



Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals



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

(Brisbane, Australia, 12 March 2023)

UNEP/CMS/ITTEA1/Inaugural Meeting Report

MEETING REPORT

INAUGURAL MEETING REPORT

1. Welcoming remarks and Introduction of Participants

1. Iván Ramírez (Head of the Avian Unit, CMS Secretariat) welcomed participants to the inaugural meeting and briefly introduced himself, Susan Tsang (ITTEA Task Force Coordinator), and Tilman Schneider (Associate Programme Management Officer), and thanked everyone for attending on behalf of Amy Fraenkel (Executive Secretary). He highlighted the importance of this first meeting of the Task Force held jointly with the EAAFP Task Force on Illegal Take of Waterbirds as a way to engage stakeholders in addressing threats to migratory birds and understand the situation in the region by hearing from the participants.
2. Participants were asked to introduce themselves. The full list can be found in Annex 1 of this document.

2. Election of Officers: Appointment of Chair and Vice-Chair of the Meeting

3. Officers for the Task Force were elected. Mr. Ramírez proposed Narelle Montgomery, the representative of the Government of Australia from the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water, who is also serving as the Chair of the CMS Scientific Council, and cited the support that the Australian Government has provided to the Task Force thus far. There were no objections or alternative proposals. Ms. Montgomery was therefore appointed as Chair of the meeting and the Task Force. Ms. Montgomery welcomed the participants. There were no suggestions for the Vice Chair, Ms. Montgomery suggested delaying the appointment of the Vice Chair until later in the meeting after further discussion.

3. Adoption of the Agenda and Schedule

4. The provisional agenda for this meeting was adopted with no additional comments.

4. Overview – Illegal Taking of Migratory Birds

4.1. Mandates, initiatives and major opportunities in addressing illegal taking of migratory birds

5. To set the context of the meeting and the Task Force, Mr. Ramírez gave a presentation about the CMS, its framework, and agreements and other avian-related initiatives under CMS to address illegal take of migratory birds. He highlighted the ITTEA Task Force as an important opportunity and platform for information exchange, and encouraged participation by stakeholders in Task Force activities, such as those in the Programme of Work (POW). The presentation can be found on the meeting website.

4.2. Situation report on illegal taking of migratory birds in the EAAF from BirdLife International

6. Ding Li Yong (BirdLife International) presented a summary version of a situation analysis of illegal take of birds in South and Southeast Asia. The study covered a total of ten countries: Bangladesh, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Thailand, Timor Leste, and Viet Nam. The goal of the situation analysis was to: a) develop an assessment and synthesis of wildlife protection and protected area legislation in each country, b) identify the scale of bird hunting, and c) develop road maps for subsequent

efforts to tackle illegal hunting and trade. The study was slated for publication in time for CMS COP14 in October 2023. Migratory species had received relatively little attention, and knowledge gaps needed to be filled to address the underlying issues effectively, including: understanding of the magnitude and extent of hunting and the underlying motivations; understanding the legal dimensions of bird hunting; assessment of the relative impact of hunting pressure on species; establishment of critical baselines for measuring impact of future conservation action; and forming an evidence base to allow for identification of priorities. Mr. Yong emphasized the need to understand motivations behind why people hunt birds and presented several reasons, including: perceived health/medicinal value of wild meat; local poverty and limited livelihood opportunities; improved access to forests, wetlands and markets; and improved or cheaper hunting tools. The key findings of the study indicated that bird hunting was widespread and particularly high in paddy fields, with little enforcement action addressing the issue in this landscape and many legal grey areas. The key groups taken were: shorebirds in intertidal flats and fishponds, rails and crakes in paddy fields, herons and bitterns in paddy fields, passerines in paddy fields, and marshes in forests. Domestic consumption was listed as the most likely reason for take, with the wild meat trade being ranked second. These findings form an important starting point, and the more detailed situation analysis will include findings organized by country. A version of Mr. Yong's presentation will be available on the Task Force meeting website.

