



## Contents

<b>Editorial</b>	<b>1</b>
• Goodby and hello to Dr. Gerhard Emonds	2
<b>Species News</b>	
• WDCS welcomes the EC proposals on cetacean bycatch	3
• Where did Mediterranean Common dolphins go?	4
• A newly discovered population of Humpback whales in the northern Gulf of Guinea	6
• Progress report on efforts to save the Wild Bactrian camel	8
<b>CMS Agreements</b>	
• Song of the Whale sails the Mediterranean	10
• ACCOBAMS starts conservation, research and capacity building activities	12
• AEWA becomes mature	12
• ASCOBANS: Poised for the new triennium	13
• EUROBATS: A successful 4 <sup>th</sup> session of the Meeting of Parties	14
• ACAP receives critical 5 <sup>th</sup> ratification	14
• 25 years of Wadden Sea Co-operation 1978-2003	15
<b>Memoranda</b>	
• Siberian Crane Wetlands Project: On the staging grounds and ready to fly	16
• New IOSEA activities	17
<b>Co-operation</b>	
• CMS - UNCCD Agreement to strengthen collaboration	18
• IUCN and CMS sign Agreement to help save thousands of species	19
<b>Meetings</b>	
• CMS Scientific Council elaborates its scientific and conservation strategy	20
• Historic Western hemisphere initiative on migratory species launched	20
• Great Bustard meeting postponed	21
• Waterbirds around the world: conserving the world's major flyways	22
<b>New Publications</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>New Projects</b>	
• Implementing priority actions for the conservation of the high Andes flamingos	24
• CMS supports project to identify wintering areas of the Lesser white-fronted goose	25
<b>New Parties</b>	
• A new Party to CMS: The Syrian Arab Republic	26
• Cote d'Ivoire joins CMS	26
• Belarus 84 <sup>th</sup> Party to CMS	27
<b>News from the Secretariat</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Calendar of Events</b>	<b>32</b>

## STRIKING A BALANCE BETWEEN PROJECT AND ADMINISTRATIVE WORK

Reporting is one of the major tasks of the CMS Secretariat, as it is, I believe, of all convention secretariats. In addition, the Secretariat has to deal with a huge amount of administrative work in consultation with the Convention bodies and headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya - both UNEP and UNON, the "United Nations Office in Nairobi". Clearly, the CMS Bulletin is part of the CMS Secretariat's reporting system. Extensive reporting had to be done last for the CMS COP 7 in September 2002 and for the recent Standing Committee meeting in July 2003. Sometimes, we feel that we are getting stuck in administrative and reporting work with the effect that one day, in the not too distant future, we will have nothing to report because we have spent all our time on reporting and administration.

Under these circumstances you may be surprised that you once again have a 32-page Bulletin in front of you. One of the reasons for this is that the Secretariat has achieved a lot despite all the reporting and administrative burdens as well as the lack of regular staff. Another reason is that the Bulletin provides, inter alia, a forum for our allies, experts and associates to report on conservation work for migratory species that CMS has been involved in, but where the major effort is being made by others. John Hare, a former UNEP staff member, journalist, university lecturer and author of some books, but above all Chair and CEO of the Wild Camel Foundation, is one of these allies and stands here for many others. Further to Richard P. Readings' report in the last Bulletin, John's article describes his foundation's ambitious work for the Bactrian camels in Mongolia, which is being supported by CMS as well as by the Mongolian authorities. I believe that this sort of co-operation should be acknowledged by the CMS Parties and that the CMS Secretariat should be enabled to build up or strengthen such coalitions for more migratory species. CMS has good reasons to try helping those who endeavour implementing CMS Agreements and MOU - or, even better, the CMS Parties could use the Action Plans to support the development and implementation of projects fitting into these Action plans. The Bukhara deer is one example of our stagnating after the successful conclusion of the MOU more than a year ago. There are a number of further examples where the competent authorities of CMS Parties could show more commitment to assist developing countries as partners in implementing of CMS instruments. Please think about it.

It appears to be politically correct that a Convention Secretariat should only report about progress and success. However, CMS has undergone a rather long period in which a number of projects have stagnated. I take this opportunity to apologise to all colleagues and friends who may have expected more action from the Secretariat and to whom we were not even able to explain the reasons for our inaction. Nevertheless, with the dedicated work of little more than fifty percent of the regular professional staff, the Secretariat has achieved a lot in accordance with its work programme and has made considerable progress - even more than reported in this Bulletin. Moreover, CMS has been awarded a major grant by the UNEP Executive Director, who has also approved that the secretariats of CMS, AEWA, ASCOBANS and EUROBATS are to receive some additional staff members for administration and accounting in future. I take this opportunity to express, on behalf of CMS, my thanks to the ED.

Thanks to the deliberations of the Standing Committee, the Secretariat was able to recruit capable temporary staff members who entered duty recently and who are helping us to cope better with our huge work programme while the recruitment of the regular professional and additional support staff members is still pending. Just a warning: if you do not hear much from the CMS Secretariat in the next months to come, some of us will have become bogged down in a couple of thousand applications for the various posts that will have eventually been advertised under the new staffing scheme of the United Nations.

Next year marks the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the conclusion of CMS in Bonn, 1979. The CMS Secretariat would be most grateful for financial contributions and contributions in kind from sponsoring Parties, non-Parties and organisations to enable the preparation of some information material and the organisation of some events in 2004, mainly side events on the fringe of various big global meetings and other events, e.g. the global flyway conference in Edinburgh, Scotland, UK, COPs of CBD and CITES and the IUCN World Conservation Congress.

*Arnulf Müller-Helmbrecht, Executive Secretary*

## GOODBYE AND HELLO TO DR. GERHARD EMONDS



Dr. Gerhard Emonds, a species conservation expert of international reputation, has left the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, having reached the age of retirement. Starting with carrying out a fundamental revision and modernisation of German legislation for nature conservation in the early seventies, Dr. Emonds quickly established an outstanding national and international reputation as a species conservationist. For about 35 years, he has influenced and partly determined German legislation for species conservation and contributed to global and EU legislation for species conservation. CITES, the Bern Convention, the Alpine Convention as well as the EC Bird and Habitat Directives are just a few of

the treaties and laws he dealt with. He was also one of the main actors in the development of the Bonn Convention (CMS) in the seventies and conducted many consultations globally with governments and international organisations.

While Dr. Emonds has remained a dedicated conservationist, he has always managed things with extreme knowledge and expertise as well as diplomacy and common sense. Throughout his professional career, he managed to resolve conflicting situations between conservationists and users.

Dr. Emonds left the senior post of Director for Nature Conservation at the German Ministry for the Environment. As far as this Secretariat is informed, he will continue providing his expertise for the benefit of nature conservation in an honorary capacity.

## WDCS WELCOMES EC PROPOSALS ON CETACEAN BYCATCH

By Ali Ross, Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society

Each year, fisheries bycatch causes the deaths of many thousands of dolphins and porpoises in European and surrounding waters. In July 2003, the European Commission put forward a proposal for a Council Regulation on cetacean bycatch (COM(2003)451 final) representing an important first step towards addressing the significant cetacean bycatch in and around EU waters.

Recognising the importance that CMS, ASCOBANS and ACCOBAMS place on the issue of cetacean bycatch and building on the CMS resolution 6.2 and recommendation 7.2 on bycatch that "... bycatch remains one of the major causes of mortality of migratory species from human activities in the marine environment", the Commission's proposal formally acknowledges the importance of fisheries bycatch as a major threat to the conservation of cetaceans, and the inadequacy of current measures to address it.

Driftnets in the Baltic are used mainly to catch salmon and can be up to 20 km long. They pose a major threat to the Harbour porpoises in the Baltic, which are already critically endangered, with the population estimated as low as 600 animals. Under the Commission's proposal, the length of driftnets used in the Baltic Sea will be limited to 2.5 km, followed by a total phase out of these nets by 2007. The sooner this proposal can be achieved, the better the survival prospects for this struggling population of porpoises will be.

In specified gillnet fisheries associated with very high levels of Harbour porpoise bycatch, including gillnet fisheries in the Baltic, the Celtic Sea, the Channel and the North Sea, the proposal would make the use of acoustic deterrent devices (pingers) compulsory. However, concerns remain over whether fishermen will use pingers effectively in practice, whether pingers will continue to deter porpoises in the longer term, and whether the widespread introduction of pinger noise will result in porpoises being displaced from important habitats, so that their use will need to be closely monitored.

Compulsory onboard observer schemes to monitor cetacean bycatch in specified fisheries are also proposed. These fisheries and areas include all the fisheries that are required to use pingers and additionally, other bottom set gillnet and tangle net fisheries and pelagic (mid-water) trawl fisheries.

While welcoming and commending the Commission's proposal, WDCS believes that further and more fundamental management measures are required. In particular, an over-arching management framework may be needed to ensure that the problem of cetacean bycatch is solved. This would identify management objectives, ensure that bycatch reduction plans are devised and implemented and enable the continuous monitoring, evaluation and adjustment of mitigation measures that is likely to be required in order to achieve effective bycatch reduction.

It is also important that provisions for bycatch monitoring and mitigation in EU-distant water fisheries and active measures to address the acute and growing problem of cetacean catches in pelagic trawls are developed.

Clearly, the burden of responsibility now weighs heavily on the European Union to adopt and implement strong new legislation to address the problem of fisheries bycatch, which represents the most serious threat to the conservation of cetaceans in the region.

## WHERE DID MEDITERRANEAN COMMON DOLPHINS GO?

By Giovanni Bearzi and Randall R. Reeves

**E**ndangered. This is how the World Conservation Union (IUCN) has characterised the Mediterranean subpopulation of Short-beaked Common dolphins (*Delphinus delphis*) in its Red List of Threatened Animals to stress how urgent it has become to do something to prevent their complete disappearance from the basin. In much of the Mediterranean these dolphins were considered common until recently. Indeed, common dolphins were one of the most abundant cetacean species - and possibly the most abundant of all cetaceans living in the Mediterranean - until up into the 1960s. What prompted such a rapid decline? Why did these incredibly beautiful animals leave, die or otherwise disappear? We don't know for sure. A recent review of their status\* suggests that the decline may at least partly be the result of large-scale habitat changes over the past 30-40 years and, in particular, the reduced availability of key prey caused by overfishing and habitat degradation. Other factors that could have contributed to the species' decline in the region include contamination by man-made chemicals, potentially resulting in immunosuppression and/or reproductive impairment, and incidental mortality in fishing gear, especially gill nets. Environmental changes such as those associated with global warming also may have played a role, for example by influencing the amount or distribution of the dolphins' prey. Although the exact cause or causes are uncertain, there is no doubt about the fact that a large-scale population decline has occurred, and that Common dolphins now survive only in relatively small portions of their former Mediterranean range. These latter include the Alboràn Sea, where thousands of animals are still present, and the northern Aegean Sea, where data is scarce but it appears that densities remain fairly high. Otherwise, these dolphins have become rare in, or completely absent from, Mediterranean areas where information is available.

# SPECIES NEWS



© Elena Politi/ Tethys Research Institute

*Common dolphin in the Mediterranean*

\* Bearzi, G., Reeves, R.R., Notarbartolo di Sciarra, G., Politi, E., Cañadas, A., Frantzis & A., Mussi, B.: Ecology, status and conservation of short-beaked common dolphins (*Delphinus delphis*) in the Mediterranean Sea. *Mammal Review*.

The relative importance and interplay of potential threats such as prey depletion, contamination and bycatch are not well understood, so designing and implementing appropriate measures to counteract negative trends is a daunting task. Calling for “more research” (and then yet more again) appears to be an inadequate, perhaps even irresponsible, approach. Although continued monitoring of the last surviving Common dolphin communities is important, what we know right now may be sufficient to gain some understanding of the problems and may provide the basis for at least some precautionary actions. Any prospect of preserving viable numbers of Common dolphins throughout much of their historic range in the Mediterranean basin presupposes the timely implementation of carefully planned measures.

