



Memorandum of Understanding  
on the Conservation of  
Migratory Birds of Prey in  
Africa and Eurasia

Distr: General  
UNEP/CMS/Raptors/TAG1/Report

29 October 2014\*

**Report of the First Meeting  
of the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) to the Raptors MoU**



**20 – 23 January 2014  
Edinburgh, Scotland**

*\* Reissued for technical reasons on 25 January 2015.*



Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of Migratory Birds of Prey in Africa and Eurasia

Convention on Migratory Species Office - Abu Dhabi • United Nations Environment Programme  
c/o Environment Agency - Abu Dhabi • PO Box 45553 • Abu Dhabi • United Arab Emirates  
T +971 2 6934 437 • F +971 2 4997 252 • [cmsoffice.ae@cms.int](mailto:cmsoffice.ae@cms.int) • [www.cms.int/raptors](http://www.cms.int/raptors)



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## Executive Summary

Hosted in Edinburgh by the Scottish Government, with support from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), on behalf of the UK Government, the First Meeting of the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) to the CMS Raptors MoU brought together thirteen TAG members and nine observers (see Annex I for List of Participants). Professor Des Thompson (Europe Region) was elected unanimously as the Chair and likewise Dr Salim Javed (Middle East and North Africa Region) as the Vice-chair of the TAG.

During 2013, the names of nominees for the TAG had been submitted to the Coordinating Unit by Signatories to the Raptors MoU. A selection process, overseen by Mr Bradnee Chambers, CMS Executive Secretary, had been carried out in line with the procedure agreed at the 1st Meeting of Signatories (MoS1), held in December 2012. The outcome was an interim TAG consisting of 10 Regional Representatives, 5 experts, and 1 scientist from BirdLife International (IUCN delegated Red List Authority on birds), which will operate until the 2nd Meeting of Signatories (MoS2) to the Raptors MoU, scheduled to be held in late 2015.

The overall purpose of the TAG is to support and assist Signatories in the effective implementation of the Raptors MoU, including: providing expert advice, information and making recommendations; analysing scientific advice and assessments and to make recommendations (particularly on the MoU Annexes); providing comments on technical proposals to amend the MoU text.; and, carrying out any other tasks referred to it by the Meetings of Signatories.

During the TAG meeting, members discussed and agreed their working practices; reviewed, prioritized and allocated the tasks delegated to TAG by the Signatories at MoS1; defined timelines; and, drafted an outline WorkPlan 2014-2015 covering seven key areas of activity, as follows:

- Activity 1 – MoU: Improvement of protection
- Activity 2 – Threats: Protect and/or manage important sites and flyways
- Activity 3 – Threats: Power grids, renewable energy, illegal killing and poisoning
- Activity 4 – Raise awareness of problems faced by raptors and measures needed to conserve them
- Activity 5 – Guidance: Monitoring, conservation research and appropriate remedial measures
- Activity 6 – Reporting: Supporting measures
- Activity 7 – Horizon scanning and emerging issues

Eight Working Groups (WG) were formed around the key tasks, as follows:

- Improvement of Protection WG: Led by Vicky Jones
- Important Sites WG: Led by Vicky Jones
- Power Grids & Renewables WG: Led jointly by Munir Virani and Nicola Crockford
- Illegal Killing WG: Led jointly by Charles Musyoki Mutua and Nicola Crockford
- Poisoning WG: Led jointly by Vibhu Prakash and Andre Botha
- Awareness Raising WG: Led jointly by Mátyás Prommer and Andre Botha
- Monitoring & Research WG: Led jointly by Jari Valkama and David Stroud
- Reporting & Support WG: Led jointly by Øystein Størkersen, Salim Javed and Des Thompson

Twenty six key actions emerged from the meeting and are listed in Annex II.

Finally, TAG members underwent a training session on using the Raptors MoU online WorkSpace; an electronic tool that will form a platform for their intersessional work. It was agreed that the Second Meeting of TAG should be scheduled to take place in the first quarter of 2015.

## 1. Welcome and Introductions

1. Nick P. Williams (Programme Officer, CMS Raptors MoU) called upon Hugh Dignon, the representative of the Scottish Government to open the meeting.
2. Mr Dignon said that Scotland was rightly proud of its role in the original elaboration of the MoU and was pleased to be able to host the first meeting of the Technical Advisory Group (TAG). The conservation of raptors constituted a major element of Scotland's biodiversity work, both on the part of the Government and its agencies and the voluntary sector, with significant contributions being made by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) and the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) among others. Some successes had been achieved with the reintroduction of the White-tailed Sea-eagle (*Haliaeetus albicilla*) and Red Kite (*Milvus milvus*). Problems persisted with illegal persecution in part because of conflicts with game bird managers and livestock farmers. The Scottish Government, Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) and the police were working together to combat wildlife crime, with more robust legislation and stronger enforcement. Wildlife watching was a key sector of the tourism industry and there was deep public support for nature conservation. A recent public vote led to the recognition of the Golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*) as Scotland's most popular animal.
3. Mr Williams expressed his thanks to Mr Dignon and Professor Des Thompson of Scottish Natural Heritage for their support and hosting of the meeting. The UK Government had also assisted financially through the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra).
4. A video message from Bradnee Chambers (CMS Executive Secretary) was played to the meeting. In his message, Mr Chambers recognized the importance of the Raptors MoU as a part of the CMS Family and the necessity of basing decisions on the best science available.
5. The first meeting of the TAG was an important new step for the Raptors MoU. There was no provision for establishing an advisory body in the text of the MoU but it had become apparent that the Coordinating Unit alone could not provide Signatories with the technical support that they needed. Members of the TAG now had the opportunity to meet face to face and to liaise with a number of key observers. They could also exchange information and would have the benefit of a live demonstration of the online workspace, an initiative that had been developed by the African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement (AEWA) and was now being shared throughout the CMS Family, including the Raptors MoU.
6. Stuart Housden (Director, RSPB Scotland) was introduced. He leads a team of 300 staff in Scotland responsible for managing thousands of hectares of land. He gave a presentation setting out some of the challenges faced by his organization and the status of some key species in Scotland. Conservationists had a reasonably clear idea of the migration behaviour of raptors in Scotland with authoritative books by renowned experts such as Maarten Bijleveld and Karel Voous. It could be reliably estimated that the populations of some species were only 1 per cent of the level of 150 years ago. The main threats had been identified as bottlenecks in migration routes, renewable energy installations, climate change and extreme weather and the loss of prey and habitats to farming and development.
7. In Scotland, NGOs were ready to cooperate with the Government and its agencies and they warmly welcomed the fact that the MoU was now operating. Scottish NGOs with their international connections were often well placed to provide the Government with the data it needed. In other countries BirdLife International might be able to assist where NGOs lacked resources. In addition to its work on the ground, RSPB also lobbied Government to ensure that the case for conservation was heard amid the various conflicting interests. Across the United Kingdom, key NGOs included the BTO, the Scottish Raptor Monitoring Scheme, the Rare Bird Breeding Panel and the Scottish Ornithological Club are variously involved in surveys, monitoring, diagnostic research and advocacy.

