



**Convention on the  
Conservation of Migratory  
Species of Wild Animals**

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NINTH MEETING OF THE CMS  
SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL

Cape Town, 4-6 November 1999

**REPORT OF THE NINTH MEETING OF THE SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL OF THE  
CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF MIGRATORY SPECIES OF WILD  
ANIMALS**

**I. OPENING REMARKS OF THE CHAIR AND SECRETARIAT**

1. The Chair, Mr. Pierre Devillers (Councillor for the European Community), opened the meeting and welcomed all participants (the list of participants is contained in annex II to the present report). He noted the appropriateness of meeting in South Africa, a country whose achievements in conservation could be an encouragement for the Convention's effort. Informing the Council that Mr. Eugenius Nowak (Counsellor for Germany) had retired, he conveyed to Mr. Nowak, through the German delegation, the warm thanks of the Council for the considerable contribution that he had made over the years.

2. The Deputy Executive Secretary, Mr. Douglas Hykle, speaking on behalf of the Executive Secretary, Mr. Arnulf Müller-Helmbrecht, thanked the Government of the Netherlands for the generous support that it had provided for the convening of the current sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties and the first meeting of the African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement. He also expressed thanks to the Government of South Africa for its contribution to the organization and hosting of those meetings.

**II. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**

3. The meeting adopted the following agenda, on the basis of the provisional agenda which had been circulated in document CMS/ScC.9/Doc.1:

1. Opening remarks of the Chair and secretariat.
2. Adoption of the agenda.
3. Report on intersessional activities:
  - (a) Chair;
  - (b) Secretariat;
  - (c) Councillors (on the work of other conventions that they were requested to follow on behalf of CMS, and on tasks allocated to them during the eighth meeting of the Scientific Council).
4. Scientific Council tasks arising from resolutions of the Conference of the Parties and other recommendations:
  - 4.1 Actions for selected Appendix I species/groups, according to resolutions 3.2, 4.2 and 5.1:
    - (a) Mammals: Sahelo-Saharan ungulates, Mountain gorilla, Huemul,

- Franciscana dolphin, Monk seal;
- (b) Birds: Siberian crane, Andean flamingoes, Ruddy-headed goose, Lesser white-fronted goose, Houbara bustard, Great bustard, Slender-billed curlew, Lesser kestrel;
- (c) Reptiles: Marine turtles;
- 4.2 Cooperative actions for Appendix II species (recommendation 5.2):
  - (a) Corncrake;
  - (b) Quail;
  - (c) Black-necked swan;
- 4.3 Other matters.
- 5. Review of proposals for amendments to Appendices I and II of the Convention:
  - (a) Discussion and evaluation of proposals;
  - (b) Conclusions and recommendations to the Conference of the Parties.
- 6. Progress on other matters requiring Scientific Council advice:
  - 6.1 Progress on the development of potential new Agreements:
    - (a) Small cetaceans and other threatened marine mammals of southern South America, South-east Asia and Western Africa;
    - (b) Albatross) southern hemisphere;
    - (c) Sand grouse) southern Africa;
  - 6.2 Progress on small-scale projects funded by CMS:
    - (a) New project proposals;
    - (b) Procedure for project selection and appraisal;
  - 6.3 Guidelines on the use of satellite tracking devices;
  - 6.4 Other matters:
    - (a) Taxonomic nomenclature to be followed in the CMS Appendices;
    - (b) Any other matters.
- 7. Elections.
- 8. Date and venue of the tenth meeting of the Scientific Council.
- 9. Any other business.

### **III. REPORT ON INTERSESSIONAL ACTIVITIES**

#### **A. Chair**

4. The Chair pointed out that the Scientific Council had held its eighth meeting mid-term in Wageningen, Netherlands, from 3 to 5 June 1999, and the report of that meeting was available as document CMS/ScC.9/Inf.1. The list of projects approved in principle by the Scientific Council at its eighth meeting would be considered later during the current meeting. He noted that the intersessional activities of the Scientific Council had been greatly facilitated by the competence and dedication of the Technical Officer of the CMS secretariat, Mr. Pablo Canevari, to whom he was very grateful. He thanked Ms. Karen Weaver, the new acting Technical Officer, for carrying out these tasks with much success, notwithstanding the short time available between her taking office and the current meeting of the Council.

#### **B. Secretariat**

5. The Deputy Executive Secretary noted that membership of the Convention had increased to 65, with 10 States having acceded to the Convention in the current year.

6. Reporting on the staffing situation of the CMS secretariat, he noted that the Technical Officer, Mr. Canevari, had returned to Wetlands International, and Ms. Weaver had been appointed to fill that position on an interim basis. He noted that, with the appointment of new staff in 1998, the capacity of the secretariat to perform its tasks had been enhanced. Ms. Bothena Bendahmane, the

Administrative/Fund Management Officer, had, *inter alia*, been involved in expediting project preparation, thereby contributing to implementation work. The secretariat's information service had been upgraded: the website had been revamped, publications had been improved and a new technical series had been launched, the first volume of which dealt with the conservation of the Siberian crane. The second volume in the series dealt with the symposium on animal migration held under the auspices of the fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, which had taken place in Geneva from 10 to 16 April 1997.

7. Contacts with non-governmental organizations and intergovernmental organizations had continued to expand. In particular, the secretariat was liaising closely with BirdLife International, with the Biodiversity and GEF Coordination Units of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and with the World Conservation Monitoring Centre (WCMC) in project development.

8. In conclusion, he said that the Convention and its secretariat were undergoing a period of growth and experiencing a new dynamic, which was reflected in the greatly increased amount of planned and completed project work and in the ongoing work to identify new areas for Agreements.

### **C. Councillors**

9. Ms. Roseline Beudels-Jamar de Bolsee (Councillor for Belgium) reported on the fourth meeting of the Subsidiary Body for Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) of the Convention on Biological Diversity, held in Montreal, Canada, from 21 to 25 June 1999. She had participated in the activities of its Working Group I, which had dealt with the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity of arid lands and drylands, alien species, and the Global Taxonomy Initiative. Working Group II of the SBSTTA meeting had considered issues of plant "terminator" technologies, tourism and the incorporation of biodiversity considerations into environmental impact assessment. Of particular interest to CMS were the SBSTTA decision on drylands, calling for the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity to initiate a work programme that would integrate issues such as the rehabilitation and restoration of drylands, *in-situ* conservation, including threatened species, the identification of the most threatened component of dryland ecosystems, including species, sustainable use options and wildlife utilization. The SBSTTA recommendation on taxonomy, calling for priority to be accorded to capacity-building for taxonomy and for access to taxonomic information, was also relevant to CMS.

10. Mr. Wim Wolff (Councillor for the Netherlands) informed the Council that, unfortunately, his schedule had not permitted his participation in meetings of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance.

## **IV. SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL TASKS ARISING FROM RESOLUTIONS OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES AND OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **A. Concerted actions for selected Appendix I species/groups, according to resolutions 3.2, 4.2 and 5.1**

11. Introducing the debate under this item, the Chair recalled that concerted actions under resolution 3.2 and its followers were an essential instrument of the Convention, implementing its articles on Appendix I species. He noted that those actions had become structured in a process that included selection of species and, where possible and appropriate, preparation of a preliminary report, drafting of detailed status reports and action plan, establishment of a working group, preparation of projects submitted to large donors, such as the Global Environment Facility (GEF). He considered that one of the most important elements in the process was the commitment of funds by the Conference of the Parties for this work. He was glad to report that all the funds for which allocations had been proposed had been committed, thus obviating the need to reallocate any unspent funds.

