN  
FLYWAY**

1. The priority actions in this Programme of Work (POW) are based on the knowledge established and needs for action with regard to the issue of illegal hunting, taking and trade of migratory birds (ITB) in the East Asian-Australasian Flyway region, as identified by relevant studies and presented in peer-reviewed publications.<sup>3</sup>
2. Illegal hunting, taking, and trade is a shared issue and the implementation of the POW requires cooperation among governments, international organizations, law enforcement agencies, local communities, the responsible stakeholders, and nature conservation NGOs to maximize impact.
3. The present POW includes a zero-tolerance approach to ITB<sup>4</sup>, and the adoption of a full proactive role at the national level in fighting against these illegal activities, supported by international exchange of experience and cooperation as appropriate.
4. This POW contributes to the achievement of:
  - a. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) particularly goal 15 related to biodiversity which sets a target to take urgent action to end poaching and trafficking of protected species of flora and fauna and address both demand and supply of illegal wildlife products;
  - b. Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, particularly its Goal A and Target 4.
  - c. The Strategic Plan for Migratory Species 2015-2023 and its planned update in 2023 as per CMS Decisions 13.4 (a)-(c) and UNEP/CMS/StC53/Outcome 2;
  - d. The CMS Programme of Work on Migratory Birds and Flyways 2014-2023, adopted through CMS Resolution 11.14<sup>5</sup> *Programme of Work on Migratory Birds and Flyways*, and reaffirmed through CMS Resolution 12.11 (Rev.COP13);
  - e. The Regional Plan of Action on ASEAN Cooperation on CITES and Wildlife Enforcement 2021-2025 from the ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Forestry;
  - f. The Arctic Migratory Birds Initiative revised Work Plan 2021-2025 (Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna; CAFF/AMBI)
5. The Programme of Work is divided into four themes:
  - Conservation and Monitoring – Improve understanding of the scope, scale, motivations, and impacts of illegal take in the EAAF Region
  - Legal and Enforcement Issues – Improve understanding of the legislative framework related to illegal take in the EAAF Region and providing guidance to improvement

<sup>3</sup> Yong et al. (2022) "The specter of empty countrysides and wetlands—Impact of hunting take on birds in Indo-Burma." *Conservation Science and Practice*: e212668; Heim et al. (2021) "East Asian buntings: Ongoing illegal trade and encouraging conservation responses." *Conservation Science and Practice* 3.6: e405.

<sup>4</sup> See CMS Resolution 11.16 (Rev.COP13) *The Prevention of Illegal Killing, Taking and Trade of Migratory Birds*: <https://www.cms.int/en/document/prevention-illegal-killing-taking-and-trade-migratory-birds-7>

<sup>5</sup> Superseded by Resolution 12.11 (Rev.COP13) *Flyways*: <https://www.cms.int/en/document/flyways-4>

- Education and Public Awareness – Improve level of awareness and education of illegal take in non-governmental stakeholders and the public in the EAAF Region that leads to active participation in combatting illegal take
  - Fundraising – Increasing available resources for tackling illegal take in the EAAF Region
6. A budget for carrying out POW activities will be necessary and voluntary funding to implement these is invited and welcome.
  7. The implementation of the POW will require coordination. A budget to cover the services of the Task Force Coordinator from 2024 onwards will be required.
  8. Delivery of the workplan is subject to sufficient resources for the Members and Observers of the Task Force and the Secretariats. Raising such resources is added as an important action point in the workplan.
  9. The responsible bodies specified are not an exhaustive list, remaining open to include additional ones as necessary.
  10. Progress on implementation of the POW will be monitored through meetings of the Task Force, and including through a scoreboard implemented every three years to track national trends in ITB and enforcement measures to eliminate it.

## **Acronyms**

CMS	Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals
EAAF	East Asian-Australasian Flyway
EAAFP	East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership
ITB	Illegal take of birds
NGO	Non-governmental organization
POW	Programme of Work
SMART	Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool

**PROGRAMME OF WORK MATRIX**

<b>Objective 1: To understand the scope, scale and motivations behind illegal hunting, taking and trade of migratory birds through a situation analysis of illegal take of migratory birds in the flyway</b>					
<b>Target</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Responsible Bodies + Scope</b>	<b>Timeline (2023-2027)</b>	<b>Priority</b>
1.1. The scale, drivers, and modus operandi and impacts of illegal take and the species affected are clarified in each EAAF Range state	1.1.1. Establish a baseline for scale and scope of illegal take in Range states in EAAF.	Number of countries with agreed Baseline for 2022 (or other appropriate date based on data availability and quality) Aim to use 2022 as baseline unless data availability and quality make it more accurate to use another date	National authorities, with support from CMS and EAAFP Secretariats and expert and advisory groups	2023	Core
	1.1.2. Create an information exchange platform for all Task Force Members to better understand status and trends of illegal take in the EAAF.	Online tool created in 2023  Number of communication events/meetings/materials on information exchange produced per year  Number of visits to online tool per year  Number of members reports on status and trends	National authorities, with support from relevant NGOs, expert and advisory groups, and CMS and EAAFP Secretariats	2023-2024	Core
	1.1.3. Conduct food and wildlife market surveys to identify which species are targeted and at what volume they are traded	A list of species found at food and wildlife markets is created  An estimate of volume of trade per species per market is made	National authorities, local authorities, local community leaders, with support from relevant NGOs, and expert and advisory groups	2023-2024	Core