8. The Red Kite (*Milvus milvus*) had been reduced to a very small number of breeding pairs in mid-Wales but there were now 1,600 breeding pairs in the UK. Similarly, the White-tailed Sea-eagle was now up to 60 pairs. The Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*) had become extinct in Scotland in 1916 (and at the end of the nineteenth century in England) because of egg and skin collectors and conflicts with fishermen, but had naturally re-established itself in the 1950s. The lesson to be learned here was the benefit of having public support. When the location of one Osprey nest in Speyside was made public, over 17,000 people came to visit. There were now 200 pairs in Scotland and tagging showed that they migrated to West Africa. Of concern, however, was the Hen Harrier which had disappeared from northern England and no nesting attempts were successful in 2013. The species was being persecuted (with its numbers down 21 per cent in the current century) but one individual known as “Bowland Betty” had been tracked from Lancashire through the Scottish Borders to the Highlands before being poisoned. A partnership established at Langholm Moor had shown that diversionary feeding to lure the harriers away from grouse chicks was effective, but landowners still seemed reluctant to take up the practice. With regard to migrants some came to spend the winter in Scotland while others bred there and then left for warmer climes.

9. The effectiveness of public awareness campaigning could best be illustrated by the case of the Amur Falcon (*Falco amurensis*) in Nagaland, India. This species bred in north-east China and wintered in southern Africa passing through India en route. It had been found that the birds were being taken in their thousands in nets, but the hunt had been stopped thanks to pressure exerted – also from CMS – on the Indian authorities.

10. In principle, the RSPB supported the development of renewable energy and the construction of wind-farms provided that they were sensitively located.

11. India had as well seen a sudden collapse in its vulture numbers – the Indian White-backed Vulture (*Gyps bengalensis*) having declined by over 95 per cent in recent years. Three years of research had revealed that Diclofenac used for veterinary purposes in cattle was the cause, and the drug had been banned in India, Pakistan and Nepal and had been replaced by Meloxicam. Vulture numbers had recovered slightly but were nowhere close to historic levels.

## 2. Election of Officers

12. Mr Williams sought nominations for the positions of Chair and Vice-Chair of the TAG. Mohammed Shobrak (Expert – Saudi Arabia) nominated Des Thompson (Representative of Europe – United Kingdom). This proposal was seconded and agreed by the meeting. Munir Virani (Expert – Kenya) nominated Salim Javed (Representative of the Middle East and North Africa – United Arab Emirates). This proposal was also seconded and agreed by the meeting.

## 3. Adoption of the Agenda

13. The Chair invited Mr Williams to introduce the Agenda. There was sufficient flexibility in the schedule to allow interventions from the floor and Mátyás Prommer (Representative of Europe – Hungary) and Nicola Crockford (Representative of BirdLife International – United Kingdom) had already indicated their desire to raise additional issues. The Agenda was adopted.

## 4. Setting the Scene

14. Borja Heredia (CMS Secretariat) gave a presentation explaining the history and role of CMS. He pointed out that the Convention had a definition of “migration” that took political as well as

ecological factors into account. The species covered by the Convention's appendices included birds, terrestrial and aquatic mammals, reptiles, fish and one insect. The Convention was negotiated after the need for an international instrument to conserve migratory species was recognized at the 1972 Stockholm Conference on Man and the Environment. Membership of the Convention had reached 119 Parties with more in the pipeline. In addition, countries that were not party to the Convention could sign the separate Agreements and Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs). Africa and Europe had the highest representation among the Parties and there were gaps in Asia and North and Central America. The Secretariats of the Convention and of three regional Agreements were based in Bonn and there were offices in Abu Dhabi and Bangkok and officers posted in Washington D.C. and Apia, Samoa.

15. The main bodies of the Convention were the Conference of the Parties (COP) which met every three years, the Standing Committee and the Scientific Council. The Convention had two Appendices, Appendix I listing endangered species and Appendix II listing those species that could benefit from international cooperation. Species could be added or removed from the Appendices at the Conference of the Parties.

16. Under the auspices of CMS, seven Agreements and nineteen MoUs had been developed. The Convention was reflecting on how best to proceed with the administration of the MoUs.

17. CMS did not operate in isolation and was part of the Biodiversity Liaison Group and the Chair of the Scientific Council was a member of CSAB, the group made up of the Chairs of the Scientific Advisory Bodies of the biodiversity MEAs. CMS collaborated with a wide range of other organizations including international NGOs and MEAs, in many cases with the relationship formalized through joint work programmes and memoranda of cooperation.

18. Following the 10<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties (COP10) in Bergen, Norway in 2011, the Convention's activities of greatest relevance to the Raptors MoU have been work on flyways, electrocution, taxonomy, poisoning, landbirds and the Saker Falcon Task Force.

19. Mr Williams then described the history of the Raptors MoU. As an MoU the instrument was not legally binding but was flexible and relatively unbureaucratic, since countries could sign it without having to ratify it formally. The MoU was also open to countries that were not party to the parent Convention and among its key roles were spreading good practice, fostering international cooperation and learning lessons from the past.

20. The MoU came into effect in November 2008 so had only been operating for five years. The initial idea of establishing an instrument for raptors was conceived in 2002 and began developing as a result of 6<sup>th</sup> World Conference on Birds of Prey and Owls May 2003 held in Budapest, Hungary. The Governments of the United Kingdom and the United Arab Emirates took the lead in the negotiations, and after substantial progress was made at Loch Lomond in 2007, the text of the MoU was agreed at a second negotiating meeting held in Abu Dhabi the following year. A Coordinating Unit was established in Abu Dhabi thanks to the generous support of the Environment Agency - Abu Dhabi, on behalf of the Government of the United Arab Emirates.

21. The MoU covered 76 species divided into three categories depending on the level of threat and also listed critical sites for migratory birds of prey. Of the 132 Range States and Territories, 46 had already signed along with three Cooperating Partner organisations, namely CMS, BirdLife International and the International Association for Falconry and Conservation of Birds of Prey. There was also scope for national NGOs to contribute more. The Coordinating Unit would continue to focus on international aspects, but the Chair suggested that an alliance of 'Friends of the Raptors MoU' could perhaps be established as a means to open doors, raise awareness and funds, and to allow other interested groups to engage with the MoU and contribute to its work. Efforts to recruit more Signatories would continue in the run-up to the CMS COP in November 2014.

22. The main provisions of the MoU included an Action Plan which identified a range of activities needed to be undertaken by Signatories such as the elaboration of National and Regional Raptor Conservation Strategies and, in some cases, enhancing legal protection. While the MoU was itself not legally binding, Signatories were being encouraged by the Coordinating Unit to integrate activities to conserve birds of prey into their National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) being developed under the auspices of the Convention on Biological Diversity and its Aichi Targets.

23. The Coordinating Unit had made substantial efforts to establish contact with responsible ministries and agencies in all Range States and not just the Signatories, casting the net wide by approaching focal points for CMS, CBD and CITES. Guidelines for National and Regional Strategies had been developed and published and responsibility assumed for the Saker Falcon Task Force set up by the CMS COP10. The 1<sup>st</sup> Meeting of Signatories (MoS1) had been held in Abu Dhabi in December 2012, where the TAG was established and Terms of Reference were agreed. Signatories subsequently submitted nominations to the Coordinating Unit. The members of the TAG had been selected by a Panel comprising the CMS Executive Secretary (Bradnee Chambers), Executive Coordinator of the CMS Office - Abu Dhabi (Lyle Glowka), the Chairman of 1<sup>st</sup> Meeting of Signatories to the Raptors MoU (Colin Galbraith) and Mr Williams.