## 1. *Mammals*

### (a) *Sahelo-Saharan ungulates*

12. Ms. Beudels, reporting on actions for the conservation of Sahelo-Saharan ungulates, highlighted the publication of two other documents in the CMS Technical Series for which her institute was responsible: Publication No. 3, the report on the proceedings of the 1998 workshop, held in Djerba at the invitation of the Government of Tunisia; and Publication No. 4, entitled "Conservation measures for Sahelo-Saharan antelopes: Action Plan and Status Report". The latter publication was the revised version of the action plan adopted by the Djerba meeting of Range States, and the revised versions of the status reports on the six species. Those documents were being distributed to Governments.

13. A working group had been established at the Djerba meeting and its members were contributing to a number of activities and production of documents. Under CMS coordination, a further 14 animals (*Oryx dammah* and *Gazella leptoceros*) had been sent to Tunisia from zoos in Europe in 1999.

14. A four-year regional project for the conservation and restoration of Sahelo-Saharan antelopes had been submitted to the French Fund for the Global Environment (FFEM). Within that project, Tunisia would play a pilot role and a world gene pool of the species would be re-established in Tunisia from the different stocks existing in European and American zoos. In addition, a series of surveys and conservation actions would be carried out in several Range States. Subject to final approval, FFEM would contribute 800,000 Euros out of a 1.4 million-Euro project. The allocation of CMS funds for the Sahelo-Saharan antelopes would be used as matching funds.

15. Mr. Pierre Pfeffer (Conference-appointed Councillor for terrestrial mammals) expressed his satisfaction at the achievements made. Noting that the basic reports and decisions on necessary action were now in place, he stressed the urgent need to move forward and focus on attempts to restore the most threatened species, perhaps through a programme involving semi-captivity or breeding stations.

16. Ms. Martine Bigan (Councillor for France) confirmed that FFEM had been approached with a request for the financing of the action to protect those mammals. She looked forward to seeing practical activities undertaken to restore the habitat and population status of those species.

17. The Chair observed that the situation of the Sahelo-Saharan ungulates, perhaps the most threatened group of terrestrial mammals, had been transformed by the activities of CMS. Conservation activities had been initiated and world attention was being drawn to the problems faced by the species. He was encouraged by France's intention to support the implementation of resolution 3.2 and urged all Councillors to encourage their respective Governments to act likewise and provide funding for conservation activities.

### (b) *Mountain gorilla*

18. Ms. Beudels said that an summary report would be prepared on the status of the Mountain gorilla. The report was subsequently made available to the Council in an information document. Available data showed that the species was currently restricted to the Bwindi forest, where the population comprised 292 individuals and appeared stable, and the Virungas volcanoes, shared between the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda and Uganda, where the last census, carried out in 1989, gave a figure of 310 individuals. Considering the impossibility of carrying out new general surveys in the Virunga range, the total working figure remained at around 600 individuals. It was known that the individuals moved constantly, crossing national borders. Their main habitat, forests at elevations of 2,500 metres, was being reduced by human population pressure and cultivation of pyrethrum. A conflict situation that had started in 1992 had subjected the species to further pressure. There were four national parks: one in the Democratic Republic of the Congo; one in Rwanda; and two in Uganda. Although

the poaching of Mountain gorillas was not as common as it once had been, the animals were still being caught in traps intended for other species.

19. She pointed to the report of the International Gorilla Conservation Programme, which illustrated the critical status of the species and the need for funding to support conservation activities. In conclusion, she said that, in 1997, a proposal had been mooted for the establishment of a transboundary national park among the three Range States. Concerning possible CMS involvement, the secretariat could encourage Rwanda and Uganda to join CMS, and also lobby in support of the proposed transboundary park. In addition, a CMS memorandum of understanding could be a useful tool, but only the Democratic Republic of the Congo was a Party to the Convention.

20. The Chair considered that, in the light of the clear need for concerted action, the species should remain on the list of species for concerted action and that the secretariat could be asked to make efforts to have the non-Party Range States join the Convention.

21. Mr. Pfeffer praised the concept of a transboundary national park and stressed the importance of providing information to all concerned Governments and rebel factions in order to protect this heritage species. History had shown that, despite political differences, an endangered species could still be afforded protection.

22. The Chair proposed that, for the conservation of the Mountain gorilla, the secretariat should be tasked with encouraging the non-Party Range States to join the Convention and to support the establishment of a transboundary national park.

(c) *Huemul*

23. Mr. Roberto Schlatter (Conference-appointed Councillor for neotropical fauna) reported that the Outer plain huemul and the Forest huemul were distinct types of the species. Observatories were requested to assess populations, to monitor their status and to carry out follow-up activities for the threatened species. Argentina was implementing a project to build such an observatory and to raise awareness of the species. A final report on its activities was expected by mid-2000.

(d) *Fransiscana dolphin*

24. Mr. Schlatter pointed to the difficulties in obtaining appropriate experts from Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay to assist in the implementation of concerted action to conserve the Franciscana dolphin. A genetic analysis of the different populations was to be undertaken and was expected to be completed by December 2000. He said that there was a need to hold regular regional technical meetings, along the lines of the meeting held in Punta del Este in December 1998 to bring together the CMS members of the subregion to examine how to implement the Convention there.

(e) *Monk seal*

25. Mr. Luis Mariano González (Scientific Council-appointed rapporteur for the Monk seal) reported that there were two populations of the Monk seal: some 350 individuals in the Mediterranean and some 150 in the Atlantic. He had attended a meeting held under the auspices of the Mediterranean Action Plan of the Barcelona Convention for the Protection of the Mediterranean against Pollution, which had taken place in Athens in 1998 to review the status of the species and revise the Action Plan for the Conservation of the Mediterranean Monk Seal. Although the Action Plan had incorporated new points with respect to the need to raise awareness and create protected areas, it was clear that conservation activities for the Mediterranean monk seal were not being fully implemented.

26. To date, no action plan existed for the conservation of the Atlantic population of the Monk seal. To restore the animals to a favourable conservation status, there was an urgent need for experts to gather data, as well as a need for greater cooperation and coordination among the Range States, Mauritania,

Morocco, Portugal and Spain. A workshop with participants from Portugal and Spain had been held in Madeira, Portugal, and had discussed guidelines for a future action plan. In addition, nine sites had been identified as Atlantic monk seal habitats (two in the Canary Islands; two in Mauritania; two in Morocco; and three in Madeira) and animals had been observed at three of the sites. It was expected that three further meetings would be held by the end of 1999, in Mauritania, Morocco and again in Portugal, with the aim of finalizing a document on conservation by the following year. Proposals also existed for the creation of a national reserve in Madeira and a national park in Morocco to reinforce the conservation activities in those areas.

27. In answer to a question concerning the involvement of the European Union in activities to conserve the Monk seal, he pointed to the report on progress and stressed the financial contributions made, under the European Union Financial Instrument for the Environment (LIFE) programme to support activities in Greece and Morocco.

28. Mr. Paul Chabeda, observer from the Biological Diversity Unit of UNEP, noting that UNEP had long been involved in activities to promote the conservation of the Monk seal, said that the organization had come up with a number of initiatives to enhance synergies between conventions. The second global meeting on cooperation between regional seas conventions and action plans had been convened in the Hague in June 1999, and the report of that meeting had been issued. Within the framework of the recent meeting of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the first meeting of personnel from environmental conventions had been held, and there were plans to hold regular meetings of bodies from conventions related to biological diversity (the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES), the Convention on Biological Diversity and CMS). He said that he would distribute a paper showing how the new divisions in the restructured UNEP would take that into account.

29. Responding to an enquiry concerning the status of a captive-breeding programme for the Monk seal, Ms. Bigan explained that the project had been set up at the initiative of France, but had been unsuccessful and had been given up in 1995. France would certainly be willing to participate in future activities for captive breeding and in any of the measures that were urgently needed to improve the conservation status of the species. Mr. Pfeffer expressed the view that activities should favour relocation projects, which were more effective than captive breeding.

30. In answer to a query about a residual population of Monk seals in Algeria, Mr. González explained that no concrete information had been received from Algeria. Some seven or eight years ago, the population had been estimated at around 20-30 individuals and he personally believed that their situation had deteriorated.