	1.1.4. Conduct survey of mistnets and improvised traps <sup>6</sup> using a shared template and methodology	Number of countries with an estimate of approximate trapping effort	National authorities, with support from relevant NGOs, and expert and technical advisory groups	2023-2024	Core
	1.1.5. Identify hotspot sites where illegal take is most intense using collected survey data	Number of countries with a list of illegal take hotspot sites	National authorities, with support from relevant NGOs, and expert and technical advisory groups	2023-2024	Core
	1.1.6. Conduct survey of hunter motivations at hotspots for illegal take using a shared template and methodology	Number of countries with a completed survey of hunter motivations at hotspots of illegal take	National authorities, with support from local authorities, relevant NGOs, and expert and technical groups	2023-2024	Core
1.2. The monitoring of ITB is improved thanks to the coordinated action of the Task Force members	<p>1.2.1. Create an online scoreboard as a self-assessment tool to measure ITB at national level (with consideration of similar scoreboards used in the framework of CMS)</p> <p>If appropriate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Identify Range state-specific issues that require national-level focus and further development of targeted National Action Plans</li> <li>b) Develop site-specific monitoring and patrols in collaboration with local communities</li> </ul>	<p>Number of Range states endorsing scoreboard</p> <p>Number of Range states submitting completed scoreboards, with input, as appropriate, from relevant NGOs and expert or advisory groups</p> <p>If appropriate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Number of Range states with species-specific issues assessed and identified, number of Range states with species-specific working groups formed to develop targeted action plans</li> </ul>	National authorities, with support from CMS and EAAFP Secretariats, relevant NGOs, and expert and advisory groups	2024	Core

<sup>6</sup> See CMS Decision 13.30 on prevention of illegal trapping of birds through contribution to global situation analysis on production, sale, use, and regulation of mistnets and other sorts of nets for bird trapping: <https://www.cms.int/en/page/decisions-1327-1331-task-force-illegal-killing-taking-and-trade-migratory-birds-mediterranean>

		<p>b) Quantity and quality of information on site-specific issues, number and activities of site-specific teams developing targeted action plans (compared to total number of sites), quantity and quality of inputs from local communities considered as part of action plan development, number of meetings held with community leaders (target: at least once per quarter)</p>			
	<p>1.2.2. Develop and disseminate a monitoring tool kit</p>	<p>A monitoring tool kit is made available in local languages</p> <p>Number of reports produced using the monitoring tool kit per year/per country</p> <p>Number of law enforcement officers who have used the monitoring tool kit</p>	<p>National authorities, local authorities, local community leaders, with support from relevant NGOs, and expert and advisory groups</p>	<p>2023-2025</p>	<p>Core</p>
	<p>1.2.3. Establish and share a hotline and/or digital submission portal for reporting illegal take of migratory birds and information or protocol dissemination</p>	<p>Percentage of reported cases followed up with appropriate legal actions by relevant authorities</p> <p>Ratio of total illegal take cases detected as compared to number of cases detected thanks to work of law enforcement</p>	<p>National authorities, local authorities, local community leaders, with support from relevant NGOs</p>	<p>2023-2027</p>	<p>Core</p>



		Percentage of investigated cases compared to reported incidents			
	1.2.4. A centralized database of reported incidents and response by authorities is established	Number of Range states with centralized database of hunting incidents and responses	National authorities	2023-2024	High

**Objective 2: To understand and develop national legislative frameworks on illegal taking of birds that are appropriate, effective, and efficient, and to develop guidance to fill in legislative, enforcement, and sentencing gaps**

Target	Action	Indicators	Responsible Parties + Scope	Timeline (2023-2027)	Priority
2.1. All Task Force members have appropriate national legislation in place and enacted to address ITB	2.1.1. Develop guidelines on effective legislation on illegal take of migratory birds, <sup>7</sup> and disseminate to all Range states	Guidelines of effective legislation produced and available at Task Force website  Number of Range state authorities incorporating guidance into their legislation	National authorities, Secretariats of CMS and EAAFP	2023	Core
2.2. Gaps and deficiencies in existing national legislation and enforcement frameworks are identified and recommendations proposed to adequately address challenges	2.2.1. Complete an independent expert review on the status of hunting regulations related to migratory birds in the EAAF	Report produced including information on percentage (%) of Task Force member countries with adequate/inadequate legislation  Recommendations are implemented at national/international level  Scoreboard reporting indicates improved legislative regulations in place over years	National authorities, with support from CMS and EAAFP Secretariats.  Legislative reviews will require relevant experts and advisory groups	2024-2025	Core
	2.2.2. Deliver specific training workshops for members of law enforcement, the	Number of training workshops held per year.	National authorities, with support from	2024-2027	Core