24. Other areas of activity included drafting an International Single Species Action Plan for the Sooty Falcon (*Falco concolor*), work on the Egyptian Vulture (*Neophron percnopterus*) in association with the Bulgarian BirdLife partner, and collaborating with CMS and other partners to address threats such as electrocution, poisoning and illegal killing of birds of prey. Mr Williams had co-led a technical mission to Nagaland to investigate the trapping of Amur Falcons. With the cooperation of national and regional authorities in India, and by engaging local communities, the harvesting had been stopped.

25. Mr Javed acknowledged Mr Williams and his team for having reactivated the MoU in a very short space of time following a hiatus when the Programme Officer post had been vacant.

**Action TAG1-1:** In the future, to consider the possibility of establishing an alliance of ‘Friends of the Raptors MoU’ with the aim of enabling interested groups to engage with the MoU and contribute to its work.

## 5. Approach and Working Practices

26. Mr Williams explained the aims and objectives of the TAG. The 1<sup>st</sup> Meeting of Signatories had adopted Terms of Reference including details of membership, namely, 10 Regional Representatives, 5 Experts and BirdLife International (IUCN nominated Red List Authority for birds). Members of the initial Interim TAG would serve a term of two years ending at MoS2. It would mainly work through remote communication for reasons of cost and efficiency but it was foreseen to have a second face-to-face meeting at least six months before MoS2, resources permitting. The main tasks of the TAG were to provide technical advice to the Signatories, make recommendations on a range of issues such as how to address key threats to raptors, and undertake some “horizon scanning” for new and emerging issues not covered by the current mandate.

27. Mr Stroud (Observer for AEWA & United Kingdom) said that the TAG could learn from the experience of equivalent advisory bodies of other MEAs which met twice in the triennium, once at the beginning to plan activities and again at the end to sign off on actions before reporting to the Parties/Signatories. Otherwise these bodies worked remotely, with teleconferencing and use of online communication applications being effective means of maintaining momentum. The current meeting was a unique opportunity for the TAG to plan their work and a pro forma template had been prepared for this purpose and was available among the meeting documents. The MoU should strive towards having a consolidated Work Programme with linkages to the activities of other instruments

under CMS such as the CMS Working Group on minimising poisoning so as to promote efficiencies. Consideration should also be given to tailoring outputs for specific audiences: for example, the Signatories, decision-makers in government and elsewhere, conservation practitioners and the general public. Also solutions to problems that worked in some regions might not necessarily transfer to others because the MoU area was large and diverse so a diversity of approaches or outputs may be needed to address any single issue.

28. It was suggested that a lead member be identified for each task and that some tasks might be clustered and assigned to a larger sub-group. More complex issues might need the input of outside experts or, where resources were available, given to consultants.

**Action TAG1-2:** To adopt a pro-forma Task Tracking Document template as a means of organising and planning for TAG tasks, and to identify Working Groups and a Lead member for each task.

## 6. Review of Tasks Identified by Signatories

29. The Chair introduced the next Agenda item which had been divided into smaller sub-themes. Mr Williams suggested that a lead person be identified for each activity.

### 6.1 Activity 1: Improvement of Protection

30. Vicky Jones (Representative of BirdLife International) explained that a scientific rationale had been presented to MoS1 that had updated the data on which the Raptors MoU had been based, which had originated in 2005. The information was drawn from the BirdLife species data held in the IUCN Species Information Service and from the World Bird Database, all of which was updated regularly. One important point was that BLI used a different definition of “migration” to CMS, one which was solely related to ecological factors and made no reference to geo-political boundaries. Within the scope of the update were proposals for a change in the number of species covered, and some suggested amendments to taxonomic nomenclature, with the merger of the Black-eared Kite *Milvus lineatus* under Black Kite (*Milvus migrans*), and the changed names of the Snowy Owl (*Nyctea scandiaca*) to *Bubo scandiacus* and the Mountain Hawk-eagle (*Spizaetus nipalensis*) to *Nisaetus nipalensis*. Of the species listed on Annex 1 of the Raptors MoU, 41 per cent had a decreasing global population trend and Ms Jones provided data on how migratory raptors were faring compared with all migrants birds and all raptors.

31. Mr Williams said that changes to the species listed and the treatment of taxonomy were exactly the sort of issues for which the TAG had been established. He reminded the meeting that a meeting of an ad hoc Bird Taxonomy Working Group had taken place during the CMS Scientific Council Strategic & Planning Meeting in October 2013 in Formia, Italy, where solutions suitable for the entire CMS Family had been sought. Mr Heredia reported on efforts to harmonize avian taxonomy among MEAs and the CMS Family. Mr Heredia explained that the current reference used by CMS was from Sibley and Monroe and that a recommendation would be made to COP11 on which reference to use in future. BirdLife International was about to publish a new taxonomy reference and was examining the consequences of any changes. It was desirable to have a degree of stability and not to change taxonomic names constantly. Mr Shobrak stressed the importance of using consistent English common names as well as recognized taxonomic names. Mr Williams said that the COP decision would help inform the debate at MOS2 next year.

32. Øystein Størkersen (Observer for Norway) asked what the current reference used by the MoU was and expressed concern that the approach being adopted was not coordinated potentially leading to a mish-mash of different references being adopted across the CMS Family. Mr Williams

said that the MoU used the BLI taxonomy rather than the one used by CMS. Mr Shobrak requested that the Coordinating Unit send a list of all the references currently in use.

33. Mr Botha (Expert – South Africa) felt that it would be helpful before the TAG was asked to give its opinion for it to have a summary of the background. Mr Williams said that the explanatory material and taxonomic references were contained in the documentation.

34. Ms Jones said that the species listed in Annex 1 were assigned in the Action Plan to one of three Categories: the first for threatened or near threatened species; the second for species with an unfavourable conservation status and the third for the rest. The improved status of the Lesser Kestrel (*Falco naumanni*) justified its transfer from Category 1 to Category 3. Charles Musyoki (Representative of Africa - Kenya) thought that immediately downlisting the species two steps was quite radical and sought assurances that robust criteria and processes were being followed.

35. Ms Jones suggested that the relevant sources of explanatory information on the IUCN Red List process and BirdLife's taxonomy be posted on the Workspace. Species had originally been allocated to Category 2 on the basis of their SPEC (Species of European Conservation Concern) status in 'Birds in Europe' (BirdLife International 2004) complemented by expert review for species occurring outside Europe. It was possible that some species were globally stable but subject to regional threats and declining locally and Mr Stroud advocated keeping a separate sub-list of such examples, something that would be facilitated if more regional-level data were available. It seemed that some species currently in Category 3 were declining globally and moving them to Category 2 would be justified.

36. Mr Williams and Ms Jones identified the need for more regional focus in data collection to ascertain a clearer picture of the status of species within the MoU area.