This is why the Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and contiguous Atlantic Area (ACCOBAMS), with support from the Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society (WDCS) and Marine Mammal Protection (ASMS), have endorsed a project for the conservation of Mediterranean Common dolphins that was presented by the Tethys Research Institute during the first meeting of the ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee. This 26-month project is to include the preparation of a Conservation Plan, the analysis of an existing ten-year dataset and the design of a web site dedicated to Mediterranean Common dolphins. These initiatives are aimed at defining priority actions to protect this endangered cetacean population in key parts of its range.

In some cases, it is now very difficult to conduct meaningful field studies on the species because only rare, scattered individuals remain. However, a thorough review of the existing historical literature may teach us a lot. For instance, in places such as the northern Adriatic Sea, research based on both historical literature and field surveys has shown that Common dolphins and Common bottlenose dolphins (*Tursiops truncatus*) used to be seen regularly in the region. Today, only the latter remain. Why are the Common dolphins no longer there? At least as far as this region is concerned, it appears that the decline was triggered by intensive culling, particularly in the 1950s when dolphins were slaughtered off the former Yugoslavia because of the perceived high levels of competition with local fisheries. Bounties had been offered to promote the killing of dolphins in the Adriatic beginning in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Early culling campaigns may not have had a major impact on the reportedly abundant dolphin populations, but in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century institutional culling campaigns aimed at complete extermination increased in intensity and resulted in the deaths of many hundreds of dolphins. The animals were depicted as “ichthyophagous monsters”, “noxious pirates” and “man’s worst enemies”. By the time such systematic culling campaigns came to an end, probably in the early 1960s, Adriatic dolphins must have been severely depleted. Unfortunately, habitat degradation was well underway by then, and it quickly became a source of concern for all of the Adriatic fauna. Overfishing, eutrophication, anoxia, sea-floor degradation and chemical contamination are some of the challenges that have faced the northern Adriatic ecosystem in the last 30 years. It appears that although the remarkably resilient bottlenose dolphins manage to survive at their current low densities, Common dolphins - still present in the northern Adriatic until the 1970s - were unable to cope with yet another threat, and disappeared.

What can we do besides lament the disappearance of these magnificent creatures? Not as much as we would like to. For instance, concern for Common dolphins in the Mediterranean is unlikely to have a major influence on the forces that cause climate change and chemical contamination. Our current lifestyle choices, entrenched patterns of overconsumption, human overpopulation and political gamesmanship militate strongly against the types of changes needed to reverse what are essentially global trends. However, at a time when the stark evidence of wide-scale overfishing and the consequent need for immediate and decisive measures to reduce fishing pressure is finally capturing the attention of European decision-makers, the goal of conserving Common dolphins may converge with, and in fact add to, the momentum building in the direction of improved ecological conditions for the benefit of both humans and wildlife. In this context, the decline of Common dolphins is one more sign that our collective actions can have large-scale, unforeseen, unintended, and intractable consequences.

*Giovanni Bearzi, Pew Marine Conservation Fellow, is President of the Tethys Research Institute and contract professor of cetacean conservation at the University of Venice, Italy.*

*Randall R. Reeves is chairman of the IUCN/SSC Cetacean Specialist Group and is based in Canada.*

## A NEWLY DISCOVERED POPULATION OF HUMPBACK WHALES IN THE NORTHERN GULF OF GUINEA

By Koen Van Waerebeek, COREWAM-Ghana c/o Environmental Science Programme, University of Ghana, Legon, GHANA

Although South Africa's Right whales have become a major tourist attraction, sub-Saharan Africa is more typically associated with visions of large land mammals than with marine mammals. That perception, however, may soon need some updating. True, even simple marine mammal species checklists are lacking for many of the region's 30 or so coastal nations, and insights in the natural history of the continent's dolphins and whales (with the exception of South Africa) are scarcer still. Nonetheless, in recent years, field researchers have gathered a wealth of information, with several quite unexpected results. For instance, scientific monitoring of Ghana's small-scale fisheries, inter alia as part of the UNEP/CMS 'Wafcet-3' Project, firmly documented some 15 cetacean species for the Ghana coast in just a couple of years.

From 2000 onwards, a team led by the author and composed of researchers principally from Benin's Université Abomey-Calavi (Laboratoire d'Ecologie Appliquée) and the Musée Nature Tropicale in Akpakpa near Cotonou, carried out exploratory surveys to determine cetacean presence in Benin's coastal waters. Sorties were made onboard a 17m experimental trawler from the Fisheries Department over short periods in the months September-October of 2000-2002, sponsored by the Netherlands Committee of the World Conservation Union (NC-IUCN) and the Centre Béninois du Développement Durable (CBDD). These efforts revealed the seasonal presence of important numbers of Humpback whales (*Megaptera novaeangliae*) nearshore in the Bight of Benin. As we argued in a 2001 paper to the International Whaling Commission, observations of neonate calves during known key months of calving activity for southern hemisphere Humpback whales add to the accumulating evidence that the Bight of Benin whale is an as yet undocumented southern breeding stock. Because the Bight of Benin is part of the North Atlantic, this is the second population known to annually migrate across the equator to breed after the Colombian population in the Pacific Ocean. Its wintering grounds are confirmed to stretch over shelf waters of at least western Nigeria, Benin, Togo, the Volta estuary area in eastern Ghana, and possibly further west into Ivory Coast. For management purposes, we have named this the 'northern Gulf of Guinea' Humpback whale stock. Humpback whales are seen off Benin from about July till early December, coinciding with the period that well-studied populations of southern hemisphere Humpback whales are found in their wintering grounds in the lower latitudes.

The brief 2002 mission sought to promote responsible management perspectives for Humpback whales and other cetaceans as a renewable resource in coastal Benin through the development of commercial whale-watching. As before, distribution and relative density data were gathered and biopsy sampling carried out for biological stock identification through molecular genetics. Two of five skin samples collected in 2001 indicated Humpback whales with mitochondrial haplotypes unique to Benin when compared to a 500+ specimen sample from South Africa and Gabon, which is compatible with separate stock hypotheses. Further sampling is of course needed.

Of 24 cetacean sightings registered in Benin from 1-9 October 2002, 20 were of Humpback whales and four of dolphins. Three neonate whale calves were accompanied by at least one adult, presumably the mother. Of two juveniles, at least one was a yearling, while the other may have been older. All Humpback whales were encountered on the shelf in surprisingly shallow water, at an average depth of 21m, although we regularly surveyed the continental slope over depths of 500-800m.

Small groups, of 18 and 12 specimens each, of a long-beaked form of Common dolphin (*Delphinus sp.*) attempted to bowride but, obviously unimpressed by our tiny bow wave, gave up quickly. However, with repeated passes through the group we could 'pick' them up a few times, which afforded a good view for all on board. The taxonomy of Common dolphins of West Africa is currently under study as it is not fully settled. A small group of ten Atlantic spotted dolphins (*Stenella frontalis*), including heavily spotted adults and unspotted juveniles, overtook our boat at high speed and then also headed for the bow, only to turn off again quickly. Surprisingly, these sightings of the two dolphin species were the first evidence that these mammals do occur off Benin.

The Benin Whale Programme specifically aims to introduce whale-watching to both the Beninese public and foreign tourists by transferring expertise and support to the pioneer operators and providing research opportunities to local biologists and conservationists from the Université Abomey-Calavi and the Musée Nature Tropicale, Akpakpa. The confirmation of good densities of Humpback whales and dolphins in Benin waters is hailed as a promising avenue for local commercial marine tourism initiatives. Recently, two boat-days scheduled for whale tourism had to be increased to four due to high demand. At one weekend we welcomed more than 60 whale-watchers and eventually ended up taking along tourists even on research sorties. In interviews, most African participants responded with excitement about the chance to see cetaceans for the first time, and while a number got seasick, this didn't seem to spoil their enthusiasm. Admittedly, the high cost of the activity is a thorny issue. Nevertheless, whale-watching in Africa looks set for to have a promising future.



© Koen Van Waerebeek

*Mother and calf Humpback whale in nearshore waters of Benin.*

Several 'test tourists' also showed much interest in the smaller cetaceans, which augurs well for marine ecotourism outside the main (whale) season. With a variety of dolphin species to watch (Bottlenose dolphin and False killer whale are also recorded) not too far from port, year-round dolphin-watching seems feasible. Gentle winds, calm seas, clear skies and scarce rainfall from December to May are predicted to facilitate dolphin-spotting from small vessels at great distances, but a reality check is needed. Globally, the spectacularly popular cetacean-watching ecotourism has grown exponentially over the past three decades into a US\$ 1,049 million business, attracting more than nine million participants annually and showing no signs of market saturation. Properly regulated, it represents an educational leisure activity as well as a sustainable and vital source of foreign currency, and it can generate significant employment opportunities.

Indications are that Humpback whales tend to avoid the large shipping lane to and from Cotonou harbour. Dead whales wash ashore with some regularity, and ship strikes are the main suspect responsible for these casualties. The steep increase in shipping throughout the Bight of Benin, plans for the construction of a large second container port along Benin's coast and deployment of region-wide underwater gas-pipelines are of grave concern for the future of the northern Gulf of Guinea Humpback whale population. Our exploratory whale surveys have demonstrated the feasibility and need for a dedicated long-term research programme that will yield information on how to best conserve Africa's large sea mammals for future generations to enjoy.

## PROGRESS REPORT ON EFFORTS TO SAVE THE WILD BACTRIAN CAMEL

*By John Hare, Wild Camel Protection Foundation*

### Lop Nur Wild Camel Nature Reserve (China)

The Lop Nur Wild Camel Nature Reserve in China has now been upgraded to a National Nature Reserve. This means it comes under the direct supervision and protection of the Chinese State Environment Ministry (SEPA). The Nature Reserve has benefited from the East West gas pipeline compensation from Petro China. The Reserve management Headquarters has sent the Wild Camel Protection Foundation (WCPF) a budget in general terms for this money. We still need to see more financial detail and will be pressing for this over the coming months. The pipeline is not welcome, but inevitable. On the supposition that it is an ill wind that doesn't blow some good, we are determined that these funds will be put towards underpinning the long-term future and development of the Nature Reserve.

### Middle Size Project (MSP) - Mongolia

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Global Environment Facility (GEF) have, with the Mongolian government, drawn up a project for biodiversity protection in the Mongolian Great Gobi Reserve A. This is the same kind of medium-sized project that enabled us to work with SEPA to establish the Lop Nur Wild Camel Nature Reserve in China. The main aim of the MSP is to increase the capacity and infrastructure of the Reserve A. Because of limited financial resources and several severe winters the local protected area staff have



*Wild Bactrian camels*

been under-funded. This has also meant little real opportunity for the protected area staff to study the habitat of the wild Bactrian camel, maintain and improve water points and manage the threats, such as wolves, to the species. One element of this MSP relates to trans-boundary co-operation between China and Mongolia, especially when the migrating camel crosses the international boundary. It has protection in Mongolia, but not in China, where it is frequently shot or poisoned. I met with the UNDP project manager, and it appears highly likely that the WCPF will be responsible for implementing this part of the project, building on the success of the Mongolian/China International Wild Camel Conference, which WCPF organised and funded in Beijing in August 2001. At this Conference a Letter of Intent was signed between the two countries to implement inter-country co-operation and information exchange on the Wild Bactrian camel. WCPF was invited to attend the Inception Meeting for the Mongolian MSP in September 2003.

