



Federal Office
for the Environment
Switzerland

Memorandum of Understanding Concerning Conservation Measures for the Siberian Crane

The Seventh Meeting of the Signatories of the Memorandum
Bonn, Germany 10-12 June 2010

Executive Summary

The meeting was attended by 30 representatives from 16 countries (including seven range state governmental officials, two Germany governmental officials, eight technical experts, four representatives from partner organisations, four United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) / Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) staff, and five International Crane Foundation (ICF) staff). Since the Sixth Meeting of Signatories of the Siberian Crane Memorandum there have been no new signatures. Birdlife International (BLI) has been suggested as future participant or partner, and, since BLI was unable to attend this meeting, the CMS Secretariat was asked to liaise with BLI to explore its interest in signing the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

Governmental and technical focal points (FP) were confirmed for all countries except Pakistan and India. Pakistan had just appointed their new Inspector General for Forestry as an Administrative FP (name and contact information to be provided shortly), and India will need to appoint a new Administrative FP soon due to retirement of the current FP. A deadline of 31 July 2010 was set for updates on FPs. The Report on the Conservation Status of the Siberian Crane was approved pending inclusion of points agreed during discussion. Further discussion focused on the following themes: responding to hunting along the Siberian Crane flyways, challenges of the Siberian Crane reintroduction to Western / Central Asia, updating reporting and information management, further activities under Western / Central Asian Network for the Siberian Crane and other Waterbirds (WCASN), partnerships with other processes and initiatives (East-Asian Australasian Flyway Partnership (EAAFP), Central Asia Flyway Initiative, Africa-Eurasia Waterbird Agreement, BLI, integration of MoU with Regional Flyway Programmes, future funding of MoU activities, which should be feasible with national resources, and its financial sustainability.

Recent results of crane counts reported that the total population of the Siberian Crane is estimated at 3,000–3,500 birds, of which approximately 99% belong to the East Asian population. The meeting discussed and further developed drafts of the three new flyway Conservation Plans including detailed activities. Signatories were given an opportunity to undertake final review and revision (by 1 September 2010), before the posting of the final version on the Siberian Crane Flyway Coordination website. The following priority actions were conformed for all Signatories and cooperating organisations.

Azerbaijan

- Identify unknown wintering grounds in Iraq and Jordan, work with local ornithologists to obtain information on possible Siberian Crane occurrence and follow up on Siberian Crane sightings in different parts of Azerbaijan.

China

- The State Forestry Administration (SFA) to prepare a national plan for 2010-2020 that will include the Siberian Crane Conservation Plan;
- Improve the 1988 law on wildlife conservation with provisions on wildlife habitat protection;
- SFA will conduct a survey of national wildlife resources that may help funding habitat protection activities;
- SFA will provide funds annually to support wildlife protection on Jiangxi and Northeast China Siberian Crane sites;
- SFA indicated interest to seek funds to continue community projects initiated under UNEP/ Global Environment Facility (GEF) Siberian Crane Wetland Project (SCWP) activities;

- MoU signatories expressed concerns on reduced water flow to protected areas in Northeast China and proposed dam construction at the mouth of Poyang Lake as main threats to the eastern population; a draft statement was given to the Chinese delegation for comments, to be finalized and sent from the MoU7 participants to the Chinese government.
- Strengthen coordination and cooperation on research and monitoring between China, Russia, and Mongolia; consider opportunities for a meeting under the EAAFP and the North East Asian Crane Working Group.

India

- Assess and manage impacts of power lines on birds;
- Identify historic sites of the Siberian Crane wintering and bring under the protected area network;
- Finalize the nomination of Etawah-Mainpuri to WCASN;
- Approach Indian government to allocate funds for Siberian Crane conservation;
- Initiate satellite tracking of the Eurasian Crane that would help identify wetlands with habitats suitable for Siberian Cranes (Bombay Ornithological Society to carry out this activity).