31. The Chair noted the slow progress made and the difficulties posed in the conservation of the Monk seal. He said that, considering that an action plan for the Mediterranean populations already existed, it was useful to focus on what activities CMS could undertake for the species.

(f) *General discussion on mammals*

32. Summing up the discussions in relation to mammalian species, the Chair said that, with regard to the Sahelo-Saharan ungulates, there had been considerable progress and he congratulated Ms. Beudels and the working group which she had coordinated. Considering the extreme state of the conservation of the species, it was important to continue to devote an equally high level of effort to their conservation.

33. With regard to the Mountain gorilla, it was appropriate to support the proposed establishment of a transboundary park.

34. Concerning the Huemul and the Franciscana dolphin, he noted the action taken to date and looked forward to the finalization of the reports on the species.

35. Having taken note of the work on the Monk seal, he asked Mr. González to liaise with the Councillors from the Range States for that species, with a view to determining what future action should be carried out by CMS to conserve the Atlantic populations of *Monachus monachus*. The conclusions of the resulting deliberations on that issue are contained in annex I to the present report.

36. At its eighth meeting, the Scientific Council had designated five rapporteurs for specific species, as follows: Ms. Beudels, for mammals; Mr. Limpus, for marine turtles; Mr. Moser, for birds; Mr. Perrin, for cetaceans; and Mr. Schlatter, for neotropical species. At the current meeting, the Chair entrusted those rapporteurs with examining the lists of concerted action species and cooperative action species, with a view to suggesting any additions or deletions and reporting thereon to the Council.

37. Accordingly, Ms. Beudels reported that no proposals had been received for amendment to the list of Appendix I mammalian species selected for concerted action. Although it was too early for a decision, the possibility of future concerted action for the Snow leopard (*Panthera uncia*) should be considered. In that regard, the Councillor for Mongolia had proposed the preparation of a file on the species for the next meeting of the Scientific Council.

38. At its eighth meeting, the Council had also considered the summary review by WCMC of Appendix I, contained in document CMS/ScC.9/Doc.6-Annex I. Referring to that review, Ms. Beudels noted that WCMC had proposed the inclusion of three species of mammals that would qualify for listing in Appendix I in the future. The first of those, the African wild dog (*Lycaon pictus*), had an unfavourable conservation status and would also benefit from concerted action to protect large areas of its habitat. At the current stage, however, it was necessary to obtain sufficient information on the species and to find a Party to prepare a proposal for submission to CMS. Mr. Pfeffer supported the listing of the species in Appendix I. He said that it was a very threatened species, which had populations on the border between Chad and the Sudan, in the Central African Republic, and between Kenya and the United Republic of Tanzania.

39. Ms. Beudels said that the Hunter's hartebeest, or Hirula (*Damaliscus hunteri*) once ranged over northern Kenya (a Contracting Party) and Somalia, but was believed to be extinct in the latter country. The species certainly merited attention, but she wondered whether CMS was the appropriate instrument for action on the species.

40. She noted that the WCMC report had also proposed Appendix I listing for the Steller's sea lion (*Eumetopias jubatus*) but, as none of the Range States was a Contracting Party, she concluded that it would not be possible to add it to Appendix I.

41. Finally, the WCMC report had proposed the listing of the African elephant (*Loxodonta africana*) under Appendix I. She pointed out that the species was already included in Appendix II, which opened up the possibility of cooperative action between countries with smaller populations of elephant. The meeting concluded that listing in Appendix I would not improve the situation of the species but that addition to the list of cooperative action species was desirable.

42. Mr. Abdou-Kérim Moumoni (Councillor for Togo) observed that most Range States of the elephant had internally listed the species for priority conservation. Togo shared elephants with Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mali and Niger and in 1996 it had invited those countries to consultations. He considered that CMS was the best instrument to put in place a conservation mechanism and to encourage the attainment of an agreement. It was necessary to establish a scientific body to develop projects for the species and he supported the suggestion that cooperative activities be developed.

43. Mr. Lamoussa Hebie (Councillor for Burkina Faso) said there was a need to ensure proper management of the species and pointed to the cross-border programme between his country and Côte d'Ivoire. Programmes were also planned for activities with Ghana and Mali for the rational management of the elephant. He also supported the listing of the species for cooperative actions under Appendix II.

44. Mr. Perrin proposed that, in the future, a species added to Appendix II should simultaneously be considered for the list of species for cooperative action.

45. Mr. Wolff proposed that, since the West African manatee was the most threatened of all manatee species, it should be listed as a species for action. Mr. Perrin suggested that the species be included in the review of the status of West African mammals which was to take place at an upcoming workshop in Guinea.

46. The Scientific Council agreed:

(a) That there would be no new mammalian species for inclusion in the list of species for concerted actions, although note was taken of the need for future consideration of the case of *Panthera uncia*;

(b) To note the need to examine whether the inclusion of *Lycaon pictus* in Appendix I would be useful and, if so, to find a Contracting Party willing to propose the species for inclusion;

(c) To add *Loxodonta africana* to the list of species for which cooperative actions are recommended.

## 2. *Birds*

(a) *Slender-billed curlew*

47. Mr. Gerard Boere (observer for the Netherlands) reported on the species, stating that it was estimated to have declined in numbers to between 50 and 270 individuals. To safeguard the species, many activities and observations had been conducted and a comprehensive long-term action plan set in place. In addition, a memorandum of understanding had been concluded with 15 range-State members. The European Union LIFE programme had financed a project for protection and monitoring of the species in southern Europe, focused mainly on Greece, and identification materials had been provided. In 1999, a working group had been established for which BirdLife International provided the secretariat. A proposal to the CMS secretariat for it to continue in that capacity during 2000 and 2001 was under consideration. A meeting of Range States was being organized in Kiev in 2000. Financial assistance was being sought from external sources, with a view to helping to protect the birds' migration routes in central Asia and their wintering grounds.

(b) *Siberian crane*

48. The Deputy Executive Secretary reported on the activities in connection with the Siberian crane, in particular on the memorandum of understanding covering the western and central populations of the species. A meeting of the Range States had been held in the Islamic Republic of Iran in December 1998, the third in a series of meetings, which had reviewed a detailed conservation plan. The memorandum of understanding had been revised to allow for the participation of China, so as to cover the eastern population of the species.

49. He said that the western and central populations appeared to have stabilized, although with probably less than 15-20 birds in total, migrating and returning to the same sites; migration routes had been identified and attempts were being made to identify other potential wintering sites.

50. A first draft of a project prepared in collaboration with the International Crane Foundation and the UNEP GEF Coordination Unit for submission to GEF had received approval for funding up to the amount of \$350,000. The project focused on the conservation of wetland habitats important for Siberian cranes and other migratory birds in China, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation.

(c) *Andean flamingo*

51. Mr. Schlatter reported that four countries, Argentina, Bolivia, Chile and Peru, were collaborating in carrying out a winter census of Andean flamingos as part of a GEF project, and a draft memorandum of understanding was being developed. As part of that process, various workshops had been held and the results of the census to be conducted in the near future would help clarify the overall impact of industry on those species. Breeding areas for the species were difficult to identify, since such areas varied in their response to drought, salination and mining activities, which were putting more pressure on water availability. It was expected that the project would be finalized in the following year.

(d) *Ruddy-headed goose*

52. Mr. Schlatter said that work had been under way for over a year to identify concentrations of the Ruddy-headed goose. That work included raising awareness of the value of the species. Mr. Jesper Madsen (Councillor for Denmark) would soon be visiting the project area, and a draft memorandum of understanding was being prepared. It was hoped that all those actions would improve the conservation of the species.