### Salzburg Zoo

Salzburg Zoo in Austria has strong links with Mongolia and keeps a number of Prejewalski horses. This species, which became extinct in the wild in Mongolia in 1969, is currently being re-introduced into its former habitat. Our captive camel breeding programme can learn from the wild horse programme, and Dr Chris Walzer, the head of the zoo, agreed to help us with our wild camel project in both China and Mongolia. As a result of our meeting, Dr Walzer wrote to us as follows:

*I suggest we establish a simple wildlife / livestock / other activities monitoring system in both the Gobi A and the Lop Nur Reserve in China.*

*We will base this on the Cybertracker® system. This system has found its way into conservation programmes world-wide. The simple field computer is designed to be quick and easy to use in the field, even by non-literate users. Using a sequence of screens on a hand-held computer (Palm OS) displaying simple and easily recognisable icons, rangers are able to record and store data in minute detail. They can for example record sightings, species and feeding behaviour or carcasses with additional criteria, for instance natural death, poached and predation. Basically, there is no real limit from the technological side as to the type of data recorded. The programme automatically stores this data along with a GPS fix and time for later downloading onto a PC. Detailed further analysis with mapping applications (Geographic Information System [GIS] e.g. ArcView®) and statistical packages is then possible.*

*In a first phase, the cybertracker would have to be programmed (simple) and the screens customised to match the areas and rangers needs. In order to carry out this stage, I will need significant input from you concerning the various species and datasets of interest in the Lop Nur Reserve. Changing the set-up is easily carried out. Adaptations can be implemented together with the rangers in the field. I suggest we start implementing monitoring in China and initially wait to see what the GEF-UNDP Grant may bring the Gobi A. This grant contains significant amounts of resources for ranger training and monitoring implementation (I would hate to duplicate efforts here). However, once we have a working system we would immediately demonstrate it to the rangers in the Gobi A (and possibly get a mandate from the GEF-UNDP project).*

*Before going into China we would test the set-up under field conditions with our "own" rangers in the Gobi B. The field surveys would initially be carried out using the above-described system. We would train a local scientist to manage the database and carry out some of the further analysis. Further input and planning would really require a field trip to the area. This trip would provide an insight into the needs of the local scientists and rangers and clearly define priorities. As we can combine this with point 1 we would already be implementing a first scientific monitoring phase on our initial trip. As I have already pointed out, we would need to have the mandate from the government to carry out this project. There is no point in starting and then finding that the surveyed camels have moved to another area. The following steps would be required:*

*a) mandate*

*b) establish breeding station (staff, communication modus, fences, sufficient fodder reserves, etc.)*

*c) move potential wild camels to the breeding facility*

*d) take samples for genetic analysis (compare with domestic and samples from China)*

*e) reproductive evaluation (general health exam, ID animals, non-invasive faecal steroids, ultrasonography of the reproductive tract)*

*Once the animals have been moved to the breeding facility and are available for examination we would require a single short fieldtrip (total 14 days from Europe) to collect samples and for reproductive evaluation. The staff would have to be trained in communications and faecal sample collection, labelling and storage (list restricted to immediate veterinary needs). As far as I remember you are presently using a genetics lab for camel identification. Would this facility be available and able to process and analyse these further samples? If not I could find a partner at Vienna University.*

## **Captive Wild Bactrian Breeding Programme in Mongolia**

We have recruited a Mongolian, Mr. Enkhbileg, as the Project Co-ordinator. He is a scientist and member of the Mongolian Academy of Sciences and has extensive experience both scientific and practical of the particular protected area where we are siting the captive camel-breeding programme. We are working with the full support of the Ministry of Nature and Environment in Mongolia, and it is therefore necessary for us to work with the Mongolian National Commission for Conservation of Endangered Species (MACNE), which has responsibility for protecting all Red Book listed species, and its Director Mr. Dorjraa. The Mongolian Minister for Nature and the Environment, Mr. Barsbold, has formally approved the programme and the involvement of the WCPF in initiating the first project phase, which aims:

- to work together and co-operate to establish the wild Bactrian camel captive-breeding programme in an agreed area in the Great Gobi Protected Area, Reserve A, Bayan Tooroi, Mongolia
- to raise awareness nationally and internationally of the plight of the wild Bactrian camel and the work being done at the captive breeding programme site in Mongolia to protect this critically endangered animal and
- to protect the biodiversity of the area in and around the programme site.

## SONG OF THE WHALE SAILS THE MEDITERRANEAN The Interim Report of the IFAW Sperm Whale Project

By Anna Moscrop

The International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW), working in partnership with UNEP's Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, the Mediterranean Sea and contiguous Atlantic Area (ACCOBAMS) and other researchers in the region, conducted a survey of Sperm whales in the Ionian Sea this summer. The survey, carried out by the *Song of the Whale* boat team, is a pilot study for a wider survey of the whole Mediterranean, planned by ACCOBAMS for 2004/05. The Sperm whale is the largest toothed whale and is found in the deep basins of the Mediterranean Sea. Details are scarce about the distribution and numbers of the remaining Sperm whales in parts of the Mediterranean, but cetaceans are known to be threatened by a range of human activities in the region.

The survey used passive acoustic techniques developed on board *Song of the Whale* over the past 15 years. The team has also taken photographs, which can be used to identify individual whales. These will be contributed to the North Atlantic and Mediterranean Sperm Whale Catalogue (NAMSC), of which IFAW is in charge. Sightings and acoustic encounters with other species of cetacean, and sightings of turtles were also documented. Over the past decade, IFAW has supported several projects to help the conservation of cetaceans in the Mediterranean Sea. In 1994, the IFAW *Song of the Whale* team conducted research in support of the designation of the Ligurian Sea, between Italy, Monaco, France and Corsica, as a whale sanctuary.



*A new Mediterranean Sperm whale to add to the photo-identification catalogue?*

### The survey

After frustrating delays in leaving the UK, and terrible weather whilst crossing the Channel and Bay of Biscay, *Song of the Whale* reached Gibraltar, and the start of the summer's project, to conduct acoustic and visual surveys for Sperm whales and other marine species, on 9 August. Sperm whales, Risso's dolphins, White-beaked dolphins and Common dolphins were encountered en route.

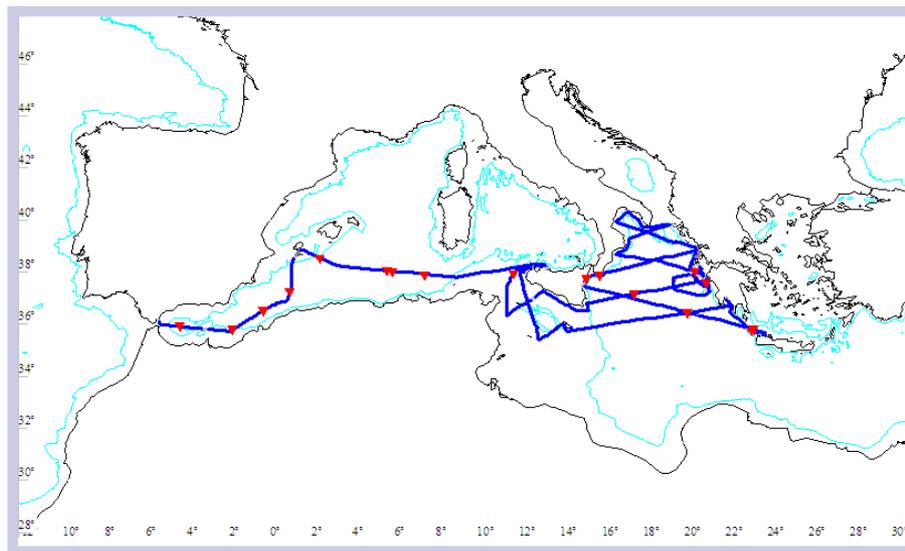
As part of the IFAW intern scheme and collaboration with ACCOBAMS, the team has hosted a number of visiting scientists and trainees, including participants from Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, Albania, Malta, Italy, Greece, Turkey, and Switzerland. These interns from universities, conservation groups and Government departments joined the project at various times throughout the summer. Working with them has been an especially rewarding part of the survey – many of the participants had never seen whales or dolphins before and were very enthusiastic and delighted to have the opportunity to be involved in the project.

### Preliminary results

Groups of Sperm whales were encountered acoustically in all areas covered by the survey. IFAW's automated acoustic tracking software provides information based on the clicks made by a number of different individual Sperm whales.

Between leaving the UK in July and the beginning of October, *Song of the Whale* travelled more than 6,000 miles (11,308 km). Almost 5,000 nautical miles (almost 9,000 km) of this was part of an acoustic survey within the Mediterranean. The team collected survey data on an ongoing basis as part of the pilot study and provided a platform for training scientists, capacity building in the region and raising local awareness.

Survey tracks were completed from Gibraltar to Sicily, from Sicily to Cephallonia, around the northern Ionian Sea, from Cephallonia to Crete and from Crete to Sicily via Malta. Preliminary analysis shows that at least 17 groups of Sperm whales were encountered acoustically in the Mediterranean, including off the North African coast, in the Ionian Sea, off Sicily, and off the west coast of Greece (see map).



**Map showing the track of *Song of the Whale* in the Mediterranean (blue line) and acoustic encounters with sperm whales (triangles along the line). The 1,000 m depth contour is shown in light blue.**

Four of these acoustic encounters also had associated visual observations. Sperm whales were encountered alone and in groups, sometimes of eight or more animals, including calves and juvenile animals. In addition, many other species were encountered whilst in the Mediterranean: Bottlenose, Common, Risso's, Rough-toothed, and Striped dolphins, and Cuvier's Beaked whales. Photo-ID was possible with Sperm whales, as well as with Risso's, Common and Bottlenose dolphins. The acoustic equipment and real-time processing worked very well, and the initial results indicate that the automated acoustic survey methods developed by IFAW should prove effective for future surveys of Sperm whales in the Mediterranean.

The IFAW/ACCOBAMS summer project in the Mediterranean drew to a close in mid-October. On the *Song of the Whale's* final leg from Sicily to Monaco, the team surveyed Sperm whales acoustically as well as photographing Sperm whales encountered as they passed through the Ligurian Sea Whale Sanctuary. A preliminary report, with recommendations for the basin-wide whale survey, will be produced by the SOTW team for the Scientific Committee of ACCOBAMS in November, and it is anticipated that this will provide valuable input to the planning and preparations for this forthcoming project. Further details of the project, links with ACCOBAMS (page 12 in this Bulletin) and the updates through the summer on the project from the boat, are available on the IFAW web site at [www.ifaw.org/sotw](http://www.ifaw.org/sotw)

*The author is research director on Song of the Whale. She has been managing the IFAW team since 1998 and is an expert on a range of cetacean conservation issues, including noise pollution, habitat degradation and Right whale and porpoise conservation.*

## ACCOBAMS STARTS CONSERVATION, RESEARCH AND CAPACITY BUILDING ACTIVITIES

In line with the International Priorities adopted by the First Meeting of the Parties, ACCOBAMS has focused on the following conservation, research and capacity building activities:

- Preparation of a Conservation Plan for the Common dolphin (*Delphinus delphis*) in the Mediterranean by the Tethys Research Institute with the support of the Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society (WDCS) and the Marine Mammal Working Group (ASMS) ;
- Sperm whale survey in the Ionian Sea as a pilot phase for a Mediterranean basin-wide survey, thanks to the support of the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW), which mobilised its vessel "Song of the Whale" between July and September (see article by Anna Moscrop in this CMS Bulletin). On this occasion, students and scientists were invited to participate in the field survey.
- In the spirit of Capacity Building, three teams of Scientists from Black Sea Countries (Ukraine, Georgia and Russia) were trained in photo identification, and thanks to the collaboration of the Sociedad Espagnola de Cetaceos, scientists from Bulgaria and Morocco participated in a training session in cetology.
- In parallel, National Cetacean Action Plans are in preparation for Bulgaria and Tunisia.

All these activities are new steps in the implementation of the ACCOBAMS Conservation Plan. Several other activities are on the way and will be discussed at the second Scientific Committee Meeting, which will be held in November 2003 in Istanbul.