**Action TAG1-3:** Taxonomic issues: (a) To defer further consideration of the taxonomic issue until consideration at CMS CoP 11; (b) Post COP11, to re-assess implications of the wider taxonomy issue for the specific MoU listings; and, (c) To generally minimise TAG work on taxonomic issues as one where the direct conservation benefits are limited.

### Migration

37. Some raptor species did not qualify as migrants under BirdLife International's ecological definition, as it excluded the non-cyclical dispersal of juvenile birds, even though some of such dispersals were seasonal and followed the same patterns. These movements were also particularly important for long-lived species such as birds of prey. However, these species had been included on the MoU listings so the Signatories clearly expected some intervention, and all qualified under the CMS definition (Article 1) based on the regular crossing of national boundaries.

38. Mr Virani suggested that the MoU focus on the species suffering the steepest declines. He also asked whether the Mountain Buzzard (*Buteo oreophilus*) which had been split taxonomically from the Forest Buzzard (*Buteo trizonatus*) was considered a migrant, as so little was known about it in Africa.

39. Mr Botha said that the number of species listed should not increase for the sake of extending the Annex but to identify those species in need of international action and concentrate on the more vulnerable ones. The MoU should also take the opportunity of highlighting its successes by downlisting those species whose conservation status had improved.

40. Ms Jones said that evidence obtained from satellite tagging showed that more species than previously known were exhibiting 'migratory' behaviour, and highlighted 10 more candidate species that could be considered for Annex 1.

41. Table 3 provided an indicative List of Key Sites comprising Important Bird Areas (IBAs) identified at the country level by BirdLife partners in partnership with national authorities and others using standardised global and regional criteria. There were now 2,621 IBAs in the region chosen for raptors, an average of 25 sites per country within the area covered by the MoU, compared with just 135 sites on the original list contained in the MoU text. Mr Shobrak said that some governments used the IBA list while Mr Stroud said that the original list of 135 was relatively short as (at the Intergovernmental Negotiation Meetings) some countries had wanted to undertake internal consultations before endorsing the sites assigned to them. Mr Williams pointed out that the MoU was not legally binding so there seemed little point in countries withholding IBAs from the list; the absence of known IBAs led to questions being raised. Having more sites listed was likely to increase local interest in the MoU. Mr Heredia said that some IBAs were more prominent than others, such as those occurring at key bottlenecks for example the Strait of Gibraltar.

**Action TAG1-4:** To develop a revised List of Key Sites included in the Action Plan annexed to the Raptors MoU and for the Coordinating Unit to circulate this to Signatories for review.

### African Vultures

42. Mr Virani and Mr Botha said that one positive to emerge from the vulture crisis in India was that it spurred research into African vultures in the late 1990s and early part of this century. Six vulture species were found in East Africa and Corinne Kendall's PhD work in the Masai Mara had investigated their decline and, in the case of the Egyptian Vulture (*Neophron percnopterus*), local extinction. Mr Botha showed a map illustrating the movements of the Bearded Vulture (*Gypaetus barbatus*) across southern Africa covering all nine countries in the region. There was evidence that a seventh species may migrate and further research might lead to more species becoming candidates for listing under the MoU.

43. At the conclusion of the discussion, the representative of BirdLife International was asked to lead a TAG sub-group to further consider the issues raised.

**Action TAG1-5:** To establish a sub-group led by the representative of BirdLife International to collate evidence of the migratory status of African Vultures to consider the potential listing of the relevant species within the MoU (and CMS) Appendices.

## 6.2 Activity 2: Protect and/or Manage Important Sites and Flyways

44. Ms Jones continued by explaining the second part of the update of the core data with regard to the management and protection of sites.

45. The threat listed as facing the largest number of Category 1 raptor species at the global scale was agro-industrial farming, followed by persecution/ control. Conservationists often only became aware of the seriousness of a threat when the adverse effects were already being seen in the form of population declines.

46. A bar chart with an analysis of all Category 1 species showed which conservation actions were needed. Another bar chart showed that forests were the habitat principally frequented by the raptors listed on Annex 1. Of IBAs identified because of their raptor interest, 57 per cent were breeding sites and 5 per cent passage sites. For 12 per cent of raptor IBAs the role of the site in the birds' migratory cycle was not known or not recorded.

47. In the MoU region as a whole more than half the IBAs identified for migratory raptors had most or all of their area designated, while about one third had little or none of their area designated.

Ms Jones noted that designation ‘on paper’ did not necessarily lead to protection on the ground, so these figures probably represented an optimistic assessment of site protection in the MoU region.

48. Not enough monitoring information was available at the moment with only 25% of Table 3 sites having monitoring data. While sites in Europe were generally in a favourable status, overall 40 per cent were in a poor state (rising to 80 per cent in Asia). Threats to sites was high in Asia and the Middle East (70 per cent of sites) and in Africa (50 per cent). Of the sites actively monitored, 28 per cent were receiving a high conservation response.

49. BirdLife International was using the IUCN threat categories rather than its own bespoke system. Mr Williams therefore suggested that guidance of how to interpret the categories and how to respond to the threats would be useful. Ms Crockford proposed that the CMS Minimising Poisoning Working Group should liaise with IUCN. Mr Botha said that the TAG should consider making a recommendation taking into account that poisoning affected species other than raptors. IUCN guidance might also be sought for other categories such as species reintroduction, trade and overexploitation.

50. Ms Crockford made a proposal to reorder the TAG priority tasks agreed at MoS1. This did not involve many substantive changes, merely the more logical ordering of the tasks. It also took account of work being undertaken under other CMS Working Groups such as poisoning and future work to be assigned to the Working Group likely to be established on energy and the African-Eurasian Landbird initiative filling the gap not covered by either AEWA or the Raptors MoU. It would be important to exert pressure to ensure that the proposed Working Groups were indeed set up and that concerns related to raptor conservation were taken fully into account.

51. After some discussion over whether the tasks were to be carried out sequentially or simultaneously, it was agreed to adapt some aspects of Ms Crockford’s suggestions into the TAG Work Plan.

**Action TAG1-6:** To develop a TAG WorkPlan, taking into account some of the aspects proposed by a representative from BirdLife International.

### Species Reintroduction

52. Mr Williams asked whether the TAG needed to develop guidance on species reintroduction as has been suggested at MoS1. The IUCN had reviewed its guidance on this subject recently, so he felt that the MoU did not need to ‘reinvent the wheel’. The Saker Falcon Task Force, facilitated by the Coordinating Unit, were considering the case of trapped falcons trained for falconry that are then released at the end of the hunting season.

53. Mr Stroud stressed that guidance from the IUCN was available and that – in similar circumstances – the Ramsar Convention and AEWA had prepared guidance explaining what advice was already available and where it could be obtained. Such ‘navigation aids’ were maybe more useful than further work potentially duplicating already existing guidance.

54. Mr Shobrak warned that before efforts were expended reintroducing vultures to India, steps should be taken to ensure that the factors that had contributed to the species’ collapse were not a threat anymore.