(e) *Lesser white-fronted goose*

53. Mr. Madsen reported that an action plan for the species had been in existence since 1994, and in 1995 a formal working group had been established under CMS auspices; some funding had been granted for conservation of the species in wintering areas. The use of satellite transmitters had facilitated the identification of staging and wintering areas, but there was still a high mortality rate due to hunting of the species during migrations. To combat that problem, an awareness campaign had been organized, using posters and stickers. Members of the working group had visited some countries to inform hunters of the need to protect that species of goose. The group had recently had been in China and had observed flocks of 30,000 birds, which constituted the largest flocks seen to date of the species. The situation of western palaeo-arctic populations, however, was much more precarious.

(f) *Houbara bustard*

54. In the absence of the report by the focal point member, the Deputy Executive Secretary reported that Saudi Arabia was taking the lead in preparing an agreement on this species, while studies on taxonomy were in progress. The secretariat was awaiting feedback.

(g) *Great bustard*

55. Mr. Attila Bankovics (Councillor for Hungary) reported that the greater part of the population was living in Hungary and was stable at about 1,200 individuals, two-thirds of which were living in a national park. Conservation measures included buying land, removing farms and establishing rape fields to provide extra winter food for the species and greater protection during the breeding period in a natural habitat. The main threats to the Great bustard came from illegal agricultural operations and predators such as foxes, which in recent years had greatly increased in number.

56. A draft memorandum of understanding had been prepared, but various difficulties existed in having it finalized by the Range States. The Chair pointed out that concerted actions did not necessarily require a memorandum of understanding. He proposed the establishment of a working group, including representatives of the Range States of the species, in order to move forward with concerted action. In the meantime, the negotiations on the memorandum of understanding would continue.

(h) *Lesser kestrel*

57. The Chair noted that this species had been added to Appendix I at the previous meeting of the

Conference of the Parties and had been placed on the list of concerted action species. The Scientific Council had commissioned the adaptation of an existing European Union action plan, expanding it to include countries in the species range outside the Union.

58. The representative of BirdLife International reported that the draft action plan had been submitted to the CMS secretariat at the end of October 1999, and was currently being reviewed.

(i) *White-headed duck*

59. The Chair recalled that the species was to be kept on the list of concerted action species but no particular action was to be taken. Mr. González said that, according to a recent census, the species seemed to be recovering, with a population of about 1,200 and with the protection of 90 per cent of breeding and nesting areas. Hybridization with the Ruddy duck remained a problem, however, and his country intended to send some birds to France to retain a non-hybridized gene pool.

60. Mr. Colin Galbraith (Councillor for the United Kingdom) reported that his country was continuing its campaign to prevent hybridization and had killed 500 individuals of the Ruddy duck in its control campaign.

61. The Chair concluded that an action plan was in place and significant activities were taking place to protect that species. The Scientific Council thus recommended that the species be retained on the list of concerted action species.

(j) *General discussion on birds*

62. In his summary, the Chair said that congratulations were due to the secretariat on its efforts to safeguard the Siberian crane, and that it should be encouraged to continue the same efforts. With regard to the Andean flamingo and the Ruddy-headed goose, actions were continuing as planned. In the light of the results presented at the following meeting, the Council would be able to recommend in what way the Convention should continue its involvement; the same applied to the Lesser white-fronted goose and to the White-headed duck. With regard to the Houbara bustard, the Chair urgently requested information in writing on the progress of the concerted action. In the case of the Great bustard, he noted that actions were taking place and recommended the formation of a working group. For the Slender-billed curlew, the Chair commended the efforts of the working group and encouraged it to continue its activity, especially as the breeding grounds were yet to be discovered. With regard to the Lesser kestrel, the Chair expressed the hope that the action plan could be circulated rapidly so that suggestions could be made at the Council's next meeting, with a view to formulating appropriate actions.

63. Speaking in his capacity as Council rapporteur for birds, Mr. Moser reported on the results of deliberations on changes to the lists of concerted action and cooperative action species.

64. Mr. Moser observed that no proposal had been received for the removal of a species from the list for concerted actions. In that connection, he noted that it would be valuable to consider the reports on projects funded under the current triennium to assess whether species had recovered sufficiently to warrant removal from the list.

65. In considering whether a species should be put forward for concerted action, his group had applied several criteria: whether there were existing programmes on which to build; whether the range of the species included sufficient Parties to the Convention; and whether realistic actions could be undertaken to benefit conservation.

66. He proposed three additional species for listing. The first, the Whitewing flufftail (*Sarothrura ayresii*), ranged over Ethiopia, South Africa (a Contracting Party), Zambia and Zimbabwe. A restoration programme was being initiated, which could be used to develop international cooperation, networking and surveys.

67. The second proposal concerned the Blue swallow (*Hirundo atrocaerulea*), which ranged over two Contracting Parties, Kenya and South Africa, and over other African States which were likely to become Parties to the Convention. Existing restoration programmes in South Africa could be used as a platform for additional support activities.

68. With regard to the Aquatic warbler (*Acrocephalus paludicola*), he noted that there was already a proposal to initiate concerted action for the species (see chapter VI, section A. 5 of the present report).

69. He expressed his wish to flag four further avian species which might merit consideration for future concerted action at the next meetings of the Scientific Council and the Conference of the Parties, namely, the Greater spotted eagle (*Aquila clanga*), the Imperial eagle (*Aquila heliaca*), the Sociable plover (*Chettusia gregaria*) and the White-eyed gull (*Larus leucophthalmus*).

70. Concerning cooperative actions for Appendix II species, three groups of birds were proposed. The African penguin (*Spheniscus demersus*) already benefited from activities carried out by Namibia and South Africa, and further activities were proposed. With regard to albatrosses and seven species of petrels, additional networking was required, as well as cooperative action for conservation.

71. In connection with the recommendations contained in the report of WCMC, no proposals were made for advancing a species from Appendix II to Appendix I. WCMC had recommended 10 avian species for inclusion in Appendix I. Nine of those species had no significant part of their range over a Contracting Party, so there was no value in listing them at the current time. The Peruvian diving petrel (*Pelecanoides garnotii*) had breeding areas in Chile and Peru, so there was scope for CMS activity to conserve the species.

72. The Scientific Council agreed to draft a recommendation to the effect:

- (a) That no species be removed from the current lists;
- (b) That, for *Otis tarda*, it should be noted that the action concerned all populations of the species on Appendices I and II;
- (c) That three species, namely, *Sarothrura ayresi*, *Hirundo atracaerula* and *Acrocephalus paludicola* be added to the list of species for concerted actions;
- (d) That note be taken of the four avian species, namely, *Aquila clanga*, *A. heliaca*, *Chettusia gregaria* and *Larus leucophthalmus*, for consideration at a future meeting;
- (e) That *Spheniscus demersus*, the albatrosses and the seven species of petrels proposed for inclusion in Appendix II be proposed for cooperative actions;
- (f) That no action be taken at the current time with regard to the recommendations pertaining to avian species contained in the report of WCMC.

### 3. *Reptiles*

#### (a) *Marine turtles*

73. Mr. Colin Limpus (Conference-appointed Councillor for marine turtles) said that formal cooperation in the conservation of marine turtles dated back only 10 years, to the launching of the regional turtle conservation programme by the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) in 1989. Since that time, conservation actions had also been launched in other regions. Significant regions that were not yet involved in some form of regional cooperation for turtle conservation included China, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Japan and the Republic of Korea; and New Zealand and Australia, which were not included in south Pacific activities. Noting that CMS had performed an important catalytic function for the African and Indian Ocean regions, which had lagged behind other regions in marine turtle conservation efforts, he stressed the need to go beyond memorandums of understanding to specific action.

74. Turning to the status of the Leatherback turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*), he noted dramatic declines in nesting populations. Population modelling indicated that the declines were due to the by-catch from high-seas long-line fisheries. Field data had demonstrated that nesting beach protection measures were not in themselves sufficient to safeguard the future of this highly threatened species. Only South Africa had prepared census data on its Leatherback turtles, recording a successful increase, owing to a conservation strategy which focused not only on beaches but also on adjacent waters.