7. The floor was open to discussion on Mr. Yong's presentation. Suh Seung Oh (Ramsar Regional Center in Asia) asked about the percentage of illegal hunting captured by the study. Mr. Yong responded that probably 60-70 per cent was captured, but illegality varied by country and context. A lot of information was available only in local languages, such as the information taken from material in Thailand and Lao PDR. Mr. Oh raised a point related to recent violent confrontations with illegal hunters. Mr. Yong said that rangers were able to effectively carry out enforcement activities within national parks and protected areas, but illegal hunting that occurs outside of these areas still remained a challenge to address. Mr. Oh also mentioned that there needed to be training efforts to improve the specific enforcement of laws related to illegal take of birds, with Ms. Tsang adding that the capacity and number of staff in national parks is often not sufficient and engagement with the local community to supplement available patrol rangers was essential to filling in numerical shortfalls in staffing recently.
8. Mr. Yong answered a question from Mr. Ramírez on how the data were collected, indicating that species list, published datasets and information available through newspapers were used in the study. The collected data allowed for screening of take of migratory birds country by country and species by species.
9. Dr. Srey Sunleang (Cambodia) reiterated the importance of this study, particularly the parts related to livelihoods for local people, with his example being former poachers being hired as rangers. Mr. Yong agreed that this was an important aspect and in Southeast Asia, it did seem that illegal take of birds was highly associated with livelihood issues. Dr. Sunleang and the Chair both emphasized the importance of this aspect and indicated that this was needed as an area of focus for the Task Force POW.
10. A discussion on cultural habits related to take of wild birds and awareness of the issue of illegal take was carried out by all participants. Dong-uk Han (ECO Korea) and Mr. Suh both described the situation in Korea and also the role that social media played in spreading information about how to catch birds. Fa-Tu-Zo Khaleque Mila (Bangladesh) indicated the importance of youth engagement. Dr. Sunleang agreed about the importance of awareness raising, describing some of the work his department had undertaken to address this while advocating for more participation from government partners.

4.3. Update from Task Force members on progress to date

11. The floor was opened to the participants with prepared updates from their offices about any work done related to illegal take of birds. Ms. Mila provided an overview of the actions taken by the government of Bangladesh, Ziyou Yang (Spoonbill Sandpiper in China) provided a video overview of bycatch of shorebirds at clam farms as an overlooked issue, and Eduardo Gallo (University of Washington) provided a video message about how his current work on illegal hunting in the Americas reflecting similarities to the issues in Southeast Asia. Ms. Tsang also prompted the attending participants about any recent updates. Seiji Hayama (Wild Bird Society of Japan) discussed creation of lists of huntable species and Mark Carey (Australia) discussed legal management of hunting at subnational levels and allowances for indigenous communities.

5. Modus operandi for the Task Force

12. For the next agenda item, Mr. Schneider provided an overview of the draft modus operandi. Mr. Carey suggested alignment of elections with future EAAFP MOPs (held every two years in-person), and the Chair added that having a similar side event at each of the MOPs would be a good way to maximize participation by Parties who should be in attendance. The modus operandi was endorsed by the meeting participants, with the understanding that it can be subject to changes in the future, as deemed useful by the Task Force members.

6. Development of draft prioritized Programme of Work for the Task Force

13. The afternoon agenda was primarily focused on the review of and commenting on the draft Programme of Work (POW). Ms. Tsang moderated the discussion of the POW by going over each of the major objectives: 1) to understand the scope, scale, and motivations behind illegal take of migratory birds through a regional situation analysis, 2) to develop efficient and appropriate legislative frameworks and guidance for addressing illegal take of migratory birds, 3) to establish active *in situ* prevention of illegal take, and 4) to establish a sustainable funding base for actions on illegal take. Discussion from participants included comments related to methods for data collection, who should conduct proposed activities, reporting tools, how to utilize pre-existing resources (such as the BirdLife International study), and awareness raising. On awareness raising, there was interest expressed in having Task Force members flag particular activities that they have conducted before to act as case studies for others on how to potentially carry out similar activities, and to translate awareness-raising materials into different languages to cover countries across the broad geographic range of some migratory species. Participants also expressed interest in knowing what others have done in the past as a way to estimate approximate cost for the proposed activities in the POW. This may be useful not only to Parties trying to budget for those activities, but also for research professionals who may have an interest in carrying out small projects on some migratory species. The POW will be modified to capture some of the discussion by participants, and was left open for further comment after the event.