55. Mr Javed said that he knew an expert on reintroductions who had recently published and was available to provide advice. Mr Botha said that it would be useful to have a list of experts who could be consulted or recommended to others. Mr Shobrak said that the IUCN group based in the UAE had a list with the names of suitable experts from around the world. Mr Prommer suggested working with falconers who had some expertise but stressed that the IUCN Guidelines should be

followed. In the opinion of Mr Virani, great strides had been made with regard to captive breeding in India, but Africa was less advanced.

56. In conclusion, it was agreed that the Saker Falcon Task Force would continue to deal with the specific issues surrounding that species. Comprehensive and up-to-date IUCN Guidelines were already in existence and the problem seemed to be that they were not always followed.

**Action TAG1-7:** To await the outcome of deliberations of the Saker Falcon Task Force before deciding whether or not any additional guidance on species reintroduction is required.

### Bottlenecks

57. Lily Arison René de Roland (Representative of Africa – Madagascar) said that no IBAs from his country had appeared on the list provided by BirdLife International. Ms Jones explained that this was because none of the IBAs identified in Madagascar had been identified for migratory raptors.

58. Mr Stroud said that regarding threats, 'Article 12' status reports under the European Union Birds Directive were due from the EU Member States which contained assessments of Pressures and Threats for many raptors in the EU28. Any TAG work should seek to use these new assessments. BirdLife International had access to relevant data that it was willing to share.

59. Mr Botha said that one problem was the lack of capacity to assess the information, with some NGOs having limited or no experience of dealing with vultures. Such NGOs would benefit from any advice that the TAG could provide. The Chair said that this might be a service that the proposed 'Friends of the Raptors MoU' could be asked to provide.

**Action TAG1-8:** The Coordinating Unit to ask the Lead of the 'Improvement of Protection' Working Group [Vicky Jones] to include listing of data relevant to threats for raptors in her groups activities.

### **6.3 Activity 3: Renewable Energy, Power Grids and Persecution**

60. Mr Heredia gave a presentation introducing the theme of CMS and renewable energy and featuring the ambitious project being undertaken with IRENA (the International Renewable Energy Agency), which like CMS had offices in both Bonn and Abu Dhabi. The two main expected outcomes from the project were a review and guidelines, with drafts of both expected to be available in time for the CMS Scientific Council in July 2014. The types of renewable energy being considered ranged from biomass, thermal, wind, solar, hydro and wave power. The impacts on all migratory species listed under CMS were being examined and it was expected that a draft resolution would be tabled at CMS COP11.

61. The subject of CMS Resolution 10.11 was Power Grids and Migratory Birds. Birds liked to perch on power lines and often built nests on poles and stanchions with a result that there were many incidents of electrocution and collision leading in several cases to the birds being killed. Both distributor and transmission lines were involved and other contributing factors were the weather (affecting visibility) and pole design including the distances between poles. One solution was to design poles and lines in a way that deter birds from landing on them. CMS COP10 had adopted guidelines developed by the German power company RWE. Among the main recommendations were: environmental impact and strategic environmental assessments and closer stakeholder involvement, especially the energy sector that was keen to improve its green credentials; gathering better baseline data on bird populations and distribution at the planning early stages of a development; producing zone maps showing IBAs and other key sites; fitting existing poles with safer components; enlisting the support of NGOs and their volunteer networks to identify particularly bad

power lines with respect to losses of birds; and regular monitoring of the effectiveness of mitigation measures.

**Action TAG1-9:** The Coordinating Unit to post on the Raptors MoU WorkSpace the CMS ‘Guidelines for Mitigating the Conflict between Migratory Birds and Electricity Power Grids’ and the CMS Res.10.11 ‘Power Lines and Migratory Birds’.

62. These guidelines had been adopted at CMS COP10 so the next stage was to ensure that they were implemented. One way to help this happen might be convening a practical meeting such as a workshop with the energy sector.

63. Mr Shobrak said that the Migratory Soaring Birds project (focused on the Rift Valley-Red Sea flyway) had included a workshop. It was important to highlight all the guidance available for all sectors including relating to wind turbines and overhead cables. Another issue to address was the appropriate duration for monitoring of the effects at the sites.

64. Mr Virani said that President Obama had launched in a major USAID initiative entitled Power Africa to extend access to electricity by investing US\$300 billion in power infrastructure. Some African countries realized that their cables had been built incorrectly and more mitigation work was needed. Mr Virani asked whether CMS could assist by supporting a meeting for sub-Saharan Africa; there were already half a million kilometres of overhead cables in South Africa alone.

65. Mr Stroud said that the Ramsar Convention had a range of policy tools and guidance related to addressing threats – including from the energy sector - to wetlands. Additionally, Ramsar has drafted a major review on current and potential impacts from the energy sector on wetlands for publication as a *Ramsar Technical Report*.

66. Mr Prommer said that there was a map of Hungary showing the network of power lines and important bird sites and the Ministry was using this map in its planning. The Hungarian Saker Project had engaged with power companies and invited guests from China and Mongolia. Given that the power industry was a highly globalized sector, it had been found that some companies followed variable environmental standards in different countries whereas they ought to be following best practice regardless of location.

**Action TAG1-10:** Power Grids: (a) The Coordinating Unit to request the map of Hungary from Mátyás Prommer showing the network of power lines and important bird sites; and, (b) TAG Power Lines & Renewables Working Group to recommend a way for Signatories to develop and utilise maps for planning purposes that incorporate power line networks and IBAs.

67. Ms Crockford pointed out that the ‘CMS Energy Working Group’ had yet to be established, and even if set up by COP11 as expected, it would probably not meet until 2015. It would in all likelihood seek to cover conservation interests and include representatives from the energy sector. Ms Crockford saw no reason not to start preparations so that the Working Group once set up would gather momentum quickly. Mr Virani said that in Kenya conservationists had met the power companies to discuss planning a workshop, but the lack of funding was the problem, and the idea had lost momentum and was losing credibility. Mr Botha said that this was unfortunate as the power companies would appreciate the opportunity of showcasing their work. The Chair wondered whether a power company could be persuaded to take the lead and sponsor an event. Mr Heredia said that with it being a COP year, and with the Scientific Council due in July, it would be difficult for the CMS Secretariat to organize anything. Ms Crockford suggested that the TAG write to power companies asking them to take immediate act now and also to invite Signatories to make voluntary contributions to help fund the meeting. Mr Shobrak suggested an alternative: as power companies all met together in the same way that other industries did, a presentation could be made at one of their industry gatherings.

68. Mr Botha estimated that the proposed event for Africa might cost US\$70,000. Mr Javed suggested that IRENA be approached as they were an amenable partner. Mr Williams undertook to contact the IRENA Secretariat.

**Action TAG1-11:** The Coordinating Unit to liaise with the CMS Secretariat to consider approaching IRENA as to the potential for an industry-supported workshop on energy impacts on migratory birds.

69. Mr Williams expressed his concern that if, as anticipated, the amount of overhead cables was to increase dramatically in Africa then it would be imperative that suitable designs were used, to avoid a catastrophe for birdlife. Although safer poles and installations cost slightly more, the reduced number of outages caused by collisions, reduced maintenance costs and minimized inconvenience to customers as fewer repairs were necessary, were real benefits for the power companies that more than offset the minimal initial extra costs. He suggested that a letter be sent to either President Obama or Power Africa, welcoming their investment to increase access to electricity but urging that the poles used should be of a standard that reduced the risk of electrocution. It was agreed that the Coordinating Unit would draft a letter to President Obama or USAID, to be sent by CMS Executive Secretary, highlighting the opportunity to avoid electrocution and collision threats to migratory birds at this early stage of the Power Africa initiative with assistance from CMS, including possible facilitation of a workshop or a conference in sub-Saharan Africa.