75. Similarly dramatic declines had been recorded in the nesting populations of Loggerhead turtles (*Caretta caretta*). While such declines had previously been attributed to trawler by-catches and, in Australia, the destruction of eggs by foxes, it was now realized that high seas long-line by-catches could pose just as significant a threat. Those conclusions were based on population modelling, as by-catch data were generally not available from fishery management agencies.

76. In summary, he said that the serious threat posed by long-line by-catches was attested in all areas, although in some there were as yet insufficient data. The threat was most acute in international tropical and temperate waters. The species most vulnerable were the Loggerhead, Leatherback and Olive Ridley (*Lepidochelys olivacea*) turtles. The problem was very difficult for individual countries to solve. CMS was well placed, with the backing of a large number of countries, to put pressure on international fisheries to reduce the threat posed by high seas long-line fisheries by-catch.

77. In response to a question, he explained that there was considerable debate on the issue of harvesting turtle eggs in the Caribbean, which had polarized the positions by the countries concerned. The issue would be taken up by CITES at its next session.

78. The Chair recalled that, when marine turtles had first been slated for concerted action, the Council had limited the scope of such action to the Indo-Pacific region. Since that time it had tacitly extended the scope to other areas and he proposed, accordingly, that the word "Indo-Pacific" be deleted from the resolution to be adopted on the issue. The Council agreed to that proposal.

79. In the ensuing discussion, Mr. Emmanuel Bossou (Councillor for Benin) said that his country had participated in a meeting on marine turtle conservation in Abidjan and, following that meeting, had undertaken activities to protect nesting sites in Benin. Mr. Abdou-Kérim Moumouni (Councillor for Togo) regretted that his country had been unable to attend the Abidjan meeting but undertook to convey the concerns of the Council to his Minister. In that context, the Deputy Executive Secretary drew attention to the signing ceremony planned for 11 November 1999, at which African Range States could sign up to the Abidjan memorandum of understanding.

80. Mr. Galbraith explained that the United Kingdom had prepared a draft resolution that might be submitted to the Conference of the Parties on the issue of by-catches, including their impact on marine turtles, as well as on sea birds and cetaceans. The representative of WCMC drew attention to the Centre's geographical information system (GIS) database on marine turtle nesting, which was accessible through either the CMS or the WCMC websites, and he invited feedback from the Councillors on the database.

81. Following the subsequent introduction and circulation of the draft resolution submitted by the United Kingdom, Mr. Limpus recommended to the Scientific Council that it should support the principle of the draft resolution, within the framework of concerted action for marine turtles. He suggested, also, that the proposers of the resolution might consider broadening the scope of by-catch to include specific fishery operations such as trawling, gill-net catches and long-line fishing, as well as encouraging general action to reduce by-catch in fisheries collectively. He further suggested that the United Kingdom consider inserting into the draft resolution a paragraph that would provide a mandate for the CMS secretariat to provide information and make representations to international fisheries agencies.

82. Mr. Wolff said that, in his view, the resolution should contain more specific reference to

migratory species listed in the appendices to the Convention, rather than a bald reference to protecting migratory species; he believed that the Scientific Council should strongly support the draft resolution.

83. On the proposal of the Chair and following Mr. Limpus's suggestion, the Council expressed its strong support for the draft resolution prepared by the United Kingdom, as a major contribution to the the concerted actions on marine turtles.

84. Mr. Galbraith said that the United Kingdom would take due account of the recommendation on broadening the scope in regard to approaching international fishing agencies and suggested, as a way forward, that the CMS secretariat should subsequently table the resolution at the next meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity.

85. With regard to amendments to the list of concerted action or cooperative action species, the Chair noted that all species of marine turtles were already on list of concerted action species and that no changes were necessary.

#### 4. *General discussion on cetaceans*

86. As no cetaceans had been included on the list of concerted action species, there was no discussion of that issue. The WCMC review, however, had included a list of Appendix II species that were migratory and highly threatened and, therefore, candidates for additional listing in Appendix I. The five Council-appointed rapporteurs had been directed to review that list and recommend species for inclusion in Appendix I and Mr. Perrin had prepared a document (CMS/ScC.9/Doc.7) on cetacean species. Accordingly, the Chair requested Mr. Perrin to brief the Council on possible proposals for inclusion in Appendix I and II, on the basis of the WCMC review.

87. Mr. Perrin reported on the case of the Gangetic susu or river dolphin (listed as *Platarista gangetica* but currently considered by most workers to be a subspecies *Platenista gangetica*, with the conspecific *P.g. minor* occurring in Pakistan) Rice 1998), thought to be formerly or at least potentially migratory across international boundaries, in particular, between Indian and Nepal. No reliable estimates were available on populations of this species, but rough estimates and observations indicated that the species was in drastic decline, with perhaps overall population numbers of 3,000-3,500. The IUCN Cetaceans Specialist Group had reported that the decline had been due to accidental kills in gill-nets and to habitats threatened by industrial effluents, water management schemes and the depletion of the fish stocks on which the species was feeding. It appeared that the species was certainly a prime candidate for inclusion in the Appendix I list, and a sponsoring Party should be identified to make the proposal.

88. Mr. Wolff, concurring with Mr. Perrin's remarks, agreed that the species certainly qualified for inclusion in the list, and that the lead would need to be taken by the Range State with the highest population, namely India.

89. Mr. Perrin reported that two Baleen whale species, the Sei whale *Balaenoptera borealis* and the Fin whale *B. physalus*, were considered endangered by IUCN. He had consulted the International Whaling Commission (IWC) and had been directed to summaries in the IWC report, which demonstrated that, for the Sei whale, there were no reliable estimates of initial population size, sustainable yield or population trends for any of the stocks. The situation was similar for the Fin whale, except that surveys of the species in the North Atlantic indicated that some stocks were depleted, but there had been no firm evidence or agreement about the status of other stocks. One possible course of action would be to follow the lead of the IWC Scientific Committee and list only those stocks for which there was scientific consensus that "substantial depletion" had occurred. At the current time, those would only include the west Norway, north Norway and Faroese-Hebrides-Ireland Fin whales.

90. Mr. Wolff questioned whether Appendix I listing of these two whale species would be useful, given that three other such species were on the list, two of which qualified for action plans, but there had

been no activity at all under the Convention in their regard.

91. Thanking Mr. Perrin for the work he had done, the Chair noted, in conclusion, that the Scientific Council considered that the Gangetic susu or river dolphin was a prime candidate for inclusion in the Appendix I list and that contracting Party should be identified to submit the proposal to the Conference of the Parties at its seventh meeting. He also said that further listing of whale species should not be pursued.

### 5. *Neotropical species*

92. Speaking in his capacity as Council rapporteur for neotropical species, Mr. Schlatter proposed amendments to both the list of concerted action species and the list of cooperative action species.

93. Mr. Schlatter said that the vicugna (*Vicugna vicugna*) had a fair conservation status in Chile and, in his opinion, should be moved from Appendix I to Appendix II listing. In addition, the following species should be added to the list of species for concerted action under Appendix I: Southern marine otter (*Lutra felina*) and Southern river otter (*Lutra provocax*), occurring in Argentina and Chile; and the Humboldt penguin (*Spheniscus humboldti*), in Chile and Peru.

94. There was interest in the status of dolphins in Argentina and southern Chile. A paper on cetaceans in the southern part of South America was under review and would be published as a technical report. To fill some of the gaps in the knowledge, cooperative action was necessary and it was thus proposed that the dolphin species of southern South America be added to the Appendix II list of species for cooperative action.

95. Turning to the WCMC report, Mr. Schlatter noted that three species warranted inclusion in Appendix II, the Pink-footed shearwater *Puffinus creatopus*, the Tierra del Fuego red fox (*Pseudalopex culpaeus*) and the Magellanic woodpecker (*Campephilus magellanicus*). Appendix II listing would benefit four species, the neotropical populations of Felidae; the Spectacled crocodile (*Caiman crocodilus*); the Peruvian diving petrel (*Pelecanoides garnotii*); and the petrels of the Oceanodroma genus found along the Pacific rim.