7. Planning of Next Steps

7.1. Next steps of collaboration of both ITTEA and EAAFP Task Force opportunities for communication, capacity building and fundraising

14. The next agenda item aimed to address how the CMS ITTEA and EAAFP Task Forces would work together for communication, capacity building, and fundraising. As previously mentioned, alignment of ITTEA meetings with future EAAFP MOPs could help maximize

attendance. The Chair also promoted the use of virtual platforms for working on specific aspects of the POW to further engage with partners and Task Force members.

7.2. Proposals for draft decisions to be submitted to CMS COP14

15. Moving on to the agenda item on draft decisions to be submitted to CMS COP14, Mr. Schneider presented the current existing CMS decisions related to ITTEA, the most relevant of which were Decision 13.33 and 13.30. Decision 13.33 was considered completed, as the Task Force convened officially. Decision 13.30 related to the global analysis of mist nets and other nets used for bird trapping was highly relevant to earlier discussion about the threat that nets for bird trapping posed in this region. There was some discussion regarding how the current language was too focused on mist nets and perhaps additional language was needed to capture the broader range of netting that occurs. A revision of this text was to be revisited by the Task Force following this meeting and circulated amongst Task Force members for input.

8. Any Other Business

16. There were no additional issues raised and the Chair thanked the participants and encouraged them to attend the dedicated side event during the EAAFP MOP11 later that week. Mr. Ramírez and the CMS Secretariat again thanked the Australian Government as hosts and participants for their inputs.

9. Closure of the Meeting

17. The Chair closed the meeting at 17:00 AEST.

Annex 1: Participants List

Representatives from Parties and Range States		
Australia	Narelle Montgomery	Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment, and Water, Australian Government
	Mark Carey	Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment, and Water, Australian Government
	Rebecca Haughey	Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment, and Water, Australian Government
	Kevin Yang	Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment, and Water, Australian Government
Bangladesh	Fa-Tu-Zo Khaleque Mila	Wildlife & Biodiversity Conservation Office, Wildlife & Nature Conservation Circle, Forest Department, Bangladesh
Cambodia	Srey Sunleang	Ministry of Environment, Cambodia
United States	Richard Lanctot	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, USA
Observer Organizations		
BirdLife International	Nicola Crockford	Principal Policy Officer, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (BirdLife in UK)
	Ding Li Yong	Regional Coordinator, BirdLife International (Asia)
	Shelby Wee	Asia Conservation Officer, BirdLife International (Asia)
	Rose Nyat Jun Au	Chair, Malaysian Nature Society Kuching Branch (BirdLife in Malaysia)
	Batrisyia Teepol	Project Officer, Malaysian Nature Society Kuching Branch (BirdLife in Malaysia)
ECO Korea	Dong-uk Han	Managing Director
James Cook University	Sara Kophamel	
Ramsar Regional Center – East Asia	Sara Ceddia	Assistant Network Officer, Ramsar Regional Center – East Asia
	Seung-oh Suh	Head, Ramsar Regional Center – East Asia
Seoul National University	Chang-yong Choi	Assistant Professor
University of Washington	Eduardo Gallo	David H. Smith Conservation Fellow
Wild Bird Society of Japan	Seiji Hayama	Head of Nature Conservation Office
Wildlife Conservation Society	Jonathan Slaght	Regional Director, Temperate Asia Program

EAAFP Secretariat		
EAAFP Secretariat	Yeonah Ku	Local Project Coordinator
CMS Secretariat		
CMS Secretariat	Ivan Ramírez	Head of Avian Species Team
	Susan Tsang	ITTEA Coordinator
	Tilman Schneider	Associate Programme Officer, Avian Species Team