Iran

Focus on following up UNEP/GEF SCWP activities:

- Maintain Site Management Committees involving local people;
- Site protection;
- Restore wintering population by way of releases, collaborate with Russia on monitoring of released birds using satellite tracking if funding permits;
- Support the Trappers Association;
- Finish construction of a guard station at Fereydoon Kenar;
- Investigate alternate wintering sites besides Fereydoon Kenar to identify better natural habitats such as Miankaleh or Bujagh, where conflict with communities is less pronounced;
- Develop and implement activities under bilateral agreement with Russia.

Kazakhstan

- Continue to cooperate with Russia and sign an agreement on implementation of the Flight of Hope Project;
- Enhance protection of key sites under existing laws;
- Extend monitoring of wetlands to western Kazakhstan, where economic development is very dynamic (numerous oil and gas companies are exploring there) but information is lacking on cranes;

- Improve access to funding through state budget; Kazakhstan should have a Single Species Action Plan (SSAP) for the Siberian Cranes as it has for other species which provides a means of gaining financial support for State budget;

- Collaboration on monitoring of released Siberian Cranes.

Mongolia

- Conduct monitoring and research on ecology and biology of Siberian Cranes in collaboration with Russia and China;
- Train local communities and rangers on data collection;
- Increase public awareness on rare cranes and wetlands;
- Continue international cooperation with Russia and China including agreement on information sharing and research;
- Protect and manage habitats including one site on the national level and one site at the local level.

Pakistan

- Improve capacity of local hunters for breeding and health management of captive cranes to reduce hunting pressure. Cracid and Crane Conservation and Breeding Center (CBCC) considering support;
- Conduct public awareness and education (request a pair from CBCC for Crane Education Center in Kurram Valley);
- Involve communities in effective management of WCASN sites;
- Facilitate approval of amendments and effective enforcement of laws, harmonize between provinces.

Russia – Central and Western Flyways

- Monitor and satellite track Eurasian Cranes at stopover sites and along the length of the flyway where both Eurasian and Siberian Cranes occur;
- Band of Siberian and Eurasian Cranes using the same routes;
- Strengthen important restoration efforts through Flight of Hope project and other release techniques to increase number of birds successfully released and to increase collaboration with other countries;
- Nominate breeding and migratory sites for inclusion into the WCASN;
- Continue training programmes and capacity building for various target groups;
- Address hunting issues and reduce hunting pressure by developing cooperation with hunters to obtain information about the Siberian Crane sightings.

Turkmenistan

- Raise awareness on importance of protection

of wetland areas for cranes, and importance of Amudarya Valley area;

- Generate funds within the national budget for wetland monitoring;
- Work with government to nominate another Turkmen site, Tallymerjen & Kelif-Zeyit, located in the Amudarya Valley for WCASN;
- Cooperate with other countries to coordinate activities for Amudarya Valley under Flight of Hope project.

Uzbekistan

- Identify new wetlands and improve protection and management of wetlands important to Siberian and Eurasian Cranes;
- Monitor wetlands important to Siberian Cranes and other waterbirds through creating of wide network of correspondents by working with local people;
- Improve public awareness of wetlands important to waterbirds and Siberian Cranes;
- Continue monitoring of wintering grounds of Eurasian Cranes as potential wintering grounds for Siberian Cranes;
- Support Flight of Hope Project at Jieran Eco-center in cooperation with Russia and invite governmental agencies to join this project.

ICF

- Host Siberian Crane Flyway Coordinator (SCFC) position and support key regional activities;
- Maintain website, newsletters, and distribution list;
- Maintain database and develop proposal to go online and link more effectively with databases under other initiatives;
- Work with countries to complete GEF proposal for Western / Central Asia;
- Work with SFA in China to submit GEF proposal for East Asia;
- Finalize hunting strategy, consult with partners, and develop proposals to cover a range of activities over a long period;
- Provide technical support including purchase or data retrieval for satellite transmitters;
- Continue collaboration with Chinese colleagues on ecological studies and environmental management at Poyang Lake.