96. The Scientific Council agreed:

- (a) To recommend the addition of the following species to the list of Appendix I species for concerted action: *Lutra felina*, *Lutra provocax*, *Spheniscus humboldti*;
- (b) To add the following seven species of dolphins to the Appendix II list of species for cooperative action: *Pontoporia blainvillei*, *Lagenorhynchus australis*, *L. obscurus*, *Phocoena spinipinnis*, *Australophocaena dioptrica*, *Cephalorhynchus commersonii* and *C. eutropia*.

### **B. Cooperative actions for Appendix II species, in particular: Corncrake, Quail, Black-necked swan (recommendation 5.2)**

97. Recalling that BirdLife International had agreed to adapt its action plans on, *inter alia*, the corncrake to the CMS format, the Chair said that the organization had submitted a report on the corncrake.

98. With regard to the Black-necked swan, Mr. Schlatter said that a GEF-supported project had been launched, principally concerned with the Black-necked swan, but also dealing with other waterbirds. The main problem was the destruction of habitat, due, *inter alia*, to El Niño effects. The project would involve the participation of Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Uruguay and lead to concerted action in those four countries.

99. Mr. Vaz Ferreira (Councillor for Uruguay) said that about 2,000 Black-necked swans had

appeared in Uruguay in recent years and were suffering from food shortage, which led to the death of some birds and caused others to migrate to salt-water areas, where they were also dying of starvation. Although the problem was primarily one of national scope, Uruguay had discussions with Argentina on methods to address it and a number of projects were under consideration.

### **C. Other matters**

100. The Chair drew attention to the proposed action plan for the management of the Great cormorant in the African-Eurasian region, prepared by Netherlands and Denmark, contained in document UNEP/CMS/ScC.9/Inf.9. A debate on the proposal was not possible, as the plan had been delivered during the meeting of the Council. The Scientific Council thus took note of having received the proposed action plan. The Chair further indicated that the proposed plan had not been unanimously adopted by the preparatory conference from which it originated.

## **V. REVIEW OF PROPOSALS FOR AMENDMENTS TO APPENDICES I AND II OF THE CONVENTION**

### **A. Discussion and evaluation of proposals**

101. The Chair introduced the summary of proposals for the amendment of Appendices I and II of the Convention (UNEP/CMS/Conf. 6.11 Annex) for the consideration of the Councillors.

102. With regard to the manatee (*Tricheus manatus*), Mr. Wolff proposed that the species over its entire range also be listed in Appendix II. The Chair, while supporting the proposal, pointed out that there was a lack of data on what constituted the entire range of the species.

103. Concerning Delphinidae, Mr. Andrew McNee (Councillor for Australia) explained that the listing of the Indian or Bottlenose dolphin (*Tursiops aduncus*), in the geographically restricted area of the Arafura/Timor Sea was because there was documented evidence of considerable by-catch in those areas from driftnet fishing.

104. Mr. Wolff sought clarification on why the White-chinned petrel (*Procellaria aequinoctialis*) was being proposed for Appendix II listing, since the supporting information spoke of a breeding population of 6 million and an estimated by-catch of 1 per cent by long-line fishing. Mr. McNee observed that the by-catch was considered to be much greater, especially in the zone of the Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR), where it was believed to be 140,000 per annum. Inclusion of this species in Appendix II would also facilitate the work to prepare the general agreement on waterbirds, designed to protect the more endangered species.

105. With regard to the Whale shark (*Rhincodon typus*), Mr. Perrin explained that the animal was being intentionally taken by commercial fisheries and that tagging had shown that the species migrated over a range of many thousands of miles. There had been a significant decline in sightings of the species in areas around Thailand. Conservation action thus required cooperation among a number of States. The United States of America was currently preparing a draft proposal on the species to be submitted to CITES. There was a need for a serious assessment of the status of the species and for action to promote its conservation. Range States would provide a supporting statement to clarify the reasons for listing the species, to be presented as an addendum to proposal II/13, contained in document UNEP/CMS/Conf.6.11.

106. In answer to a query on whether the Basking shark should also be considered for listing under CMS, Mr. Galbraith said that, while he had no proposals for CMS at the current stage, there was ongoing discussion in his country for preparation of a proposal for CITES.

107. In explanation of the proposal to include 18 species of sturgeon in Appendix II, Mr. Blanke (Councillor for Germany) explained that, not only were the combined legal and illegal catches of sturgeon for caviar unsustainable, but all species of the Acipenseriformes had an extremely unfavourable conservation status. According to the World Conservation Union (IUCN) sturgeon specialist group, out of 27 species 25 were threatened, six of them critically endangered, 11 endangered and eight vulnerable. There were a number of reasons for the depletion of the species: ongoing destruction of spawning areas due to dam construction in the rivers around the Caspian; pollution of the Caspian Sea itself, particularly from oil exploration and exploitation; and fisheries. Uncontrolled illegal fishing represented the major threat to the species. Sturgeon stocks were highly sensitive to overfishing because the fish were slow to reach maturity and also did not spawn every year.

108. CITES had added all sturgeon species not in its Appendix I to its Appendix II, but CMS action was also called for, as CITES was only concerned with trade issues, whereas CMS listing could make it possible for issues of pollution and damming to be addressed and facilitate regional cooperation. The 18 species chosen for inclusion in Appendix II were migratory across State borders. An action plan for all species was needed, followed by coordinated national conservation programmes. There was also scope for developing a regional agreement which would not be exclusive to the Parties to CMS. The main consideration was that all Range States had to take action immediately to stop the threatened extinction of the species. The listing of the species in Appendix II would mean that the important trade in caviar could still continue, since the value of such trade was a factor in ensuring the continued interest of Range States in conservation of the resource.

109. During the discussion on the proposal, Mr. Wolff considered that a broad general agreement to protect sturgeons could be drawn up, also including other anadromous species, in particular those in river basins.

110. Mr. Pfeffer stressed the trade-related aspect of the problem facing sturgeons, particularly illegal trade, and called upon CMS to examine the issue with CITES. The Chair, noting the problem of pollution of the Caspian Sea, pointed to the fact that the continuation of sustainable legal trade was an important deterrent to further uncontrolled pollution.

111. The observer from the Islamic Republic of Iran said that the issues surrounding the sturgeon were complicated and did not just concern trade. He considered listing under Appendix II to be appropriate, since Appendix I listing would mean States would have no interest in controlling pollution from the oil industry. He intended to raise the issue at the upcoming meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

112. Mr. Wolff informed the Council that the European sturgeon, which was listed as endangered in the Netherlands, was now extinct in that country. Even if the species did exist in the North Sea, he said, it would not be able to survive the trawling pressures there.

113. In summing up, the Chair said that the Scientific Council had endorsed all the proposals, which were well supported by the documentation and which represented considerable effort on the part of the Parties making the proposals. He extended profound thanks to those Parties that had submitted proposals, and stressed that listing of a species in the Appendices of the Convention was only one step. In the near future, it was hoped that there would be proposals for concerted action and new agreements among Range States.

## **B. Conclusions and recommendations to the Conference of the Parties**

114. With regard to the manatee (*Tricheus manatus*), the Council agreed to recommend the proposal for listing in Appendix II to the Conference of the Parties, with the suggested amendment that the listing should be for the whole range of the species.

115. The Council agreed to recommend the proposal for the inclusion of seven species of *Procellariiformes* in Appendix II, on the understanding that Range States would provide a supporting statement to clarify the reasons for listing the White-chinned petrel (*Procellaria aequinoctialis*), to be presented as an addendum to proposal II/8, contained in document UNEP/CMS/Conf.6.11.