**Action TAG1-12:** The Coordinating Unit to work with the CMS Secretariat to encourage the Executive Secretary to write to USAID, welcoming the Power Africa Initiative, noting risks to migratory birds of expansion of African power-grids and highlighting opportunities to build-in best standards from the outset.

70. Mr Shobrak expressed the view that EIAs did not take enough account of bird migration. Mr Musyoki said that the whole point of such assessments was to minimize the harm to the environment, but that the conservationists' voices did not seem to be being heard. Government planners needed to be aware of the dangers to birds of unsafe power lines. Ms Jones said that there was EU legislation concerning the publication of reports prepared for EIAs, but elsewhere the legislative provisions were less demanding. The Chair said that just as important as the impact assessments undertaken before a project was started was the monitoring of its effects after construction.

### Persecution

71. Mr Heredia reported on the initiative being led by the Council of Europe's Bern Convention on illegal killing of birds in the Mediterranean region. CMS was cooperating and had organized the poisoning workshop back-to-back with a Bern Convention conference in Tunis in 2013. A meeting had also taken place in Bonn on bird trapping in Egypt and Libya with representatives of both countries in response to the hundreds of kilometres of mist nets being set up along their coasts; these nets were targeted at Quail (*Coturnix coturnix*) but the method was unselective and this resulted in a large bycatch of protected species, including some raptors. There were also some localized large-scale shooting of migratory raptors, particularly in Lebanon.

72. Mr Shobrak added that there was some evidence of eagles and vultures being shot in the Middle East and the Gulf. According to Mr Javed, in the UAE such incidents were associated with trying to protect Houbara Bustards from predation.

73. Ms Crockford supported a call for the establishment of a Working Group on illegal killing of birds under the auspices of CMS for the whole Mediterranean and not just the eastern part. The entire Mediterranean was a migration bottleneck, so lessons being learnt there could have wider application. BirdLife International has just begun a 15-month project with a comprehensive review of illegal bird killing in the Mediterranean. The project had five objectives: identifying the main threats,

gathering information on species (population levels), establishing best practice for monitoring, communication of results, setting a roadmap and drawing up a portfolio of responses.

74. Vibhu Prakash (Expert – India) explained that kite flying associated with religious festivals was a common activity in South Asia and occasionally raptors became caught in nylon strings that were coated with glass and were killed or injured.

75. Mr Musyoki said that the position in Kenya with regard to poisons was complicated. Mostly poisons were used with a view to killing large carnivores rather than raptors which tended to be secondary victims. Livestock owners left carcasses laced with pesticides. Predators ate the carcass and died, and then the vultures ate the dead predator. Poison was cheap and readily accessible. The Government was engaged in a campaign with producers, trying to ensure that the manufacturers promoted the proper use of their products. Certain products were no longer imported into Kenya and the number of poisoning incidents had reduced.

76. A question for the TAG to consider was how best to approach manufacturers to inform them of the hazard posed to raptors and how to improve awareness of the risks. In Kenya, the American manufacturers were told that there were only 2,000 lions left in the country and these were at great risk from misused poisons. The usefulness and necessity of pesticides was undeniable, but it was vital that they were used appropriately.

77. Poachers knew that they should look out for vultures as their presence indicated that there was a carcass nearby and this attracted the attention of the authorities. Poachers were now deliberately targeting vultures to keep wardens away from their illegal activities.

78. Mr Størkersen said that the CMS Family should work closely with the ‘chemicals cluster’ of multi-lateral environment agreements, continue its collaboration with the Bern Convention in Europe and beyond and continue to be proactive in promoting the issue of poisoning. The TAG should consider issuing a strong statement. Increased wealth had led to higher degree of sophistication on the part of hunters who were able to take more and more animals. Mr Shobrak added that CMS needed to liaise with other conventions on related issues (CITES on trade, etc.). BirdLife International was active across the Middle East and was running a project on sustainable hunting of soaring birds and not just raptors.

**Action TAG1-13:** The Coordinating Unit to encourage the CMS Family to work closely with the ‘chemicals cluster’ and continue its collaboration with the Bern Convention in Europe and beyond and continue to be proactive in promoting the threat to migratory raptors from poisoning.

79. Mr Botha was having dealings with the South African Department of Agriculture which routinely firebombed pest species such as *Quelea (Quelea sp.)* which ate grain in large numbers (a single bird could eat 3 g of rice a day so a flock of 500,000 could devastate a crop in a week). Unfortunately this method often led to a large raptor casualties as collateral damage. Another problem was large roosts of birds in exotic trees in suburban gardens. A single eucalyptus tree could host thousands of birds and householders concerned at the quantity of droppings would cut the trees down. Such activities were often supported or even encouraged by local authorities if the tree species involved were non-native.

80. Mr Stroud said that there were many reasons why people killed raptors either through direct or indirect means. It was important to understand their motives. Robert Kenward (Observer - IUCN) agreed this was indeed important because the remedies needed were usually different. Public education and more subtle responses were also needed. In the case of corvids, poisoning of eggs and allowing live trapping were found to be an effective solution. It was important to attract more landowners to become members of the TAG. Patrick Stirling-Aird (Observer - Scottish Raptor Study

Groups) said that he had found that on another forum which did include other stakeholders, they tried to play down the problems of raptor persecution.

81. Mr Virani regretted that there was no representative from West Africa present. Cameroon had seen catastrophic declines in raptor numbers as a result of high levels of persecution.

82. The Chair asked whether enough was being done to promote the use of alternatives to poisons. With regard to timescale, Mr Williams said that the BirdLife International study on illegal killing in the Mediterranean region would take 15 months so there would not be any results in time for the CMS COP11 but it might be appropriate to hold a side event. Ideally a volunteer would be found from among the TAG members to act in a liaison capacity.

83. Mr Kenward said that BirdLife International and FACE (The European Federation of Associations for Hunting & Conservation) were working closely on persecution in the Eastern Mediterranean. Those members of the hunting community that acted responsibly did not persecute raptors and their representatives were well placed to contact their counterparts in West African hunters. They would be more persuasive than members of the TAG who were mainly scientists or government employees and therefore less likely to win hunters' trust.

84. Mr Virani cited the case in Africa where a 14-year-old who rigged up a solar-powered motor with lights to frighten off large carnivores. This simple solution was being adapted and the boy had travelled the world promoting his low-tech device.

85. The Chair said that conflicts were central to much of the TAG's discussions this week. The TAG should try to find solutions, but in many cases the conflicts were illusory rather than real. Mr Botha said that the case of the Amur Falcons in Nagaland was an excellent example of a problem being tackled and the solutions found being acceptable to all stakeholders. Mr Stirling-Aird repeated his caveat that while it was good to have all stakeholders around the table, sometimes some players abused their position. Mr Kenward urged patience as often the only alternative to engagement was an escalation of conflict and criminal actions. He said that to effectively address the threat of persecution it was important to understand the drivers behind it, and to liaise with stakeholders seeking mutually acceptable solutions.