Wetlands International

- Work closely with CMS to finalise the institutionalisation of the CAF Action Plan in collaboration with range states and partners to enable its early implementation including development of the CAF site network;
- Promote use of the "Wings Over Wetlands" (WOW) Critical Site Network Tool launched in June 2010 with

WOW Partners as an information platform for Siberian Crane and migratory waterbirds in the western flyway;

- Promote use of the WOW Flyway Training Kit to build national and local capacity for waterbird and wetland management in Central and Western Asia with WOW Partners and others;
- Develop Western / Central Asian GEF proposal with ICF and CMS, in close consultation with partners with a focus on key WCASN and other internationally important migratory waterbird sites;
- Strengthen conservation activities in East Asia through the framework of the EAAFP and EAAF Site Network through development of a regional project and related activities at important sites for the Siberian Crane and other migratory waterbirds;
- Work with partners to raise importance of Poyang Lake for the Siberian Crane and other migratory waterbirds;
- Coordinate activities under Wetlands International Arctic Program with focus on wetland management and through working with the oil and gas industry;
- Promote use of the International Waterbird Census framework for monitoring of the Siberian Crane and other waterbirds and wetlands for the region.

Cracid & Crane Breeding and Conservation Center

- Continue support to OCBC for releasing birds for reintroduction;
- Send a pair of cranes to Pakistan, Iran, and India for education and awareness programs;
- Consider support for travel to build capacity and promote collaboration;
- Help seek funds for SCFC position;
- Provide eggs for Flight of Hope project;
- Seek support for Flight of Hope program.

CMS Secretariat

- Produce an executive summary of priorities and send to national governments requesting support (Countries will receive draft to review and provide clarification or details).

As of 12 June 2010 there were ten sites officially designated in WCASN in five countries: Iran, India, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. Four sites were proposed for the shadow list of WCASN: three in Kazakhstan and one in Uzbekistan. Representation of BirdLife International in WCASN is pending. The WCASN Committee had formally approved the two sites nominated in Pakistan; site certificates were presented to the official representative of Pakistan at a special designation ceremony

Discussion on fundraising among CMS Secretariat, ICF,

Wetlands International, and CBCC gratefully acknowledged the value of UNEP/GEF SCWP funding during the last six years. This funding is no longer available due to project completion. CMS also has very finite resources. Short term funding priorities include the SCFC position. The International Trust Fund that has been on the table for discussion for the last three years is not considered viable. CMS has potential to set up a mechanism for voluntary supplementary contributions paid at the same time as main CMS assessed contributions from CMS. The UN Foundation has funds which UN organizations can draw upon. CMS through UNEP could seek funds from this source.

Mr. Dereliev noted that AEWA would like to see more Siberian Crane MoU countries which qualify to become parties. He indicated that the AEWA Secretariat would like to help in process of accession through the Moscow workshop, bilateral discussions during this meeting, and visit to Kazakhstan for the Lesser White-fronted Goose workshop. Parties have to pay contributions to join AEWA and a minimum contribution was set at Euro 2,000, raising the minimum from a few hundred.

This proposal was put forward by African countries. Amounts at this level are not usually a problem. There are more technical and administrative issues. Under AEWA \$25,000 funding for new parties (Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan and Iran) would be eligible. But AEWA does not extend to India, Pakistan, China and Mongolia. There is some possibility of extending AEWA to cover CAF so these countries would be able to join and therefore benefit.

It was agreed to convene the next CMS MoU7 meeting in 2013, at a venue still to be determined. It was noted that five of the Range States (Iran, India, Russia, USA and Kazakhstan) have hosted a MoU in the past. The China delegate expressed possible interest in hosting MoU8 in coordination with scientific meeting focusing on accomplishments of SCWP and importance of Poyang Lake. Another opportunity for a scientific or technical meeting might combine with the EAAFP. The Signatories were invited to consider hosting the Eighth Meeting and to make pledges for financial or in-kind support to the meeting. CMS Secretariat will send out letter to all signatories (states and organizations).