

# MINIMISING THE RISK OF POISONING TO MIGRATORY BIRDS

*(Document submitted by BirdLife International)*

This document highlights the urgent need for guidance from CMS on minimising poisoning of birds



Together for birds and people

# Background

- Poisoning of wildlife is a significant and avoidable cause of mortality for a variety of wildlife across a range of taxa and geographic areas. Species affected include a significant number listed in the Appendices to the Convention on Migratory Species.
- Poisoning, mainly of birds of prey, is considered the most important issue regarding illegal killing of birds in **Europe**, due to its high conservation impact on a number of threatened species. There are serious concerns that following a decrease in the last decades, **poison use as an illegal method of predator control is increasing in at least nine European countries and already has a negative impact on the populations of a number of threatened migratory bird species.**

# Background

- **Africa too has not been spared-** there is now evidence from a site in Western Kenya (Bunyala) that thousands of birds including migrant waders, storks and ducks are poisoned every year using snail baits laced with Carbofuran. See more reports including poisoning of mammals and fish at <http://stopwildlifepoisoning.wildlifedirect.org/> This could be happening in several other places, e.g. at the Mwea Rice Scheme where previously large numbers of Ducks have been reported poisoned.

# Background

- Reference to the cattle-lion conflict in the border of protected areas is a good African example (hence higher risks for wildlife, and the need to focus mitigation and enforcement measures and to balance them with local development).
- African and Asian vultures is a good way to demonstrate the magnitude of the problem, and also vultures are a good flagship for the rest of the ecosystem

# Background

- Is poisoning of vultures only confined to East Africa, or whether such incidents are more likely to be reported because of the long established networks of conservation and monitoring organisations.
- In April 2004, in the worst incident reported in Kenya so far, 187 vultures died as a result of Furadan poisoning near Athi River. The hardest hit species were White-backed vultures, but Rueppell's and Lappet-faced vultures were also killed.
- As in other cases of poisoning in Kenya, vultures seem not to have been the intended victims: the targets were lions which had killed cattle. This kind of conflict between farmers and wild carnivores often happens at the boundaries of protected areas. But vultures can be attracted over long distances by the sight of others descending on carcasses, which may explain why a recent survey found that numbers of White-backed, Rueppell's and Hooded vultures within Kenya's Masai Mara National Park had fallen by up to 60% over recent decades.

# Envisaged outcome

- Establishment of a working group to undertake a detailed assessment of:
  - ✓ The scope and severity of poisoning of migratory bird species and how this varies geographically and across taxa
  - ✓ The potential human health effects
  - ✓ Significant knowledge gaps, either across range states or in specific areas
  - ✓ Where sufficient evidence exists, to recommend suitable responses to address the problems, potentially including:
    - ✓ Areas where enhanced legislation is required
    - ✓ Features of socio- economic drivers of poisoning
    - ✓ Call for funding to broaden research on poisoning of migratory birds

THANK YOU FOR YOUR  
ATTENTION AND SUPPORT