#### **6.4 Activity 4: Raise Awareness of Problems Faced by Birds of Prey and Measures Needed to Conserve Them**

86. Mr Heredia spoke about CMS Resolution 10.26 and the related Workshop on bird poisoning led by a coordinator appointed by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB – BirdLife UK). The Workshop had been held in Tunis in May 2013, in conjunction with the Council of Europe's meeting on illegal bird taking and had been funded by the United Kingdom, the Raptors MoU and the European Science Foundation.

87. At Tunis, five priority areas had been discussed: insecticides, rodenticides, poison baits, veterinary pharmaceuticals and lead (used for ammunition and for fishing weights). The new generation of pesticides (nicotinoids) was also discussed.

88. A map of Europe showed the impact of the different poisons in different countries with scores showing the results of a survey indicating the level of impact of each poison. A table presented the status of each species and its susceptibility to the poisons.

89. With regard to pesticides and agrochemicals, there was a clear overlap between agricultural land and key bird areas, where the build-up of residues was a problem. There was evidence suggesting that raptors controlled rodent populations better than either poisons or traps.

90. Of the veterinary drugs, Diclofenac was associated with the 99.9% declines of three species of Gyps vultures. Diclofenac had been banned in 2006 in India, Pakistan and Nepal but was widely used elsewhere. Scavenger species ingested lead when they fed on the carcasses of animals that had been shot.

91. Further information was contained in the documentation posted on the Raptors MoU pages of the CMS website. It was foreseen that a draft Resolution on poisons would be tabled at the forthcoming CMS COP11.

92. Regarding insecticides Mr Mutua urged that the wording be very specific about the legality of using substances in circumstances where wildlife could be endangered and ensure that the labelling on the packaging made clear how the poison was to be used. A distinction should be made between deliberate and incidental poisoning. Responsible and correct use should be encouraged. The Chair questioned the use of the word “minimize” suggesting that “eradicate”, “eliminate” or “prevent” were less equivocal. Ms Crockford subsequently consulted the author and confirmed that “minimize” had been chosen deliberately as it was considered less emotive language. Mr Botha thought that total eradication was not practical while Mr Kenward thought that ‘prevent’ expressed the intention. Mr Kenward also asked whether conservationists were being too reactive and that more horizon-scanning should be undertaken to anticipate problems. The Diclofenac issue had alerted conservationists to wider problems of veterinary drugs and neonicotinoids.

#### Rodenticides

93. The main issue with rodenticides was to prevent irruptions and manage the use of second generation anticoagulant rodenticides (SGARs). Mr Kenward said that there were well documented cases of owls proving to be effective pest control agents preventing rodent population irruptions. A precondition for allowing the use of certain products should be a rodent infestation and regulations should require that only trained personnel should use rodenticides.

#### Poison bait

94. It was important to understand the drivers behind the use of poison bait and these were mostly related to human-wildlife conflicts. Legal professionals such as prosecutors and judges also needed additional training to become aware of the issues and greater effort was needed to implement existing regulations. The Chair said that the message should be that poison should only be used as a last resort. Mr Musyoki said that government agencies often overreacted to the Quelea problem seeking to eradicate the birds at all costs without taking properly targeted measures. Mr Prommer said that Article 15 and Annex VI of the EU Habitats Directive banned the use of poisons for the killing of species listed in Annex IVa and Va of the Directive. In Hungary with a burgeoning fox population hunters were left with limited options in their attempts to control this so-called pest. Mr Musyoki told the meeting that Kenya’s new wildlife laws had come into effect with greatly increased penalties for killing species such as vultures.

#### Veterinary pharmaceuticals

95. The Chair said that it was important to highlight success stories such as the establishment of Vulture Safe Zones (VSZ).

96. Ms Crockford cited the project being undertaken in the Red Sea/Rift Valley region by BirdLife International, the UNDP and the Global Environment Facility (GEF). The consultant leading the poisoning work, Symone Krimowa, had done a similar review and drafted guidelines. Comments on the draft were due by the end of the month and one of the questions was the extent to which the guidelines were applicable to other regions. It was noted that the cases of licences for Diclofenac in Spain, Italy, Turkey and Kazakhstan had come to light and the Spanish Ornithological Society (SEO)

and BirdLife International were pursuing this with the Spanish and European authorities, so no action was necessary from the TAG for the moment. Mr Heredia added that CMS had approached the Spanish National Focal Point and the Environment Ministry was in the process of trying to have the licence revoked. Mr Botha welcomed the news of the action in Spain but asked what was happening in the other three countries as he was concerned that supplies could reach Africa. Mr Virani said that it was important after the collapse of vulture populations in Asia that all countries should be made aware of events in Europe.

97. Mr Kenward asked which company was producing the Diclofenac. Mr Prakash said that there were many smaller manufacturers producing and exporting it.

**Action TAG1-14:** The lead of the TAG Poisoning Working Group to ensure that the points made about poisoning, including the various types, are incorporated into the relevant Task Tracking Document (Activity 3, Task 3.4).

#### Lead shot and fishing weights

98. The solution lay in wider recognition of the existing substitutes for lead and recruiting sympathetic hunters and anglers to spread the word. Mr Williams said that a dual approach was needed of minimizing the use of lead and promoting better alternatives. The Chair suggested that future consideration might be given to setting up a TAG Working Group to find ways of resolving conflicts.

### **6.5 Activity 5: Guidance - Monitor Bird of Prey Populations, Carry Out Conservation Research and Take Appropriate Remedial Measures**

99. Mr Stroud gave a presentation on how raptors were being monitored in the UK and on the lessons being learned. Most monitoring schemes relied on volunteers and were joint ventures between NGOs and government agencies.

100. The UK had some very rare species with as few as 50 pairs; other species were quite rare while others relatively abundant. One success story concerned the Red Kite which had recovered from an all-time low of just a handful of birds.

101. A Rare Breeding Bird Panel had been established in 1973 which drew information from and those licensed to visit nest in the constituent parts of the UK (England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland) as well as from bird recorders appointed in each of the counties. Rarer birds were covered by SCARABBS, a joint initiative of government agencies and the RSPB (Statutory Conservation Agency/RSPB Annual Breeding Bird Scheme), while more common birds were included in the Breeding Birds Survey conducted by the agencies, the RSPB and the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO). Scottish Natural Heritage supported Raptor Study Groups in Scotland but there was no scheme operating across the whole of the UK.

102. The strength of this system was that a vast pool of expertise had been built up among volunteers over the years, and handbooks and guidance were available to help with training. The data gathered were collected in such a way that they could be used for a multitude of purposes, such as reporting under the EC Birds Directive, although in the 1960s and 1970s the locations of some rare birds were kept secret. A regular and reliable funding stream was needed to ensure that core activities could be carried out, especially during the recent financial crisis when government expenditure was reduced.