<sup>7</sup> These guidelines may include examples of previous effective models of legislation for combatting illegal take.

	judiciary, and prosecutors to implement guidelines.	Survey results from course participants pre- and post-training, to test for understanding of laws and regulations around illegal take of migratory birds	CMS and EAAFP Secretariats		
	2.2.3. Develop a whitelist to distinguish between huntable from non-huntable or protected species	Number of Range states applying whitelist to update protected species lists, hunting licensing requirements, or other relevant national legislation	National authorities, with support from relevant NGOs, expert and advisory groups	2023-2024	Core
	2.2.4. Develop species or multi-species Action Plans to address ITB where appropriate.	Number of countries with National Action Plans incorporated into national legislation	National authorities, with support from relevant NGOs, and expert and advisory groups	2025-2027	Medium
2.3. Legislation on wildlife and environmental crime is properly implemented and enforced	<p>2.3.1. Develop or improve communication pipelines between government actors or law enforcement at different scales (national and local):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• establish a template reporting format and protocol;</li> <li>• create regular schedule for compiling of local incident reports (e.g. through SMART app or software)</li> <li>• conduct training-of-trainers workshops and refresher courses on reporting tools in each country to increase patrol and reporting capacity, along with nurture peer-to-peer relationships</li> </ul>	<p>At least one report completed per quarter to national authorities.</p> <p>At least one training-of-trainers workshop and one refresher course per country on reporting tools (e.g. SMART app or software) is conducted</p> <p>National authorities provide more precise data to Task Force on priorities using reports provided by local authorities</p>	National authorities, local authorities, local community leaders	2023	Core

	between enforcement authorities from around the country and on different scales via informal communication tools (e.g. WhatsApp)				
	<p>2.3.2. Develop or improve a communication pipeline between governmental actors or law enforcement and non-governmental subject matter experts to better share information related to ITB activity and trends or target taxa</p>	<p>Number of countries with a Point of Contact in law enforcement on ITB per year</p> <p>Number of trainings provided to Government officials by experts or relevant NGOs per year</p> <p>At least one webinar per quarter on relevant species or challenges from expert groups to provide latest updates on target taxa.</p> <p>Dedicated informal channels for communication created (e.g. WhatsApp groups)</p> <p>Number of meetings/workshops between experts and enforcement officers held</p>	National authorities, relevant NGOs and expert and advisory groups	2024-2025	Core
	<p>2.3.3. Develop and review national manuals for conducting more effective inspections or to improve detection and conviction rates</p> <p>Where possible and appropriate, establish specialized units for addressing wildlife crime</p>	<p>Number of revised manuals</p> <p>Number of training workshops for revised manuals and protocols</p> <p>Assessment score of practical detection and inspection skills of law enforcement teams during training workshops</p> <p>Number of patrols completed per month per site</p>	National authorities, with support from relevant NGOs, and expert and advisory groups	2023-2025	Core

		<p>Number of incident reports submitted per month per site</p> <p>Average time to investigate following a report of an incident of illegal take</p> <p>The following should be calculated per month and with consideration for law enforcement effort (number of patrols):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of arrests for illegal take</li> <li>• Number of investigations for illegal take</li> <li>• Prosecutions for illegal take</li> <li>• Convictions for illegal take</li> <li>• Ratio of prosecutions to convictions</li> </ul>			
	<p>2.3.4. Organize check-in meetings of local enforcement officers with local community leaders (non-law enforcement)</p>	<p>At least one check-in meeting per quarter to raise concerns to local law enforcement.</p> <p>Level of cooperation in enforcement activities between authorities and community members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quantity and quality of input from local community leaders in reports over time.</li> <li>• Ratio of reported issues from local leaders to number of issues addressed</li> <li>• Average amount of time law enforcement takes to address issue</li> </ul>	<p>Local authorities, local community leaders, with support relevant NGOs</p>	<p>2024-2027</p>	<p>Medium</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of voluntary patrol rangers from local communities</li> </ul> <p>Quantity and quality of data national authorities can provide to Task Force on site-specific issues and priorities using reports provided by local authorities</p>			
2.4. The understanding of legal frameworks is improved along enforcement chain and judiciary	2.4.1. Disseminate existing sentencing guidelines and gravity factors to all levels of law enforcement and judiciary sectors	<p>Level of understanding of sentencing guidelines and gravity factors by law enforcement and judiciary leading to push for development of more effective prosecution and sentencing guidelines. Degree of prioritization of wildlife crime, such as (as appropriate):</p> <p>a) Number or percentage of penalties that are appropriate and proportionate to relevant guidance,</p> <p>b) Average fine for offenses for illegal take of birds,</p> <p>c) Average jail time sentences for illegal take of birds,</p> <p>d) Severity of penalties in countries with standards below sentencing guidelines.</p>	National authorities and judiciary, local authorities, with support from CMS and EAAFP Secretariats and relevant NGOs	2023-2027	Core
	2.4.2. Regional and national training seminars on illegal take of migratory birds or on environmental crime for police officers, inspectors, rangers, prosecutors, and judges	<p>Number/frequency of training seminars</p> <p>Number/frequency of knowledge assessments conducted</p> <p>Number of trained frontline law enforcement officers,</p>	National authorities and judiciary, with support from relevant NGOs	2023-2027	Core