**ACCOBAMS Secretariat**  
 "Villa Girasole"  
 16, Boulevard de Suisse  
 98 000 Monaco  
 Tel. (+377) 93154229  
 Fax (+377) 93509591  
 Email:  
 mcvanklaveren@gouv.mc  
 www.accobams.mc

## AEWA BECOMES MATURE

Since the second Session of the Meeting of the Parties (MOP2) held in Bonn in September 2002, the number of Contracting Parties to the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (AEWA) has increased from 33 to 43 as of 1 December, 2003. The new members are: Equatorial Guinea, France, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Lebanon, Luxembourg, Slovenia, Syria, and Ukraine. The Secretariat is aware that a number of countries are finalising their internal procedures to join the Agreement in due course. Hopefully, this excellent growth will continue in the near future. The Secretariat regards Luxembourg's ratification of the Agreement as a milestone. As of 1 December 2003, Luxembourg will be the 42<sup>nd</sup> Party to AEWA. By that date, we will have reached 50 % of the total number of Contracting Parties to CMS. Currently, there are 84 Contracting Parties. The Secretariat feels that the Agreement is becoming mature and has demonstrated its added value to the existing Conventions, e.g. the Convention on the Conservation of Wetlands (Ramsar Convention). Not only has the number of Contracting Parties grown. The activities executed by several international NGOs and contractors on behalf of AEWA has increased tremendously, too. Unfortunately, the other side of the coin with this success story is the increasing workload for the small Secretariat. Luckily, as adopted by MOP2, the recruitment of a Technical Officer is foreseen as of mid-2004. The recruitment process has been started already, taking into account the lengthy procedures in UNON. The vacancy has been announced in due course on the UN website: [www.jobs.un.org](http://www.jobs.un.org). Just before Ms Mirna Maya, Personal Assistant to the Executive Secretary, left office earlier this year, Ms Marie-Therese Kämper was recruited as temporary staff member until 1 April 2004. Recently, Ms Maya's post was reclassified, and the recruitment process will start in due course. It is a pity that these processes are so time-consuming and limit the Secretariat to absolutely essential work. The Agreement is receiving growing attention. The number of requests to participate in meetings to give a presentation on AEWA is increasing steadily. The Secretariat is being asked more and more for project support. Currently, the Technical Committee is preparing criteria for which kind of projects are eligible for AEWA funding. However, the funds available are very limited. Finally, an African-Eurasian Flyway GEF project proposal has been submitted to the GEF council. It is hoped that this project will be approved and that implementation can start in 2004.



**UNEP/AEWA Secretariat**  
 Martin-Luther-King-Str. 8  
 53175 Bonn, Germany  
 Tel: +49228815 2414  
 Fax: +49 228 815 2450  
 Email: [aewa@unep.de](mailto:aewa@unep.de)  
[www.unep-wcmc.org/aewa](http://www.unep-wcmc.org/aewa)

## ASCOBANS: POISED FOR THE NEW TRIENNIUM

### Groundwork Laid for ASCOBANS Activities in an Extended Agreement Area

The 4<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Parties to the Agreement on the Conservation of Small Cetaceans of the Baltic and North Seas (UNEP/ASCOBANS) took place in Esbjerg, Denmark, from 19-22 August 2003. At the invitation of the Government of Denmark, representatives of the eight North and Baltic Sea Parties, Estonia and a large number of intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations met to chart the course for the conservation of small cetaceans not only for the Baltic and the North Seas but soon also for the Eastern North Atlantic. At the meeting, there was consensus on extending the Agreement to also cover parts of the North Atlantic and to incorporate waters adjacent to Ireland, Portugal and Spain into the Agreement area. When ratified, this will close the gap between the Agreement areas of ASCOBANS and its sister agreement, the Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black and Mediterranean Seas and contiguous Atlantic Area (ACCOBAMS). The Meeting also focused on other issues high on the Agreement's agenda, such as bycatch, disturbance and a new, large-scale abundance survey for the extended ASCOBANS Agreement area ("SCCANS II"). Another key point was the strong support for the ASCOBANS recovery plan for the particularly threatened Harbour porpoise in the Baltic Sea (Jastarnia Plan). Moreover, the Meeting agreed to begin the process of elaborating a recovery plan for Harbour porpoises in the North Sea. While the conservation status and conservation problems of the Baltic Sea differ from those of the North Sea, the experience gained in the elaboration of the Jastarnia Plan will prove useful in developing a North Sea recovery plan.



ASCOBANS Secretariat  
Martin-Luther-King-Str. 8  
D-53179 Bonn, Germany  
Tel: (+49 228) 815 2418/16  
Fax: (+49 228) 815 2440  
Email: [ascobans@ascobans.org](mailto:ascobans@ascobans.org)  
[www.ascobans.org](http://www.ascobans.org)

At the 4<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Parties to ASCOBANS, The Netherlands generously offered to host the next Meeting of the Parties, which is to take place in 2006. An exact date and venue have not yet been determined. This will be the second ASCOBANS meeting to be held in The Netherlands, the fourth meeting of the Advisory Committee having taken place on the Island of Texel in 1997. In a nutshell, MOP 4 laid the groundwork for a successful continuation of the Agreement's activities in the coming triennium.

#### "PROJECT C" - ASCOBANS CD LAUNCHED

The ASCOBANS Secretariat and Hel Marine Station have joined forces in producing a music CD entitled "Project C". Launched at the 4<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Parties in Esbjerg, Denmark (19-22 August 2003), the CD comprises nine original compositions by Anna Nacher and Marek Styczyński, combining traditional instruments from around the Baltic region with cetacean vocalisations. For NGOs, the CD is obtainable from the Secretariat at below cost price. Organisations wishing to purchase the CD for resale for non-profit purposes are invited to contact the Secretariat.



#### ON THE HORIZON: 11<sup>TH</sup> MEETING OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE: POLAND, 27 - 29 APRIL 2004

ASCOBANS looks forward to returning to Poland for the 11<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the ASCOBANS Advisory Committee, scheduled to take place from 27 - 29 April 2004. Poland has repeatedly hosted ASCOBANS meetings in the past. The 5<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Advisory Committee was held at Hel Marine Station, Hel, in April 1998. The workshop aimed at drafting an ASCOBANS recovery plan for Baltic harbour porpoises took place in Jastarnia in January 2002.

## EUROBATS: A SUCCESSFUL 4<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE MEETING OF PARTIES

At the invitation of the Government of Bulgaria, the 4<sup>th</sup> Session of the Meeting of Parties to EUROBATS was convened in Sofia from 22 – 24 September 2003.

The Session adopted a record number of Resolutions, taking substantial decisions to further strengthen and develop the Agreement. One of the key Resolutions deals with "Bat Conservation and sustainable Forest Management", which at the same time is the contribution of EUROBATS to the CBD/CMS Joint Work Programme. In a further Resolution the Parties instructed the Advisory Committee to develop proposals for contributions to the future CBD/CMS Joint Work Programme on important topics such as indicator species and agriculture.



**EUROBATS Secretariat**  
 Martin-Luther-King-Str. 8  
 D-53179 Bonn, Germany  
 Tel: (+49 228) 815 2420/21  
 Fax: (+49 228) 815 2445  
 Email: eurobats@eurobats.org  
 www.eurobats.org



*Ms. Fathme Iliaz, Deputy Minister of Environment and Water, opened the Meeting on behalf of the Government of Bulgaria.*

In a number of other Resolutions, the Session adopted guidelines "for the Protection and Management of important Underground Habitats", "for the Use of remedial Timber Treatment" and "for the Issue of Permits for the Capture and Study of captured wild Bats". And one of the Resolutions addresses the important issue of "Wind Turbines and Bat Populations". A Resolution recognising "important role of NGOs in Bat Conservation" and encouraging closer international co-operation deserves special mentioning. The Meeting of Parties welcomed Belgium and Latvia as new Parties to the Agreement. A number of further countries are expected in the near future.



*The team of officers guiding the Meeting (from right to left): Dr. Gerhard Emonds, Germany (Vice-Chair), Dr. Hristo Bojinov, Bulgaria (Chair), Peter Lina, The Netherlands (Chair of the Advisory Committee).*

## LATEST NEWS: ACAP RECEIVES CRITICAL 5<sup>TH</sup> RATIFICATION

Following Spain, the Republic of South Africa is the fifth country to become a Party, meeting the threshold for ACAP's entry into force, which will now occur on 1 February 2004. South Africa joins Australia, New Zealand, Ecuador and Spain as a party to ACAP. South Africa played a key role in the negotiation of ACAP and is home to many important populations of albatrosses and petrels, including those on the sub-Antarctic Prince Edward Islands.

Further details are available on the following web site:  
[www.ea.gov.au/coasts/species/seabirds/albatross/index.html](http://www.ea.gov.au/coasts/species/seabirds/albatross/index.html)

AGREEMENTS

## 25 YEARS OF WADDEN SEA CO-OPERATION 1978 - 2003

This year marks the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of close co-operation between the governments of Denmark, Germany and The Netherlands in the joint management of the Wadden Sea. The geographical range of the Wadden Sea Area includes the coastlines and offshore zone of Denmark, The Netherlands and Germany. This single and unique habitat offers breeding, resting and wintering sites to migratory waterbirds. Marine mammals such as small cetaceans and seals are also to be found in the Wadden Sea. It is part of the Agreement area of AEWA, ASCOBANS and the Agreement on Conservation of Seals in the Wadden Sea. As CMS wants to highlight conservation activities for marine mammals, the main focus of this Bulletin edition is put on these species.

Since 1978, Denmark, The Netherlands and Germany have been working together on the protection and conservation of the Wadden Sea covering management, monitoring and research, as well as political matters. The first Trilateral Governmental Conference on the Protection of the Wadden Sea was held in 1978 in The Hague, The Netherlands. The second Wadden Sea Conference took place in Bonn, Germany, two years later. In 1982, at the third Conference in Copenhagen, Denmark, a Joint Declaration was agreed upon by the three countries. In the Joint Declaration, the Wadden Sea countries declared their intention to co-ordinate their activities and measures to implement a number of international legal instruments in the field of natural environmental protection, amongst others, the Ramsar Convention and the EC Bird Directive, for a comprehensive protection of the Wadden Sea region as a whole, including its flora and fauna.



**Wadden Sea Secretariat**  
Virchowstr. 1  
D-26382 Wilhelmshaven  
Germany  
Tel: (+49 4421) 910 80  
Fax: (+49 4421) 91 08 30  
Email:  
info@waddensea-secretariat.org  
www.waddensea-secretariat.org



© K. E. Heers

Grey seal



© Foto Natura

Crab plover



© F. Graner/GSM

Harbour porpoises

Since 1982, four more Governmental Wadden Sea Conferences have been held and trilateral co-operation has been strengthened and intensified. The Trilateral Wadden Sea Plan (WSP) was adopted at the Eighth Trilateral Governmental Conference in October 1997. It entails the common policies, measures, projects and actions of the countries for their joint efforts to fulfil the ecological targets. At the 9<sup>th</sup> Governmental Wadden Sea Conference, Esbjerg 2001, it was decided to install an independent platform of stakeholder groups in the trilateral Wadden Sea area, the Trilateral Wadden Sea Forum (WSF). The WSF will develop proposals for sustainable development in the Wadden Sea region, to be submitted to the 10<sup>th</sup> Governmental Wadden Sea Conference in 2005.

## SIBERIAN CRANE WETLANDS PROJECT: ON THE STAGING GROUNDS AND READY TO FLY

By Claire Mirande, SCWP Project Director



© International Crane Foundation

Siberian crane

In 1998, the third meeting of the CMS Memorandum of Understanding concerning Conservation Measures for the Siberian Crane (MOU) in Ramsar, Iran identified the need for sustainable, long-term financing of Siberian Crane Conservation Plan activities as a top priority. A United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) / Global Environment Facility (GEF) PDF B grant was obtained, and after four years of concerted effort, a GEF Full Project grant for US\$10 million was secured, matched by over US \$12 million from the national governments and other sources. The Project Document for the UNEP/GEF project on *Development of a Wetland Site and Flyway Network for Conservation of the Siberian Crane and Other Migratory Waterbirds in Asia* (Siberian Crane Wetlands Project - SCWP) was officially signed in March 2003, allowing us to enter the next phase of this long-term programme.