116. The Council approved the proposal to include the Whale shark (*Rhincodon typus*) in Appendix II, thanked the Philippines for its work in preparing and forwarding the proposal, and agreed to forward it to the Conference of the Parties with an indication that it also supported and welcomed any other initiatives by other bodies to support the conservation of the species. It was also agreed that, if the Conference of the Parties approved the proposal to include the Whale shark in Appendix II, the species should also be added to the cooperative action list.

117. The Council stressed the extreme importance of the proposal to list 18 species of sturgeons in Appendix II and thanked Germany for preparing and submitting the proposals. The Council asked Germany, when examining the possibility of preparing an agreement with Range States, also to take into account the possibility of incorporating other species with similar ecological requirements and to bear in mind other factors, such as trawling.

## **VI. PROGRESS ON OTHER MATTERS REQUIRING SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL ADVICE**

### **A. Progress on the development of potential new Agreements**

#### *1. Small cetaceans and other threatened marine mammals of southern South America, south-east Asia and western Africa*

118. Reporting on progress in the southern and central American region, Mr. Schlatter said that two technical meetings had been held in the region, from which a number of proposals had emerged, including on manatees. He stressed the need to maintain the momentum generated by those technical meetings. The organization of further such meetings would make possible the study of candidate species for inclusion in the Appendices and lead to proposals on concerted action, the negotiation of memoranda of understanding, and progress towards agreements. Accordingly, in the southern and central American region, the existing draft memorandum of understanding on flamingoes could lead to the development of an agreement and, with support from GEF and UNEP, a third agreement on waterbirds, covering the southernmost part of the neo-tropical zone, could be developed.

119. Reporting on the situation in south-east Asia, Mr. Perrin said that progress had been impeded by the recent economic and political turmoil in the region, which was characterized by rapid population growth, an increase in pressure on fishery resources and a concomitant increase in the by-catch. He stressed the need for a renewed international action on small cetaceans, whose populations in the region were all shared between two or more countries, owing to their proximity, and noted the positive start made in Australia and the Philippines in that regard, and the encouraging initial moves in Hong Kong, Thailand and Viet Nam. He stressed the need for action in Indonesia, which, with the world's longest coastline and the fourth largest population, represented a serious gap in conservation efforts.

120. In western Africa, one data-gathering project had been completed in the Gambia and Senegal and others were under way or being planned, including a training workshop in Guinea, which, it was hoped, would be held as soon as possible. In response to a question, Mr. Perrin explained that the projects in question were seed-money projects, hence small in scale, but that it was hoped that the Guinea workshop would lead to an action plan involving all countries in the region.

121. The Chair proposed, and the Council agreed, first, to note with gratitude the reports of the Councillors; and, second, to commend the countries concerned on their efforts to date and to encourage similar efforts by other countries.

2. *Albatross: Southern hemisphere*

122. Mr. McNee reported that, notwithstanding increased efforts, virtually nothing remained known about most of the southern hemisphere populations. Where data were available, however, the evidence was of rapid decline, due mostly to adult mortality from a range of threats, including ingestion of plastics and pollution and, at the top of the list, long-line fishing operations. According to conservative estimates by CCAMLR, between 20,000 and 40,000 birds were dying annually in the CCAMLR zone and a similar situation was presumed to obtain in other areas as well.

123. Consultations had been launched by Australia with a number of Range States to identify support for conservation efforts, and the Valdivia group had agreed on the need for a new instrument with the involvement of other Range States and international organizations. In his view, the dialogue should be broadened to include all Range States, including (in accordance with the CMS definition) flag-States of vessels fishing on the high seas, with a particular focus on the issue of by-catches. The situation was critical and there could be no confidence about the survival of the species: urgent action was required.

124. Mr. Bigan and Mr. Galbraith reiterated the concern about those species in France and the United Kingdom, both major Range States. They also both emphasized the need for concerted international approaches to address, *inter alia*, the problem of illegal fishing and affirmed their countries' support for and desire to be involved in measures to address the problem.

125. Mr. Vaz Ferreira drew attention to a project in Uruguay on the conservation of five albatross species, which involved data-gathering and awareness-raising and the final report of which would be submitted to the Conference of the Parties.

126. The observer from BirdLife International, speaking also on behalf of CCAMLR, expressed concern about the status of the albatross and noted that, according to CCAMLR estimates, up to 250,000 seabirds had been killed in the southern areas in the last year, largely as a result of illegal fishing operations, representing an unsustainable rate of decline.

127. In response to questions from Councillors, the Chair stated his view that conservation measures should initially involve only breeding Range States as action on the issue was long overdue and there should be no further delays. Mr. McNee agreed that the process should follow a staged approach and should be driven by the breeding Range States with the subsequent involvement of the flag-States of fishing fleets active in the areas concerned.

128. Accordingly, the Chair proposed, and the Council agreed, that the Council adopt the following conclusion:

- (a) That it take note, with gratitude, of the report by Mr. McNee;
- (b) That it urge Australia to intensify its efforts, in close cooperation with all Range States, in particular the breeding Range States, and, in that context, that it note the reiterated offer of scientific, technical and other assistance from other Range States, in particular France, South Africa, and the United Kingdom, and urge Australia to liaise closely with those and other Range States with a possible view to the establishment of a working group with members drawn, *inter alia*, from those States, for the purpose of ensuring speedy progress on the issue;
- (c) That it note the support of BirdLife International and its offer to be involved in any measures to address the issue; and
- (d) That it urge all Range States, in particular, Australia, France, South Africa and the United Kingdom, to take all necessary steps at the forthcoming meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CMS to ensure the rapid adoption of an agreement.

3. *Sand grouse: Southern Africa*

129. Mr. P. Botha, in his update on the conservation measures for the species, said that the Range States Botswana, Namibia and South Africa had held a further meeting and had prepared a draft memorandum of understanding, which had been distributed to the three countries for evaluation and comment. Further discussions would be held on the memorandum. A scientific advisor had been tasked with drafting an action plan, which was expected to be ready in the near future.

130. The Scientific Council took note of the report of Mr. Botha and expressed satisfaction at the fact that activities for the conservation of the Sandgrouse were approaching completion. The Council thanked him for his efforts and congratulated him on the progress made.

#### 4. *Marine turtles*

131. Mr. McNee drew the attention of the Council to the report of the consultation on the needs and mechanisms for regional conservation and management of marine turtles, held at Perth, Australia, from 19 to 22 October 1999 (UNEP/CMS/Conf.6/Inf.14). That consultation, which had been the first large-scale meeting on the subject for the Indian Ocean region, had marked a positive development towards a possible agreement on the conservation of marine turtles in the region. Representatives from the Indian Ocean and south-east Asian region, as well experts from a number of States and regional and international organizations, had considered a broad range of issues. The meeting had agreed on the need for a new regional instrument to coordinate action, possibly under CMS. Further consultations were to be held in the first half of 2000, with a view to concluding an Agreement for the conservation of the marine turtles of the region.

132. The Scientific Council took note of the report and welcomed it as a contribution to action to conserve the marine turtle.

#### 5. *Progress report on the possibility of considering a memorandum of understanding for the Aquatic warbler*

133. The observer for BirdLife International pointed to the need for action to arrest the steep decline in numbers of the Aquatic warbler, due to the destruction of its breeding habitat in Eastern Europe. Little was known about the wintering area of the species or about the pressures it faced on its migration routes. A meeting of Range States was planned, in order to obtain their views and reactions on the subject. It was clear that concerted action was needed to conserve the species.

134. The Chair considered that the time was ripe to propose concerted action for the species, especially for the protection of its breeding habitat and that a memorandum of understanding could be a useful part of such a concerted action.

### **B. Progress on small-scale projects funded by CMS**

135. The Chair reported that the Scientific Council had reviewed progress on all small-scale projects funded by CMS, as set out in document UNEP/CMS/ScC.9/Doc.3.

136. Mr. Michael Moser (Conference-appointed Councillor for birds) expressed the view that the Scientific Council might wish to review its method of handling project reports and evaluating results. It was agreed that such a review should be effected at the Council's next meeting.