		<p>prosecutors, and judges specialized in or with improved understanding of issue and impact of illegal take of migratory birds and environmental crime. Improvement will be determined by practical skills assessment during training seminars</p> <p>Number of special units dedicated to detecting and investigating wildlife crime</p> <p>The following should be calculated per month and with consideration for law enforcement effort (number of patrols):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of arrests for illegal take</li> <li>• Number of investigations for illegal take</li> <li>• Number of prosecutions for illegal take</li> <li>• Number of convictions for illegal take</li> </ul>			
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<b>Objective 3: To establish active <i>in situ</i> prevention by stakeholders, including the public, of the illegal killing, taking and trade of wild birds through improving level of awareness and education of ITB in the EAAF Region</b>					
<b>Target</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Responsible Parties + Scope</b>	<b>Timeline (2023-2027)</b>	<b>Priority</b>
3.1. Awareness of general public and policymakers on the environmental, social, and economic impacts of illegal taking is	3.1.1. Design, produce, and disseminate a media toolkit on impacts of illegal take of migratory birds	Availability of media toolkit via multiple channels in languages understood by local and national audiences	National authorities, local authorities, with support of relevant NGOs, expert and advisory groups, and with support of CMS	2023-2027	Core

raised		<p>Number of public education and behavior change campaigns on illegal take of migratory birds</p> <p>Number of countries with a national communication strategy on illegal take of migratory birds</p> <p>Public level of knowledge on illegal take of migratory birds, as determined by pre- and post-activity evaluations</p> <p>Public support of eradication of illegal take of migratory birds, as indicated by public surveys of support for legislation or activities to combat illegal take of migratory birds</p>	and EAAFP Secretariats		
3.2. The hunting community understands the issue of illegal take and works collaboratively to combat it	3.2.1. Conduct hunter education and awareness activities	At least one public education and townhall for raising awareness focused on hunters and their motivations is held at each hotspot for illegal take	National authorities, relevant NGOs, with support from expert and advisory groups; hunters	2025-2027	Core
	3.2.2. Promote hunter participation in monitoring and awareness raising activities	<p>Frequency of refresher courses: at least one course per year on patrolling and reporting tools such as SMART app or software</p> <p>Number of hunters participating in surveillance efforts</p> <p>Number of detection reports by hunters of illegal take</p>	National authorities, local authorities, local community leaders, relevant NGOs, hunters	2025-2027	High

<b>Objective 4: To establish a sustainable funding base for countries' and stakeholder's actions to address illegal take of birds</b>					
<b>Target</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Responsible Parties + Scope</b>	<b>Timeline (2023-2027)</b>	<b>Priority</b>
4.1. The Task Force is sufficiently funded to conduct its Programme of Work	4.1.1. Review departmental budgets to determine where mandates dovetail with Task Force objectives, and identify where departmental funding may be drawn from to implement POW	Amounts allocated for implementation of activities to stem illegal take of migratory birds	National authorities	2023-2027	Core
	4.1.2. Establish and maintain a database of relevant external funding sources	Availability and frequency of updates of list of potential relevant external funding sources: updated at least once per quarter	National authorities, with support from relevant expert and advisory groups and CMS and EAAFP Secretariats	2023	Core
	4.1.3. Apply for funding from external sources for implementation of conservation or research activities in POW	Amounts of external funds for implementation of POW activities	National authorities, local authorities, relevant NGOs, expert and advisory groups	2023-2027	Core
4.2. Improve quality of funding proposals from Task Force members through creation of a peer review or technical advisory system	4.2.1. Create protocol for request of technical review or peer review of grant proposal from expert and advisory groups or relevant NGOs	Quality of grant applications (based on review ratings)  Ratio of awarded proposals to total proposals submitted	Expert and advisory groups, relevant NGOs, national authorities, with support from CMS and EAAFP Secretariats	2023-2027	Medium