The International Crane Foundation is serving as the International Executing Agency for the project. Following several delays, agreements have now been signed with the governments of Russia, China, and Iran. Unfortunately, initiation of the project in Kazakhstan has been postponed due to re-organisation of the government. The United Nations Development Programme /GEF Kazakhstan Wetlands Project has recently been approved, and our two related projects will share a joint Steering Committee. It is hoped that Kazakhstan will initiate Siberian Crane Wetlands Project activities early in 2004.

Activities during the first six months have focused on building the capacity of national and site level staff to implement the project. A Regional Co-ordination Unit was established in Beijing through the generous donation of office space by the National Bird Banding Center of the State Forestry Administration in China. The International Crane Foundation is pleased to welcome our new Operations Manager, Paul McVey, to the regional project team. His broad experience with administrative and financial aspects of international project management also provides valuable guidance and support to the project's national teams.

Thanks to the generous support of Moscow Zoo, a Siberian Crane Flyway Co-ordination Center has been established in Russia. Elena Ilyashenko is Siberian Crane Flyway Co-ordinator, a position jointly funded by CMS and GEF. Siberian Crane Flyway Co-ordination activities have included: Crane Day Celebrations organised at 13 sites to actively engage local communities; a Siberian Crane Flyway Coordination meeting in Mongolia to co-ordinate activities with the North East Asia Crane Site Network; delegates from four nature reserves in China and Russia funded to participate in an Education and Ecotourism Training Workshop in Mongolia sponsored by the NE Asia Crane Site Network; improvement of the Siberian Crane Flyway Coordination website ; a roundtable discussion on Siberian Crane conservation issues held at the Crane Working Group of Eurasia Meeting in Ukraine; the email distribution list being active throughout Asia; and a Siberian Crane poster been printed in 13 languages and distributed in twelve countries. Several noteworthy national achievements were made during the project review and inception phases of the GEF Siberian Crane Wetlands Project. For example, the Chinese government agreed to re-establish water flows to the Xianghai Nature Reserve and to complete a highway mitigation project to restore normal water flows at Zhalong National Nature Reserve.

# MEMORANDA

Iran's Department of the Environment assigned Bujagh the status of a National Park and Fereydoon Kenar that of a Non-Shooting Area, introduced harsher penalties for illegal hunting, and strengthened efforts to collaborate with local NGOs and duck trappers in Fereydoon Kenar. Russia increased the size of the protected area in Kytalyk Resource Reserve, and breeding grounds in Uvat entered their first stage of protection as a local *zakaznik* (nature reserve). The first Siberian Crane Wetlands Project Steering Committee Meeting was originally scheduled to be held in China in April 2003. However, due to the impact of SARS on international travel, the Regional Coordination Unit instead worked with the national teams to organise Mobilization Workshops for Russia/Kazakhstan (June), Iran (June), and China (August). During these meetings, detailed work plans were drafted for 2003 to elaborate on the tasks, outputs, responsibilities, and timeframes needed to ensure effective implementation of the activities approved in the Project Document and the Project Logframe. National Project Inception Workshops were held to announce the project to key partners and the media in Iran (August), China (August), and Russia (September). A full Steering Committee Meeting was held in Moscow on 27-29 September 2003. Due to the delayed starting date, plans for implementing project activities in 2003 were reviewed and approved. Project Advisory Group members provided input via email. The national teams are now working intensively to develop detailed plans for 2004. An Operations Manual designed to assist the national teams in meeting UNEP/GEF requirements has been prepared. The second Steering Committee Meeting will be held in China from 24-27 February 2004.

CMS and the International Crane Foundation propose to host the Fifth Meeting on the CMS MOU on the Siberian Crane (MOU 5 Meeting) during the second half of April 2004. To determine a location, CMS will write to signatory states to invite them to host the meeting. Iran and Russia have indicated that they might be willing to host the meeting pending further discussion with their relevant ministries. At this meeting, important discussions will be held on the establishment of a flyway site network in West / Central Asia for Siberian Cranes. Mechanisms for links to the Central Asian Flyway initiative led by Wetlands International will be explored. This MOU 5 Meeting will be held in conjunction with the first Flyway Level Training Workshop sponsored by the GEF project. CMS will contract with the International Crane Foundation to organise this meeting and will co-ordinate with the local organising committee. Progress on activities under the MOU will be evaluated and Conservation Plans for the three Siberian Crane flyways will be updated. Special attention is going to be paid to co-ordination with GEF Siberian Crane Wetlands Project activities.

## NEW IOSEA ACTIVITIES

*By Douglas Hykle, Head of the IOSEA MOU Secretariat*

The Secretariat of the Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation and Management of Marine Turtles and their Habitats of the Indian Ocean and South-East Asia (IOSEA Marine Turtle MOU) was formally established in April 2003. Through an arrangement agreed by UNEP and the Signatory States to the MOU, the Secretariat is co-located with UNEP/ROAP. Various options are being pursued to try to secure additional resources for the Secretariat, through internships and longer-term Asia-focused placement programmes. With a mission to facilitate and enhance collaboration among Range States and others interested in marine turtle conservation, the Secretariat has been working with a multimedia company to develop a comprehensive web site for the MOU. Once the project is implemented to its full extent, it should enable Signatory States to post their national reports online, allow for easier and more timely updating of the MOU's Conservation and Management Plan, and provide for a "user-updateable" projects database.



An important task remaining from the First Meeting of Signatory States, held in Bangkok in January 2003 – that of editing the Annotated Conservation and Management Plan (CMP), prior to its circulation to Range States and others – was completed in May 2003. Although a considerable amount of detail remains to be filled in, the first iteration of the annotated CMP lays a good foundation for the incorporation of more comprehensive information in the coming months. The MOU Secretariat has also been working to develop an extensive database of Indian Ocean – South-East Asia and Pacific Ocean contacts of direct relevance to the MOU. A priority over the coming months will be to familiarise other bodies with the aims and provisions of the MOU and to establish effective working relationships with them. In his capacity as Senior CMS Advisor, the Head of the MOU Secretariat, has an additional responsibility to promote the Convention on Migratory Species at a regional level and to undertake regional initiatives in favour of migratory species conservation in general. These efforts will be actively pursued, albeit necessarily as a secondary priority, once the initial MOU activities have been well-grounded.

Further details are available on the IOSEA website: [www.ioseaturtles.org](http://www.ioseaturtles.org)

## CMS AND UNCCD AGREEMENT TO STRENGTHEN COLLABORATION

**E**arly in September, during the sixth session of the Conference of the Parties to the UNCCD in Havana, Cuba, the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) signed a Memorandum Of Understanding in which they agree to co-operate further to achieve better coherence in the development of specific targeted actions to address issues relating to migratory species in areas affected by drought and desertification.

“Collaboration between environmental conventions is critical, as they deal with issues that are closely interlinked,” said Hama Arba Diallo, Executive Secretary of the UNCCD. “This is a step forward in strengthening synergies between the CMS and the UNCCD aimed at a holistic and consultative approach to preserving both fragile ecosystems and human habitats in the drylands.”

“The memorandum is a milestone in the efforts of CMS to foster synergies with other conventions in the environment and development field,” noted CMS Executive Secretary Arnulf Müller-Helmbrecht. “Efforts to combat desertification, erosion and drought will provide a better life for people and should include wildlife conservation and restoration. Desert and steppe plants and animals,” he explained, “are integral to the landscape. They are adapted to the climate and, when conserved and used in a sustainable manner, they have the potential to provide local communities with a means to reach their development goals.”

Co-operation between the two organisations aims at avoiding duplication and integrating implementation of both conventions at the national and regional levels. The initiative will enable their respective Parties to take advantage of the convergence of objectives between the two conventions in these fragile ecosystems.



© H.-P. Mueller

In the memorandum, the conventions agree to participate in each other’s major meetings and to share information of mutual interest, in order to deepen their co-operation. The memorandum also requires the UNCCD secretariat to call on the Parties to the UNCCD to integrate the concerns of migratory species into their national, sub-regional and regional action programmes, and to consult with CMS in identifying areas critical to the conservation and management of migratory species. In order to assess to what extent synergies between the two conventions have evolved, the initiation of case studies and the holding of a workshop are envisaged as a preliminary step following the signing.

A significant number of migratory species listed as “endangered” by CMS are found in arid, semi-arid and dry, sub-humid areas, and much of their survival depends in part on the successful implementation of programmes to combat desertification at all levels. Also, hundreds of millions of birds cross all the world’s drylands twice a year. With the ongoing expansion of the dry areas and increasing drought within them, the birds will one day not have the energy reserves to cross these areas. Many of them will become extinct.



The agreement follows repeated calls made at Conferences of the Parties to strengthen collaboration between the UNCCD and other relevant environmental conventions. The Conferences of the Parties have also called for interlinkages to be set up among the environmental conventions in support of sustainable development.

## IUCN AND CMS SIGN AGREEMENT TO HELP SAVE THOUSANDS OF SPECIES



**T**he heads of the World Conservation Union (IUCN) and the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) signed a landmark agreement at the World Parks Congress in Durban, South Africa, on 15 September. It is set to strengthen the conservation of hundreds of species ranging from the Siberian crane to the Mediterranean monk seal. IUCN and CMS have had a close working relationship in striving to conserve the world's migratory species since the Convention was created in 1979. The IUCN Environmental Law Commission and Programme took the lead in drafting the Convention text, with work starting in 1974.

The Memorandum of Co-operation (MoC) builds on the many areas of collaboration that have already evolved and provides a framework that will make IUCN's contribution to implementation of the Convention more effective. It was signed by Achim Steiner, IUCN Director General, and Arnulf Müller-Helmbrecht, CMS Executive Secretary. The objectives of CMS and IUCN converge in many areas, and there is close co-operation between CMS and IUCN's programmes, particularly the latter's Species and Environmental Law Programmes. Information supplied by the more than 7,000 experts that make up the IUCN Species Survival Commission, largely through the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, is critical to implementation of the Convention. Mutual activities include providing scientific advice on the status and conservation needs of migratory species, carrying out evaluations of proposals to amend the listing of species on CMS appendices and providing technical advice to the implementation of action plans for migratory species.

"Signing this MoC is a significant step in the commitment by CMS to strengthen working ties with key international organisations that will accelerate the pace of implementation of this important Convention. With its broad global constituency of governments, NGOs, and a network of 10,000 experts, IUCN is an extremely valuable partner," said Mr Müller-Helmbrecht.

"This is a landmark event that provides further evidence of the growing co-operation that we are seeing in the global conservation community. The extinction crisis must be halted, and CMS is vital to protecting the thousands of migratory species that are a cornerstone of global biodiversity," said Mr Steiner.

Transboundary issues, such as the creation of protected area corridors to help the free movement of migratory species, are important to CMS, and they figured prominently at the World Parks Congress.

## CMS SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL ELABORATES ITS SCIENTIFIC AND CONSERVATION STRATEGY

Work has started on the elaboration of the CMS Scientific Council's scientific and conservation strategy. A mandate in this regard was granted to the Council by the 7<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Conference of the Parties, which, in Res. 7.12, instructed the Council "to produce a strategy on its scientific and conservation work, taking account of the ecology of species listed in the CMS Appendices as well as the factors which may threaten or endanger migratory species, leading to clear priorities for action and including appropriate consideration of monitoring the implementation of such a strategy".

In line with a recommendation of the 11<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Council, a working group in charge of the elaboration of a first draft of the strategy has been established that will meet in Edinburgh from 27-28 November 2003. The draft strategy document prepared by the group will be submitted to the 12<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Scientific Council (Glasgow, 31 March - 2 April 2004) for further elaboration and finalisation. The Scientific Council Strategy document is expected to complement the CMS Strategy 2006-2011, to be finalised and adopted by the 8<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

## HISTORIC WESTERN HEMISPHERE INITIATIVE ON MIGRATORY SPECIES LAUNCHED

The leaders of the 38 Western Hemisphere nations met in 2001 at the Summit of the Americas in Canada and called for "the development of a hemispheric strategy to support the conservation of migratory wildlife throughout the Americas".