#### 1. *New project proposals*

137. In regard to new project proposals to be submitted to the Conference of the Parties for the possible allocation of new funds, it was agreed that the five appointed rapporteurs were gathering together a pre-selection of projects for the Conference to consider, should it so wish.

## 2. *Procedure for project selection and appraisal*

138. The secretariat drew the attention of the Scientific Council members to document UNEP/CMS/ScC.9/Doc.8 on the procedure for project selection and appraisal and informed them that, under the heading "Requests for proposals", the first paragraph should read "The CMS project funding programme shall be administered in accordance with the eligibility criteria described above. Proposals may be solicited from selected external sources and may be submitted at any time".

### **C. Guidelines on the use of satellite tracking devices**

139. Mr. Limpus reported on the activities of the working group set up to deal with the question of satellite and other tracking devices. The Chair said that a workshop had been held on the topic, the conclusions of which were:

- (a) It was agreed by consensus that CMS was the appropriate forum to discuss the priority conservation problems requiring the use of funds for tracking devices; and
- (b) CMS should not, however, seek to intervene or undertake a proactive policy or express its opinion as to what should be done in regard to tracking devices.

Interventions in connection with tracking devices should be limited to cases where a Party or non-Party requested help from the Scientific Council or where funding by CMS was being used for tracking or marking devices.

140. Mr. Limpus further stated that no external projects had requested such help and there were no new projects under CMS auspices that would involve tracking. He also wished to put on record that the working group still had some concerns about the cost-effectiveness of satellite tracking devices.

### **D. Other matters**

#### 1. *Taxonomic nomenclature to be followed in the CMS Appendices*

141. Mr. Ebenhard, co-chair of the working group set up to consider the issue and prepare a proposal for adoption by the Council, drew attention to an error in the paragraph on Muscicapidae on page 1 of document UNEP/CMS/ScC.9/Doc.4, which stated that under Morony *et al.*, the listed subfamilies would no longer be included with the Muscicapidae: those subfamilies would in fact be included with the Muscicapidae under Morony *et al.*

142. The working group had concluded that the recommendation prepared by the secretariat was necessary, since the current Appendices were not based on any particular taxonomic reference and, whatever reference the Council decided to adopt, changes would have to be made to the nomenclature in the Appendices. In considering which references to adopt, the working group had been guided by a desire to keep to a minimum the number of consequential changes that would be required and the need for consistency with nomenclature of other organizations, in particular, CITES.

143. Accordingly, the working group recommended the following:

- (a) With regard to mammals, Rice, D.W. 1998, *Marine Mammals of the World. Systematics and Distribution*, should be retained as the reference for cetaceans, sirenians and pinnipeds; for other mammals, Wilson, D.E. and Reeder, D.M. (eds.) 1993, *Mammal Species of the World: a Taxonomic and Geographic Reference*, second edition, should be retained;
- (b) With regard to birds, the group recommended that Sibley, C.G., and Monroe, B.L. Jr., *Distribution and Taxonomy of Birds of the World*, with its 1993 supplement, which was based on the most modern filogenetic analysis but whose taxonomy was not adopted by most people working in CMS, should be adopted at the species and genus level only and Morony, J.J., Bock, W.J. and Farrand, J. 1975, *Reference List of the Birds of the World*, should be retained at the

family and order level;

(c) With regard to turtles, the group recommended that Eckert, K.L. Bjorndal, K.A., Abreu-Grobois, F.A., Donnelly, M., 1999, *Research and Management Techniques for the Conservation of Sea Turtles*, should be used as the reference;

(d) With regard to fish, the group recommended that Eschmeyer, W.N., 1990, *Catalogue of the Genera of Recent Fishes*, should be retained as the reference.

144. In addition, the group recommended the inclusion, in the draft resolution, of a paragraph on the process, on the following lines:

"*Recommends* that the secretariat amend Appendices I and II to reflect the taxonomy and nomenclature of the standard references."

He stressed that the proposed changes affected only the nomenclature and not the content of the Appendices.

145. The Chair proposed, and the Council agreed:

(a) To accept the references proposed by the working group;

(b) To amend the wording in the resolution, as suggested by the working group;

(c) To entrust the working group with resolving the issue of a reference for turtles and to incorporate it, as appropriate, in the draft resolution; and

(d) To amend the resolution so as to request the Council to assist the secretariat in preparing the revised text of the Appendices.

146. He also suggested that it might be appropriate for the revised text of the Appendices to be brought formally to the attention of the Conference of the Parties.

## VII. ELECTIONS

147. The Chair said that only one nomination for the post of Chair had been received. No nominations had been received for the post of Vice-Chair by the agreed deadline. Accordingly, he suggested that the Council take a vote, by show of hands, on the election for the post of Chair and that a process of nominations by writing be followed over the following months for the post of Vice-Chair, to enable regional groups to confer among themselves.

148. In response to statements by several representatives of African countries, pointing out that a candidate for Vice-Chair had been agreed upon by their region, he said that, as that nomination had not been received by the deadline, the written procedure should be following in pursuing the nomination, by the beginning of 2000.

149. Following a presentation by the Chair, and supporting statements by Ms. Beudels and Mr. Abdel Kader Bangoura (Councillor for Guinea), the Council unanimously elected, by show of hands, Councillor Galbraith (United Kingdom) as its new Chair.

## VIII. DATE AND VENUE OF THE TENTH MEETING OF THE

### SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL

150. The Deputy Executive Secretary suggested that, as the meetings of the Conference of the Parties were to be held every two-and-a-half or three years and that, accordingly, its next meeting would probably be in the first half of 2002, the Council should hold its next meeting one year before-hand, in

the first half of 2001.

#### **IX. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

151. The Chair drew attention to draft resolution 6.6, which, he explained, was a traditional resolution and required no comment except for its provisions on the appointment of Conference-appointed Councillors and observer participation. With regard to the first issue, he strongly proposed that, in view of the excellent service to the Council rendered by the current five Councillors, it recommend to the Conference of the Parties that they be re-appointed. The Council unanimously approved that proposal. There were no nominations for additional Conference-appointed Councillors.

152. With regard to the issue of observer participation, the Chair proposed that, in the interest of streamlining the Council's work, the standing practice of inviting certain bodies and organizations, as designated in draft resolution 6.6 to be considered by the Conference of the Parties, should be formalized as an automatic invitation to those bodies and organizations to participate as observers in the meeting of the Scientific Council. The Council approved that proposal.

#### **X. CLOSURE OF THE MEETING**

153. Following the customary exchange of courtesies, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 6 p.m. on Friday 5 November 1999.

## CONCLUSIONS OF THE DELIBERATIONS ON CONSERVATION MEASURES FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN MONK SEAL WITHIN THE CMS FRAMEWORK

The world population of the Mediterranean monk seal is still decreasing and is considered in a critical state of conservation. Nevertheless, in Madeira (Deserta Islands) and Greece (North Sporades) it was possible to stop this tendency, thanks, primarily, to the creation and efficient management of protected areas and also to the development of awareness campaigns and financial compensation to local fishermen. In view of this success, future actions should continue with this policy and CMS could contribute to Monk seal conservation through:

- (a) Maintaining the Monk seal on the list of species requiring concerted action;
- (b) Promoting the establishment and efficient management of a network of protected areas of the Monk seal in the Atlantic area, using as a starting point the nine existing protected areas listed below with suitable populations and/or potential habitat. This network would be part of the *in situ* Action Plan already in progress and would benefit from a future memorandum of understanding between Mauritania, Morocco, Portugal and Spain.

### Existing protected areas

Portugal:	Rocha do Navio Natural Reserve Ponta de São Lourenço Natural Reserve Desertas Natural Reserve
Spain (Canary islands):	Alegranza Natural Park Jandia Natural Park Corralejo-Lobos Natural Park
Morocco (Western Sahara):	Dakhla National Park
Mauritania:	Cap Blanc Satellite Reserve Bank d'Argin National Park

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