



## Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of Migratory Birds of Prey in Africa and Eurasia (Raptors MoU)

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1<sup>ST</sup> MEETING OF SIGNATORIES  
Abu Dhabi, UAE, 9-11 December 2012

### SAKER FALCON TASK FORCE

*Report to the 1<sup>st</sup> Meeting of Signatories to the Raptors MoU  
prepared by the Interim Coordinating Unit of the Raptors MoU*

#### Background

1. The Saker Falcon<sup>1</sup> (*Falco cherrug*) was up-listed to Appendix 1 of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) at the 10<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties (COP10) held in Bergen, Norway, during November 2011. The species has, in addition, been more recently up-listed by IUCN to globally 'Endangered', as a consequence of a population trend analysis which indicated that the species may be undergoing a very rapid decline.
2. At the same time as the CMS up-listing of the species occurred, the need for a Saker Falcon Task Force (STF) was recognised and this was formally established by the CMS. Resolution 10.28<sup>2</sup>, adopted at COP10, states that the Parties agree to provide financial and other resources to the operation of the STF and for the implementation of the Concerted Action in cooperation with the Signatories of the Raptors MoU, Range States and other interested parties. The Task Force now aims to bring together Range States of the Saker Falcon, as well as co-operating Partners and other interested parties, to develop a coordinated Global Action Plan (SakerGAP). Importantly, this will include a management and monitoring system for the species.
3. The Saker Falcon Task Force provides a unique opportunity to promote the effective conservation of the species throughout its range. It is anticipated that the STF will play a key role in creating an internationally co-ordinated response to improve the status of the Saker Falcon, including developing robust mechanisms to ensure the controlled and sustainable use of the species for falconry purposes, within an adaptive management framework.
4. It is important that the work on the Saker Falcon fits within wider initiatives on the conservation and management of birds of prey, and particularly within the framework of actions initiated under the Raptors MoU.
5. According to the recommendations of CMS COP10, the Task Force should '*[r]eport to the 1<sup>st</sup> Meeting of the Signatories of the UNEP/CMS Raptors MoU, envisaged for the last quarter of 2012*'. The following summarises the progress of the Task Force so far.

#### The 1<sup>st</sup> Meeting of the Saker Falcon Task Force

6. The 1<sup>st</sup> Meeting of the STF was held in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates (UAE) on 29 March 2012. It was hosted by the Interim Coordinating Unit (ICU) of the Raptors MoU, which is generously supported

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.birdlife.org/datazone/speciesfactsheet.php?id=3619>

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.cms.int/bodies/COP/cop10/resolutions\\_adopted/10\\_28\\_saker\\_e.pdf](http://www.cms.int/bodies/COP/cop10/resolutions_adopted/10_28_saker_e.pdf)

by the Environment Agency - Abu Dhabi, on behalf of the Government of the UAE. Twenty seven participants from 14 different countries, including Government officials and representatives from international and non-Governmental organisations, attended the Meeting.

7. The objectives were to bring together key stakeholders to review and agree Terms of Reference for the Task Force, and to agree on its Work Plan for 2012–14, including adopting an International Single Species Action Plan protocol. The core objective of the 2012-14 Work Plan is Objective 9 ‘*Develop a Saker Falcon Global Action Plan*’, which was agreed to be led by the ICU of the Raptors MoU.

8. Prior to the Meeting, the ICU had prepared and disseminated the Meeting documents, including the Outline Agenda, Objectives, Guiding Principles, Terms of Reference, the Participants’ Introduction Forms and the draft Work Plan of the STF for 2012-14.

9. During the Meeting, participants were requested to take responsibility for leading and driving forward a range of critical tasks to better understand the threats facing the species, and to identify how best to tackle them. Prof. Colin Galbraith (CMS Scientific Councillor) was elected as Chairman and Mr. Umeed Khalid (Ministry of National Disaster Management, Pakistan) as Vice Chair.

The Participants formulated and agreed on 46 Action Points within the following key areas:

- **Terms of Reference and Membership of the Task Force** (Action Points 1-5),
- **IUCN listing** (Action Points 6-8),
- **International Single Species Action Planning** (Action Points 9-10)
- **STF Work Plan 2012-14**
  - Objective 1: ‘Effective day-to-day management, administration and support of the Task Force’ (ongoing)
  - Objective 2: ‘Establish the STF formally and approve its 2012-14 Work Plan’ (completed)
  - Objective 3: ‘Financial planning and fund raising’ (Action Points 11-16)
  - Objective 4: ‘Review Relevant international policies and legislation’ (Action Points 17-19)
  - Objective 5: ‘Carry out stakeholder analysis and develop stakeholders’ network’ (Action Points 20-22)
  - Objective 6: ‘Conduct a knowledge gap analysis’ (Action Points 23-25)
  - Objective 7: ‘Examine the issue of sustainable use’ (Action Points 26-30)
  - Objective 8: ‘Plan and implement fieldwork’ (Action Points 31-33)
  - Objective 9: ‘Develop a Saker Falcon Global Action Plan’ (Action Point 34)
  - Objective 10: ‘Advocate, educate and raise awareness’ (Action Points 35-36)
  - Objective 12: ‘Plan future STF Work’ (Action Point 37)
- **Fundraising** (Action Points 38-43)
- **Timeline and Summary** (Action Points 44-46)

10. A number of task-oriented groups are now being established to address the key issues in the forward work plan highlighted above. These groups will work mainly by e-mail correspondence and by teleconference.