To follow up on this challenge, the first gathering of Western Hemisphere countries to focus on co-operative efforts to conserve migratory wildlife met at the edge of Puyehue National Park, Termas de Puyehue, in the Chilean Lake District, from 6-8 October 2003. Representatives from 26 countries attended the First Western Hemisphere Migratory Species Conference, co-hosted by the United States Department of State and the US Fish and Wildlife Service. The Conference met in parallel with the Seventh Neotropical Ornithological Congress.

The 60 Conference attendees, which included inter- and non-governmental organisations, were invited to prioritise migratory species conservation issues, identify tools to address the issues and how to implement relevant action and identify follow-up actions, including recommendations for a strategy to follow-up on prioritisation needs.

The meeting was very well organised, relied on professional facilitation led in part by a representative from the IUCN Conservation Breeding Specialist Group and broke into two working groups. The first day was devoted to the governmental representatives identifying priority areas for international co-operation. The scope of the undertaking was the only potentially contentious issue. A "synthesis group" resolved that the scope of the initial work under the initiative would be migratory birds, to be extended to all other migratory species within two years.

During the tool identification stage, the CMS Secretariat, represented by Agreements Officer Lyle Glowka, was given an important opportunity to describe the Convention, its operational tools and its achievements over the last 25 years. This provided a foundation for supportive comments that had been made throughout the meeting about CMS' possible role from the representatives of those CMS Contracting Parties that attended the meeting: Argentina, Bolivia, The Netherlands (represented by the Netherlands Antilles), Paraguay and Uruguay. The CMS Contracting Parties and the CMS Secretariat also hosted a CMS briefing session and reception on the evening of 6 October.

The synthesis group met on the evening of 7 October. It distilled the results and proposed to the wider group some follow-up steps that would comprise a strategic way forward. The Conference agreed to create a process to establish the basis for a hemisphere-wide dialogue on migratory species. Its initial focus would be on migratory birds. An interim Steering Committee was created with regional governmental representation, NGO membership and membership by interested intergovernmental organisations. CMS was invited to sit on the interim Steering Committee.

NGO representation for the Standing Committee was organised around bird and non-bird themes. Three NGOs will represent different bird issues: American Bird Conservancy (North American terrestrial birds), BirdLife International (terrestrial birds of South America, Meso-America and the Caribbean), and Wetlands International (waterbirds and wetlands). BirdLife International and Wetlands International are key CMS partners. The WWF Central American office will lead on non-bird taxa. Each country will designate a focal point responsible for two-way communication with its regional representative to the Steering Committee.

The interim Steering Committee, which will be chaired by the United States representing North America under the leadership of Mr Herb Raffaele, Chief of the US Fish and Wildlife Service Division of International Affairs. Uruguay, a CMS Party, will sit on the interim Steering Committee and represent countries from Southern South America. The US and Uruguay will be joined by other representatives from Meso-America (Costa Rica), Northern South America (Colombia) and the Caribbean (St. Lucia). Among other things, the interim Steering Committee will be responsible for keeping the process alive, producing a baseline report on the status of top-priority needs within the hemisphere, raising money for future meetings, developing a formula for the future and preparing progress reports to the summit of the Americas and other intergovernmental processes and meetings, such as the CMS Conference of Parties.

## MEETING ON EUROPEAN GREAT BUSTARDS IN HUNGARY POSTPONED

A joint meeting of Experts of the European Great Bustard Population and of Range State Representatives of the CMS Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation and Management of the Middle-European Population of the Great Bustard (*Otis tarda*), scheduled from 1 to 5 October 2003, in Dévaványa, Hungary, had to be cancelled.

It was in agreement with the Ministry for Environment and Water of Hungary that the CMS Secretariat took this decision due to technical problems. The CMS Secretariat is currently consulting with the Signatory States of the CMS MOU on the Great Bustard to agree a new date and venue for the meeting. Due to conservation activities between Hungary and Austria on the Great bustard, it is presently being considered to organise the meeting as a joint Austrian/ Hungarian meeting in a transboundary area in spring next year.

## WATERBIRDS AROUND THE WORLD: CONSERVING THE WORLD'S MAJOR FLYWAYS



**3 to 8 April 2004 in Edinburgh**

The conference **Waterbirds Around the World** will be held in Edinburgh, Scotland, from 3 to 8 April 2004. It will be jointly hosted by the Governments of the United Kingdom and The Netherlands, with support from CMS, the Convention on Wetlands, BirdLife International, US Fish and Wildlife Service, North American

Waterbird Conservation Plan, Conseil International de la Chasse et de la Conservation du Gibier (CIC) and many other national and international organisations.

**Waterbirds Around the World** will focus on all major themes and developments related to the global conservation of waterbird flyways during their full annual cycle: breeding areas, stop-over sites and wintering areas, harvest of waterbirds, site networks, flyway monitoring, flyway management plans, climate change and flyways, nomadic migration and many more. It will address achievements of the last 40 years following the first waterbird conference and formulate gaps and needs for initiatives to stimulate future conservation of the world's flyways and the species and habitats involved.

Waterbird migration connects the continents, including the Arctic and Antarctic and waterbird conservation and management is a challenge for all those involved. Conservation and research of waterbirds and their flyways is clearly only possible on the basis of good co-operation at a global level. The year 2004 is a milestone in waterbird conservation. The conference will take place around 40 years after the first European waterbird conference in St. Andrews (not far from Edinburgh) in 1963. It marks the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of CMS and the 5<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the African Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement (AEWA); both of which are important and potentially powerful instruments to stimulate and facilitate conservation, management, sustainable use and research of waterbirds. It is also the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the EC Birds Directive, an important bird conservation tool for Europeans.



The concept of a flyway, as it is now widely used, is mainly based on the migratory behaviour of waterbirds such as geese, ducks and waders, many species of which migrate along rather well-defined routes while for decades using the same wetlands as stop-over and wintering sites. The African Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement is one of the latest examples of a co-ordinated large scale flyway conservation activity. Many more initiatives are in various stages of preparation and implementation such as the Asia Pacific Migratory Waterbird Conservation Strategy, Central Asian Flyway Project, Siberian Crane Flyway Programme, Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network, North American Waterfowl Conservation Plan, American Pacific Flyway Programme, etc.

All initiatives regarding waterbird flyway conservation, including both species groups and single species activities, shall be presented and reviewed. This pertains to the larger international treaties such as CMS and AEWA, flyway strategies and site related networks. New ideas for co-operation and formal arrangements should be launched, and the results of existing ones will be presented and evaluated. Participants will submit flyway contributions on seabird species as well, given the many closely related problems and policy developments such as the recent conclusion of the Albatross and Petrel Agreement (ACAP).

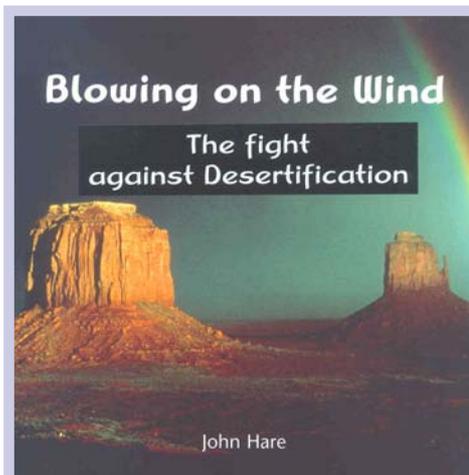
**Further details are available on: [www.wetlands.org/GFC/Info.htm](http://www.wetlands.org/GFC/Info.htm)**

MEETINGS

## BLOWING ON THE WIND: THE FIGHT AGAINST DESERTIFICATION

**R**aising public awareness and informing local communities how to fight against desertification. This is the objective of John Hare, author of this coloured brochure. When water is scarce and fragile soil is being turned into desert, "this is called Desertification, an ugly and difficult word for an ugly and difficult problem". John Hare explains the phenomenon of desertification, which is mostly man-made. Overgrazing by livestock, especially goats, and intensive farming, clearing as well as poor irrigation all promote desertification. Growing population pressure in recent years has accelerated the process. The loss of a huge amount of farmland is threatening. John Hare points out how the reader can take action to combat desertification. The booklet is written in a clear and comprehensive way, which is suitable for schoolchildren, the author's main target group. The message is "Join the fight to stop Desertification and you will be surprised at the difference you can make". With a view to the institutional co-operation with the Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), CMS was involved in fund-raising for the booklet.

*Blowing on the Wind* costs £ 5.00 and can be obtained from the Wild Camel Protection Foundation ([www.wildcamels.com](http://www.wildcamels.com)).



John Hare, Founder  
Wild Camel Protection Foundation  
School Farm,  
Benenden, Kent, TN17 4EU  
England  
[harecamel@aol.com](mailto:harecamel@aol.com)  
[www.wildcamels.com](http://www.wildcamels.com)

## SMALL CETACEA AND WORLD POLITICS ...

Margi Prideaux has submitted her PhD thesis on "Small Cetacea and World Politics ... *developing regimes for species survival*" in June 2003. Her main focus in the thesis is on investigating the importance of global and regional conventions and organisations for small cetaceans, in particular CMS. CMS has a legal mandate for the conservation of small cetaceans. The author refers to ASCOBANS and ACCOBAMS, two regional agreements concluded under CMS, as a potential model for efficient conservation measures. When combined with ecosystems-based management and the protection of critical habitats, they could be applied to other regions and offer the potential of both cetacean and marine environment conservation.

CMS regional agreements aim at threat mitigation by setting up conservation strategies. Regional circumstances and ecosystem-wide considerations are included in cetacean management. Existing agreements consider cetaceans as an integral part of the marine environment to be conserved. Parties have committed themselves to achieve and maintain a favourable conservation status for cetaceans. The author points out that Parties have proved that conservation measures and establishing marine protected areas for these animals turn cetacean protection into an achievable goal. Margi Prideaux concludes that CMS regional agreements might be right way forward in terms of encompassing conservation strategies in a marine environment.

CMS would like to thank Ms Prideaux for her support and express its congratulations on her successful thesis.

## IMPLEMENTING PRIORITY ACTIONS FOR THE CONSERVATION OF THE HIGH ANDES FLAMINGOS



© Pachamama Foundation

*Andean flamingos*

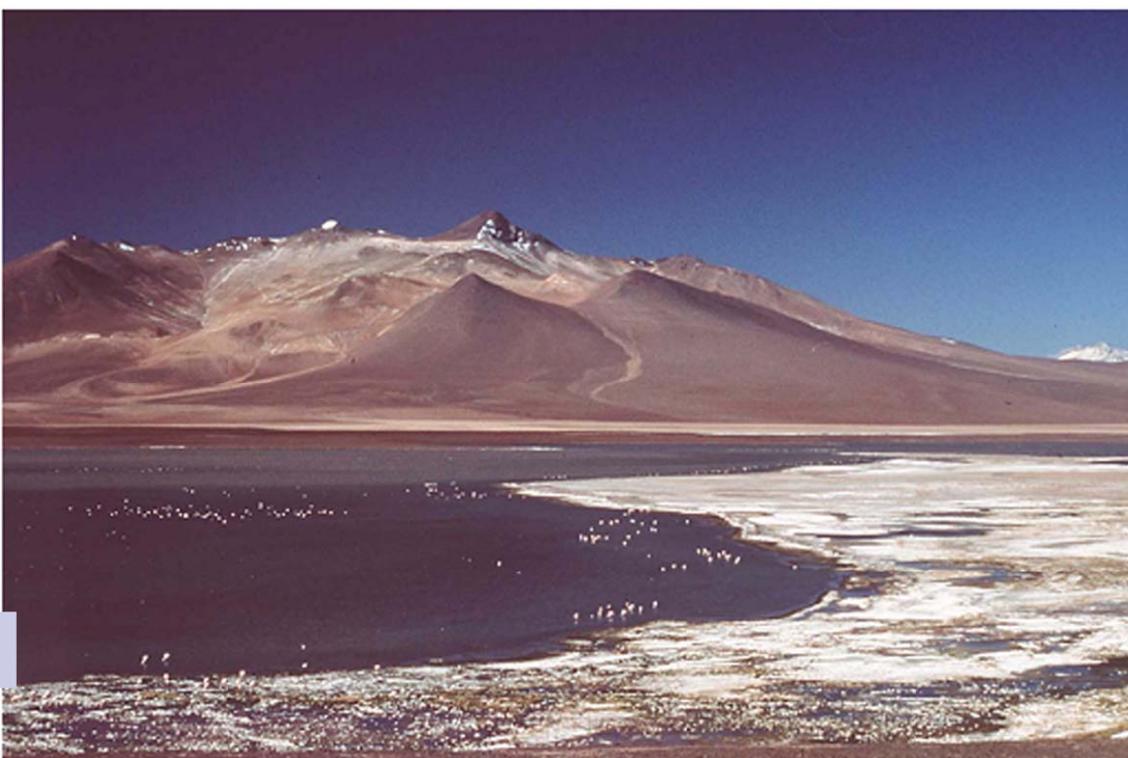
**J**ames' and Andean flamingos are the rarest of the six flamingo species in the world. Argentina, Chile, Bolivia and Peru share the range of these species. Owing to their low population numbers, they are considered vulnerable by IUCN and have been included in both Appendix I and II of CMS. The 5<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CMS has designated the species for Concerted Actions under the Convention.

The High Andes wetlands and their associated flora and fauna are threatened by mining expansion, underground water pumping, geothermal energy production, gas pipelines and power lines, unregulated tourism, overgrazing of their basins, and egg collection. The results of a project supported by CMS in 1998 demonstrate that populations of both species show a strong decline, with the Andean flamingo being in the more critical condition.

The present project aims at establishing a monitoring and surveillance programme of the Andean flamingo's most important nesting colonies and to improve knowledge of the flamingo's migratory patterns and habitat requirements. To attain these objectives, the project provides for

- monitoring and effective protection of the Andean flamingo colonies in the four key breeding areas in Chile, and
- the analysis of Andean flamingo movement patterns by satellite tracking, including identification of priority wetlands for conservation.

The implementation of the project will be co-ordinated by Corporación Nacional Forestal (CONAF), Región Antofagasta, Chile, with the collaboration of Salta National University, Argentina, Administration of National Parks, Argentina, Direction General of Biodiversity, Bolivia, and the Wildlife Conservation Society BOLIVIA. The project is co-funded by CONAF, the Wildlife Conservation Society, the International Flamingo Foundation, the Women in Science Program, and Salta National University.



© Pachamama Foundation

NEW PROJECTS

## CMS SUPPORTS PROJECT TO IDENTIFY WINTERING AREAS OF THE LESSER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE

The world population of Lesser white-fronted geese (*Anser erythropus*) has declined dramatically during the last century. The species is at present regarded as globally threatened. It is currently included in both Appendix I and II of CMS, and has been designated for Concerted Actions under the Convention by the 5<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Conference of the Parties. The main causes for the population decline have been identified in heavy hunting pressure and loss of feeding habitats along the migration route and at the wintering grounds.



© Ingar Jostein Øien

*Lesser white-fronted goose*

The major wintering areas of the geese are close to the Caspian and Black Seas, and at least formerly most of the birds were found in Azerbaijan in mid-winter. However, the ultimate wintering sites of most Lesser white-fronted geese migrating along the Western Palaearctic flyway have still not been identified. The migration route is relatively well known as far south as to Kazakhstan, but it is the

route further south of Kazakhstan that is virtually unknown. Localising staging and wintering areas along this flyway is a crucial element in the design of a comprehensive conservation strategy for the species.

The specific objective of this project is to discover the unknown parts of the migration route through Kazakhstan. To achieve this aim, the project provides for the capture of geese in the main known staging area in Kazakhstan (Lake Kulykol), and for equipping them with satellite transmitters to track their further southward migration. The project is part of a wider initiative aimed at the conservation of the species in the wild by significantly reducing hunting pressure and establishing a network of protected areas to conserve the most critical habitats.

The project is co-ordinated by the Norwegian Ornithological Society (NOF-BirdLife-Norway), and is implemented with the participation of WWF-Finland and the Kazakh NGO Naurzum as well the support of regional and local management authorities in Northern Kazakhstan.

## A NEW PARTY TO CMS: THE SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC

The Syrian Arab Republic has become the 82<sup>nd</sup> Party to CMS as from 1 June 2003. The country is situated in the Middle East, bordering the Mediterranean Sea and five countries, two of which are already Parties to CMS. Syria's accession brings the total number of CMS Parties in Asia, which includes the Middle East, to ten.

The Syrian Arab Republic is already Party to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands. Of direct relevance to CMS, Syria has already ratified ACCOBAMS and become Party to the African Eurasian Waterbird Agreement (AEWA).

The Syrian Desert, which is crossed by the Euphrates River, as well as semiarid and desert plateaus dominate the landscape. A narrow coastal plain alternates with high mountains in the west. The Syrian Arab Republic is a Range State to numerous species of CMS interest. Eighteen species listed on CMS Appendix I are reported to occur in Syria. These include, among others, three species of marine turtle (the Loggerhead turtle, *Caretta caretta*, the Green turtle, *Chelonia mydas*, and the Leatherback turtle, *Dermochelys coriacea*), the critically endangered Slender-billed curlew (*Numenius tenuirostris*), the Lesser kestrel (*Falco naumanni*), the Ferruginous duck (*Aythya nyroca*), and the White-headed duck (*Oxyura leucocephala*), all of them species designated for concerted actions under CMS. A few individuals of Mediterranean monk seal might also still occur along Syrian coasts. Among the numerous Appendix II species reported in Syria, the Houbara bustard, for which a multilateral agreement under CMS is currently being negotiated, deserves special mention. Among the mammals, the Asiatic wild ass and the Black-tailed gazelle have been included in Appendix II by the last meeting of the Conference of the Parties. At a more general level, the territory of the Syrian Arab Republic is situated along the important flyway linking Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia with East Africa through the Bosphorous and the Eastern Mediterranean.

## COTE D'IVOIRE JOINS CMS

Côte d'Ivoire joined CMS as the 83<sup>rd</sup> Party on 1 July 2003. This West African state borders the North Atlantic Ocean, between Ghana and Liberia. Its neighbouring countries, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Guinea and Mali, are already Party to CMS.

Côte d'Ivoire has ratified the following environment-related treaties: the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, the African Convention on the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (Algiers Convention), and the Convention for Cooperation in the Protection and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the West and Central African Region (Abidjan Convention). Within the CMS framework, Côte d'Ivoire is already a Signatory State to the Memorandum of Understanding concerning Conservation Measures for Marine Turtles of the Atlantic coast of Africa. The intergovernmental meeting which adopted the MOU was actually held at Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire) in May 1999. The MOU itself is often referred to as the Abidjan Memorandum. Mostly flat to undulating plains stretch from the Gulf of Guinea to mountains in the Northwest. A great number of species cross the Gulf of Guinea on their migration routes.

Over 70 species of migratory birds covered by CMS Appendices are reported for Côte d'Ivoire. Among them is the Lesser kestrel (*Falco naumanni*), a species designated for concerted actions under CMS. As regards other species than birds, Côte d'Ivoire is a Range State for four species of marine turtle: the Leatherback turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*), the Green turtle (*Chelonia mydas*), the Olive Ridley turtle (*Lepidochelys olivacea*) and the Hawksbill turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*). The Loggerhead turtle (*Caretta caretta*) may also occur here. Other marine species of CMS concern that can be found in Côte d'Ivoire waters include the Humpback whale (*Megaptera novaeangliae*) and the West African manatee (*Trichechus senegalensis*). This latter species was listed during COP7 in September 2002.

Together with its border countries, Côte d'Ivoire is also home to the African elephant (*Loxodonta africana*) listed on CMS Appendix II. The West African populations of this biggest terrestrial mammal are classified as endangered according to IUCN, and they are also listed on Appendix I of CITES. The accession of Côte d'Ivoire to CMS is expected to facilitate the establishment of protected migratory corridors linking various habitats of African elephant populations in West Africa.

## BELARUS 84<sup>TH</sup> PARTY TO CMS

**B**elarus became the 84<sup>th</sup> Party to CMS on 1 September 2003. This Eastern European landlocked state borders Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, and Ukraine, which are already Parties to CMS, as well as the Russian Federation.

Belarus has ratified the following environment-related treaties: the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands and the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution (LRTAP). In addition, it has signed the Law of the Sea Convention. Belarus has taken the lead in preparing the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) concerning Conservation Measures for the Aquatic Warbler. An international meeting to negotiate and adopt this MOU was held in Minsk, the capital of Belarus, in April 2003. Belarus has become a Signatory State to the MOU, to which it is also a Range State.

The flatness of Belarusian terrain and its 11,000 lakes have their origin in glacial scouring. Its widespread marshland represents an ideal habitat for numerous species of waterbirds. Up to 90 species of migratory waterbirds and more than ten bat species are reported for Belarus. The Aquatic warbler (*Acrocephalus paludicola*), the Ferruginous duck (*Aythya nyroca*) and the Lesser white-fronted goose (*Anser erythropus*), listed on both CMS appendices, are designated for Concerted Actions. The territory of Belarus is situated along the important flyway linking Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia with East Africa via the Bosphorous and the Eastern Mediterranean.

## ECUADOR TO BECOME 85<sup>TH</sup> PARTY

CMS welcomes the accession of the Republic of Ecuador to the Convention, which will come into force 1 February 2004.

## CMS SURVEY ON BENEFITS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

In August, the CMS Secretariat distributed over a hundred questionnaires. The idea behind this exercise was to learn more about how the benefits and achievements of the Convention are perceived from national, regional and scientific perspectives. It goes back to the last Standing Committee meeting, where members proposed to focus on concrete advantages and strengths of the Convention. Above all, the analysis is to be of use for recruitment efforts, and the results will flow into future information material.

We thank all Standing Committee members, National Focal Points and Scientific Counsellors, who took the time and made the effort to fill in the details of the survey. Nearly a quarter of the persons contacted replied. The wide and interesting range of answers provide us with hints on aspects we should deepen. Here are just a few examples. While an African country points to sharing of scientific information, a European country emphasises greater co-operation between Range States. A South American country highlights improved co-ordination of stakeholders in field projects whereas a country of Oceania focuses on the legal framework for the development of Agreements.

Although the deadline has passed, we would be very grateful for any additional questionnaires from those focal points who have not had the time to submit them so far. Please get in touch with us and help assess the value added of our Convention!

## PREPARING FOR 25<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY

**Next year marks the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Convention on Migratory Species, which was signed in Bonn on 23 June 1979. Reason enough to celebrate and highlight CMS!**

Since the second quarter of 2003, the CMS Secretariat has started to plan and conceptualise activities for the Anniversary year. The production of new information material as well as preparations for increased media work are well underway. The consultation process on a series of other activities is still in progress. This includes joint activities with NGOs in the field of environment and fundraising among interested and relevant private companies. The CMS Secretariat is also planning to use next year's international days related to biodiversity and environment to highlight the Convention's history and current work.

During the Anniversary year, Parties, NGOs and other stakeholders will receive a kit with information and promotion material on CMS. We hope to encourage as many stakeholders as possible to support our activities or to actively engage in their own events for the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of CMS. The network of our Parties and co-operating NGOs all over the world is so dense that it offers enormous opportunities to celebrate and raise awareness. We look forward to getting in touch with you! Please contact Lyle Glowka (+49 228 815 2422) or Anja Pauls (+49 228 815 2776).