11. The key agreement reached at the 1<sup>st</sup> Meeting was a clear ‘road-map’ for the development of a Global Action Plan for the conservation and management of the species. Importantly, this will include work related to sustainable use, leading in due course to the development of a system to be agreed by all the parties involved.

12. In closing the Meeting, the Chairman summarised the outcomes. The Meeting had brought the Task Force to life; reviewed the Terms of Reference to implement CMS Resolution 10.28; considered the key issues and completed a first review of the proposed Work Plan; identified a timetable for the work; and received a potential offer of a financial contribution from the Saudi Wildlife Authority.

13. The Meeting Report<sup>3</sup>, together with the revised 2012-14 Work Plan<sup>4</sup>, Financial Plan and detailed Timeline were published on-line on the Raptors MoU website in July, 2012 (Inf.11.1).

### **Fundraising efforts**

14. During the 1<sup>st</sup> Meeting, participants agreed that there were many actions that required funding to enable the Task Force to be effective. Firstly, the core work of the STF had to be resourced to ensure effective overall delivery. This needed to be complemented by funding for the Stakeholders' Action Planning Workshop. And significant financial support would also be required in the medium to long term to ensure effective implementation of the Global Action Plan.

15. Apart from an initial contribution of EUR 10,000 granted by CMS Parties at COP10, and US\$ 28,000 contributed by the ICU of the Raptors MoU to prepare and host the 1<sup>st</sup> Meeting of the Task Force, no financial resources had been identified to implement the 2012-14 Work Plan.

16. In order to ensure the implementation of the Task Force's Work Plan, the ICU prepared five international funding proposals between May and October 2012, with the focus on Objective 9, '*Develop a Saker Falcon Global Action Plan*'. Proposals were submitted to: the Saudi Wildlife Authority, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia; the Ford Foundation (Middle East); Defra, United Kingdom; the CITES Secretariat; and, the European Commission.

17. These efforts have secured some major success. The Saudi Wildlife Authority has generously agreed to contribute US\$ 60,000 to fund research required to fill key knowledge gaps in advance of the planned Stakeholders' Workshop. The European Commission has granted US\$ 100,000 to fund the Workshop and preparation of the SakerGAP. In addition, the ICU is actively discussing with the CITES Secretariat to reach agreement to release US\$ 20,000 for work directly related to trade and sustainable use of the Saker Falcon.

### **Forward Plan**

18. Now that some of the required initial funding has been generated, the implementation of the 2012-14 Work Plan will continue with the preparation of the Saker Falcon Global Action Plan (SakerGAP) to be initiated in detail in early 2013. The Work Plan includes actions to gather important background information thematically (Objectives 4-8), and will be undertaken through on-line and face-to-face Stakeholder consultations. It is intended that this process will follow the International Single Species Action Planning protocol developed by the African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement (AEWA), in conjunction with BirdLife International. This is a tried and tested procedure that will be extended from the standard focus on specialists to include wider stakeholders involved with Saker Falcons, including falconry and trade interests. The core activity will be the organisation of the Stakeholders' Workshop envisaged to take place in mid-2013. Attendance is anticipated to extend to 80+ representatives drawn from a wide range of stakeholder groups.

### **Action requested**

In line with the CMS Res.10.28, Signatories and Saker Falcon Range States are invited to:

- a) Note the establishment of the Saker Falcon Task Force and its progress to date, including in particular, the intention to develop a Global Action Plan, incorporating guidance on the conservation and sustainable use of the species.
- b) Consider providing financial and in-kind support to help ensure the implementation the Task Force's 2012-14 Work Plan;

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<sup>3</sup> [http://www.cms.int/species/raptors/pdf/saker\\_tf\\_report\\_072012.pdf](http://www.cms.int/species/raptors/pdf/saker_tf_report_072012.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.cms.int/species/raptors/pdf/saker\\_tf\\_work\\_prog\\_072012.pdf](http://www.cms.int/species/raptors/pdf/saker_tf_work_prog_072012.pdf)

- c) Consider actively supporting the work of the Task Force, including, if appropriate, contributing to the Stakeholders' Workshop planned to be held in mid-2013.
- d) Note that there will be an Open Meeting outlining the work of the Saker Falcon Task Force to be held in the margins of the 1<sup>st</sup> Meeting of Signatories to the Raptors MoU.