## CMS INFORMATION MANAGEMENT SYSTEM LAUNCHED

Implementation to date of the actions set out in Resolution 6.5 has resulted in the development of the CMS Information Management System (CMS IMS). This system, which is available via the website of the Secretariat, brings together the information provided by the Parties to CMS with their national reports, the knowledge generated within CMS and other biodiversity agreements, and the data from various expert organisations. The CMS IMS offers the following categories of information:

- **Information about animals listed in the CMS Appendices**

This option provides access to the information available in Party Reports for Appendix I species in relation to population size, trends, research and monitoring activities, etc. in conjunction with the information provided on-line by expert organisations (e.g. BirdLife, Fishbase, GROMS, IUCN Red listing, UNEP-WCMC, etc.).

- **Information about animal groups of special interest to CMS**

This option provides access to the information available in Party Reports to CMS on animal groups of special interest to the Convention (i.e. Bats, Birds, Marine Turtles, Marine Mammals, and Terrestrial Mammals - other than Bats), on issues such as implementing legislation, obstacles to migration, endangering factors, impediments for action, assistance required, etc.

- **Information about Parties to CMS**

This option enables the user to obtain a country profile for each Party to CMS, with information on national governmental and non-governmental organisations relevant to the implementation of the convention; implementation of resolutions and recommendations at a national level; mobilisation of financial and technical resources; use of technology such as satellite telemetry; and species listed in the CMS Appendices that are present in the country in question. This option also provides a direct point of entry to the CBD Clearinghouse Mechanism of each Party.

- **Information provided by Parties to CMS on specific themes**

This option enables the user to attain an overview across Parties to CMS regionally or world-wide, on the current state of affairs regarding a number of themes relevant to the implementation of the Convention, such as implementation of resolutions and recommendations, mobilisation of financial and technical resources, and on the use of technology such as satellite telemetry.

#### UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre



UNEP-WCMC, Information Office  
219 Huntingdon Road  
Cambridge CB3 0DL, UK  
Main switchboard Tel: +44 (0)1223 277314  
Information enquiries Tel: +44 (0)1223 277722  
Fax: +44 (0)1223 277136  
Email: [info@unep-wcmc.org](mailto:info@unep-wcmc.org)  
[www.unep-wcmc.org](http://www.unep-wcmc.org)

## GROMS NEWS

**F**ive years after GROMS project leader Mr. Klaus Riede moved from Freiburg to Bonn, the GROMS web site has followed and is now located at Bonn University. The faculty of Biology of Freiburg University had hosted hundreds of megabytes of GROMS data. The change will probably remain unnoticed by the user, but bookmarks must be placed on individual pages again all of which are now to be found under the domain "www.groms.de". If you have bookmarked the www.groms.de domain only, you might have to reload the web page to activate the new links. While trying to search "Google" for GROMS Species fact sheets by typing in a species name + GROMS, you might still end up with old, broken links. We hope that Google will soon be updated appropriately. Meanwhile, fact sheets and other database tools can be downloaded by clicking on "Enter database products".

A new Letter of Agreement (LoA) between CMS, the Zoological Research Institute and the Museum Alexander Koenig (ZFMK) was signed on 5 July. It guarantees further funding of GROMS until 2004. CMS will continue to provide the infrastructure and financial support for further development and maintenance of GROMS. The Work Programme linked to the LoA includes strengthening of strategic partnerships with other organisations and data providers. GROMS will consolidate and update the web site aiming to improve outreach and dissemination while focusing on GROMS data entry. The identification of donors is another strategic issue for the development of capacity building programmes.

### International Discussion Forum on Migration

**T**his forum aims to bring together researchers and conservationists working on migratory animals. "Migration" is an international discussion forum that was set up in 1999. It is provided by the Global Register of Migratory Species (GROMS www.groms.de), in collaboration with Bonn University.

At present 350 subscribers can be reached. Subscription to the list is required to address all list members. If you wish to participate, please subscribe to "Migration" by sending an email to: majordomo@listserv.uni-bonn.de, subject: leave blank, text: subscribe migration.

To post information to the list, send an email to: mailto:listname@listserv.uni-bonn.de.

In case you have subscribed already and your email address has changed, please unsubscribe in order to keep the forum up to date. If you want to unsubscribe, just send a mail with "unsubscribe migration" as subject to majordomo@listserv.uni-bonn.de.

For questions or if problems occur, please contact Klaus Riede: k.riede.zfmk@uni-bonn.de

### GROMS Introduced at International Conference

**A** hundred scientists from 24 countries met for an International Conference and Workshop on "Biological Resources and Migration" at Philipps University, Marburg, Germany, from October 5-8, 2003. The interdisciplinary meeting covered the migration of biological resources such as plants, animals, microorganisms and genes and combined these fields with the migration of people.

The GROMS information system was represented by Klaus Riede (Germany) within a session on animal migration, embedded into lectures on migration in aquatic invertebrates (Bert Higler, The Netherlands), fishes and sea mammals (Paul Rodhouse and Ian Boyd, UK), and on nature conservation consequences of changes in migration and dispersal (Harald Plachter, Germany). The wide spectrum of topics ranged from human migration in the Sahel (Werner Fricke) to dispersal of pathogens (S. Becker: Be a virus, see the world). Results from the meeting will be published in the conference proceedings, published with the Springer-Verlag, Berlin-Heidelberg-New York.

**Web-links to the programme, speakers and themes can be found at the GROMS news section ([www.groms.de](http://www.groms.de)).**

## NEWS FROM BONN

The Federal Government of Germany has invited UN Agencies to move to a new compound in 2005. UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan accepted the offer after prior consultation with the UN Agencies. In 2001, the Federal and Land Governments and the City of Bonn identified the old parliamentary compound ("Bundeshaus") as the area in Bonn that could best host both the UN offices and a conference centre. The German authorities decided to refurbish the existing "Bundeshaus" structures and facilities in a joint effort and have new ones built to serve as the "IKBB - Internationales Koferenzzentrum Bundeshaus Bonn" and the "UN Campus". To that end, they signed a national agreement in Berlin in February 2002, in the presence of the Secretary-General and the Federal President. Since then, UN requirements have been collected for the conference centre, which is to be established in and around the former parliament plenary hall. As for office accommodation, the Federal Government of Germany presented a proposal to the UN in May/June 2003. The offer comprises the "Langer Eugen" high-rise and the neighbouring "Altes Hochhaus" building. Office space on three floors has been assigned to the UNEP Secretariats. The UN Agencies are now reviewing the offer. All agencies' managements and staff associations are participating in the UN Campus Task Force that examines ideas and proposals, consolidates the UN requirements, liaises with the Government, and makes recommendations to management.

UNIC, an extremely busy information centre, closed down on 31 October due to economisation. According to the plan for reforms of Secretary-General Kofi Annan, nine information centres in Western Europe will close down by the end of the year. To replace them, a regional information centre is to be set up in Brussels that will be in charge of the countries that formerly hosted the centres. Starting at the beginning of 2004, a small representation will continue UNIC's work in a scaled-down capacity.

### Bereavement

After fighting a long disease with great dignity and courage, Ms Sharon Capeling-Alakija, Executive Coordinator of the United Nations Volunteers programme, passed away peacefully in the company of her family and closest friends on 4 November 2003 in Bonn, Germany.

She was the fifth Executive Coordinator, having assumed the position on 1 January 1998. Prior to joining UNV, Ms. Capeling-Alakija was Director of the Office of Evaluation and Strategic Planning (OESP) at UNDP's New York headquarters, a post she held from April 1994 until December 1997. She was one of the most senior officers among the Heads of UN Agencies based in Bonn. Her commitment and dedication to the cause of United Nations Volunteers as well as to her staff members was outstanding. She will be sorely missed.



## CMS STAFF RECRUITMENT

After lengthy stagnation and teething problems, the UN staff selection system is in operation. The vacancies of the Information Officer and the Deputy Executive Secretary were posted online in July and August respectively. The selection of a JPO is complete. At the General Staff level, the vacancy of the existing post for a Clerk as well as the newly created post of a Registry Clerk have been filled as of 1 October 2003. UNEP has provided the Secretariat with a Senior Officer for a few months to act as Deputy Executive Secretary. Mr. John Hilborn has assumed his new duties at the Secretariat with effect from 17 October 2003. CMS has recruited a consultant who is very familiar with the Convention, its MOUs and Agreements for a period of four months. Mr. Volodymyr Domashlinets has assumed his new responsibilities with effect from 9 October 2003. He will promote CMS projects in Central and Eastern Europe as well as in Central Asia. In order to strengthen collaboration between CMS and other organisations, CMS has established the post of a Liaison Officer, which will become effective in 2004. The Secretariat is confident that it will have the new staff member on board by March 2004. In the coming months, the Secretariat will devote more time to the staff selection system for vacant and newly established posts in CMS and the Agreement Secretariats of AEWa and EUROBATs. In addition, for every post that has been upgraded, the full selection process will apply. The Secretariat will therefore face considerable delays in its work output during this period.

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

DATE	TITLE	VENUES	ORGANISED BY
<b>2003</b>			
26-28 Nov	UNEP: Intergovernmental Meeting on Great Apes/GRASP	Paris, France	UNEP
1-5 Dec	Bern Convention: Standing Committee Meeting	Strasbourg	Bern Convention
1-12 Dec	UNFCCC: Ninth Session of the Conference of the Parties	Milan, Italy	UNFCCC
8-12 Dec	Partnerships in Environmental Management for the Seas of East Asia (PEMSEA): The East Asian Seas Congress 2003	Putrajaya, Malaysia	
10-12 Dec	Regional Meeting on Marine Mammal Protection in the South Pacific	Apia, Samoa	
10-13 Dec	Third Asia Regional Conservation Forum	Colombo, Sri Lanka	IUCN
<b>2004</b>			
2 Feb	World Wetlands Day		Ramsar Convention
2-8 Feb	Pacific Islands Regional Forum	Suva, Fiji	
9-20 Feb	CBD: 7 <sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Conference of the Parties	Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia	CBD
22-29 Feb	24 <sup>th</sup> Annual Sea Turtle Symposium on Conservation and Biology	Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia	
7-13 Mar	IOSEA: BLI World Conference and Global Partnership Meeting (7-13 Mar)	Durban, South Africa	IOSEA
10-11 Mar	Millennium Assessment Board Meeting	Nairobi, Kenya	Millennium Assessment
10-12 Mar (tentative)	2 <sup>nd</sup> Meeting of Signatory States to the IOSEA Marine Turtle - MoU	Bangkok, Thailand	IOSEA
22 March	International Biodiversity Day		CBD
29-31 Mar	UNEP/SGB: 8 <sup>th</sup> Special Session of Governing Council / Global Ministerial Environment Forum	Jeju, Korea	UNEP
31 Mar - 2 Apr	CMS: 12 <sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Scientific Council	Glasgow, UK	CMS
31 Mar - 2 Apr	AEWA: 4 <sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Technical Committee	Edinburgh, UK	AEWA
3-8 April	WI: Global Flyway Conference "Waterbirds Around the World"	Edinburgh, UK	Wetlands International
5 June	World Environment Day		
23 June	CMS 25 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary	Bonn, Germany	CMS

### PLEASE NOTE

that the old web site address has changed. The new CMS address reads: [www.cms.int](http://www.cms.int)

UNEP/CMS Secretariat  
 Martin-Luther-King-Str. 8  
 D- 53175 Bonn, Germany  
 Tel. (+49 228) 815 2401/02  
 Fax (+49 228) 815 24 49  
 Email: [secretariat@cms.int](mailto:secretariat@cms.int)  
[www.cms.int](http://www.cms.int)



The previous address ([www.wcmc.org.uk/cms](http://www.wcmc.org.uk/cms)) will continue to be valid for some time. On this occasion we would like to thank WCMC for hosting our web site right from its inception.