103. The most poorly monitored species were owls and the Honey-buzzard (*Pernis apivorus*).

104. Mr Stirling-Aird explained that the Scottish Study Groups had been established in 1981 using a different model from the one adopted in England. In Scotland, a Scottish Raptor Monitoring Scheme brought together Raptor Study Groups, government agencies and other NGOs. Scotland was a relatively compact country with a wide range of species. The NGOs provided 300 volunteers and the RSPB led on the monitoring of two species. The Chair emphasized the important role played by the volunteers and in many cases individual experts. The system operating in Scotland showed what could be achieved with a dedicated network of enthusiasts. Mr Williams stressed the importance of cooperation and coordination; in England, implementation mechanisms had been introduced for the licensing system to ensure that nests were not visited too often so as to prevent the birds from being disturbed.

105. Mr Prommer said that in Hungary there were 300 people on a raptor mailing list of whom 50 were active. However in the Ukraine there were probably no more than six or eight people dealing with raptors and in Croatia the figure was probably two or three. He suggested that volunteers from the UK and the Netherlands be encouraged to go to Croatia, Turkey and the Ukraine to help with survey work there. Mr Stroud said that similar cooperative schemes operated for waterbirds. Ms Crockford stressed the importance of taking local volunteers on survey trips so that they could learn. The pan-European monitoring scheme which had only been operating for four years had exceeded all expectations and had built up a large number of volunteers coordinated through university natural history societies in Kazakhstan.

**Action TAG1-15:** TAG Monitoring & Research Working Group to identify mechanisms to more effectively communicate volunteering opportunities for raptor conservation activities, particularly aimed at recruiting volunteers from European States.

106. Mr Botha said that initial steps were being taken towards establishing an African Raptor DataBank (ARDB) and building the associated capacity with the long-term objective of obtaining the same levels of coverage as had been achieved by the UK. One disadvantage was that the NGO-sector was not well developed in some regions of the continent.

107. Mr Williams said that the Coordinating Unit was already working with the ARDB to develop applications for use to capture data in the field using Android, iPhone and other similar devices.

108. Mr Shobrak said that Wetlands International and BirdLife International had developed tools to help identify waterbirds, and a similar product for raptors would be helpful. Mr Kenward said that the Saker Falcon Task Force had established links to falconers as well as birdwatchers. In other cases hunters could be a useful source of information and he cited the example of AEWA cooperating with FACE. Mobile phones were an alternative tool to traditional books for identifying birds. Ms Crockford said that even though there were fewer raptor species, they presented a greater challenge to application designers.

109. Jari Valkama (Representative of Europe – Finland) said his country had a long tradition of bird surveying with many volunteer helpers. The scheme had started in 1982 with funding from the Ministry and the data on 10 km square grids were stored by the Museum of Natural History. Over 30 years the data had provided clear population trends. The quality of the data varied and some volunteers had left the scheme, so their experience was lost. Volunteers, however, received feedback on use of the data that they had helped to provide and this encouraged most of them to continue. The coverage of species also varied with some less-well documented, in part because their nests were difficult to find.

110. Lily René de Roland (Representative of Africa – Madagascar) said that it was difficult to find volunteers willing to work in Madagascar's forests but photographs of birds were posted in villages as an aid for identification.

### The Hen Harrier - *Circus cyaneus*

111. Stephen Murphy of Natural England made a presentation on the Hen Harrier describing its physical characteristics and changes in its population in England, drawing on the results of a PhD study.

112. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the species had been common across the UK. The reduction in forest coverage suited the Hen Harrier which preferred open spaces. The development of muzzle-loading shotguns in the late 1700s contributed to the bird's decline and by the end of the nineteenth century it was restricted to the Highlands and Islands of Scotland. It began recolonizing after the Second World War with the decline of the great estates. By the 1960s there was a small breeding population in England and 25 recorded pairs in the 1970s and 1980s. At the same time Merlins and the Red Kite staged recoveries in similar habitats but Hen Harrier numbers decreased, and 2013 was the first year for some time with no young reared at all. The species had declined by 22 per cent in recent years and conflict with game keepers raising grouse was a likely factor. Engaging with land managers and recruiting conservation volunteers were necessary.

113. Satellite tracking had provided a clearer picture of the species' dispersal ecology and migration. Historical literature suggested that the birds moved to the coasts and marshes outside the breeding season. Data from 42 birds with wing tags over the period 1999-2002 confirmed the old records. Radio tags with range of 40km led to the discovery of one bird in Denmark, some on the Isle of Wight off the south coast of England and some in Southern Ireland and Wales. Light weight satellite transmitters were being now fitted to chicks and 34 tagged birds had been followed for periods ranging from 3 to 30 months.

114. Hen Harriers liked grouse which in turn liked heather. It was possible to model likely suitable habitat but it was not understood why birds frequented some areas but not others. Females tended not to go to the coast but stayed in the Pennine uplands remaining at the same altitude; males behaved differently coming to sea level when temperatures fell too much and three tagged individuals migrated to France and one named 'MacPedro' flew to Spain. Hen Harriers were communal birds so if observers found one, they often found several others roosting close by.

115. The birds' migration behaviour was varied. Some birds migrated while others were sedentary, and males and females followed different patterns. Two sister birds both migrated but to different destinations. Mr Virani said that this was also the case in the elsewhere, the theory being that the female birds were larger and could tackle larger prey while the males foraged further afield in search of more mobile prey.

116. England was not alone in experiencing problems with the Hen Harrier. Losses were also being reported in Palencia, Spain and Poland.

117. Mr Heredia said that management interventions such as supplementary feeding in breeding areas had proven to be successful. This was done not to ensure that the birds had sufficient nutrients but to reduce the number of grouse they were taking and thus reduce the likelihood of persecution by gamekeepers.

118. Ms Crockford said that there were many reasons for undertaking monitoring including understanding population trends and there were pressures to introduce standardized methodologies. When dealing with migratory species, another factor to consider was the optimal time for monitoring to take place during the cycle: the breeding season, during passage or winter congregations. The TAG might consider providing advice on this.

119. Mr Virani spoke of the challenges in East Africa which had provided the greater number of the 16,000 entries in the new pan-African database (ARDB). The Chair suggested that some

stocktaking be done and consideration given to a regional approach to data collection. New information might expose false 'facts' previously assumed to be correct, such as the migration behaviour of Hen Harriers. Mr Stroud said that some of the information upon which the IUCN Red List was based was also old and in need of updating. Some prioritization of the species to be reviewed was also necessary.

120. Ms Crockford saw the potential for attracting financial support from large power companies in support of projects on sensitivity mapping using new technologies. Mr Botha said that funding had been secured for ascertaining vulture movements along power lines. The focus had been placed on Palaearctic birds moving south including many African birds migrating within Africa. Much was learnt about migration movements including some going East-West. With the power network expanding rapidly, this was important baseline knowledge. Capacity was unfortunately rather limited.

121. The Chair suggested that it might be a good idea to establish a list of experts on monitoring who could provide advice or even participate in surveys and Mr Botha stressed that it was important for there to be experts available across the entire MoU area. Mr Williams said that a simple spreadsheet could be produced linking experts to particular species and localities. The list could be published on the Raptors MoU webpage. Mr Shobrak said that travel costs and safety concerns were a problem in some areas. Mr Prommer said that monitoring activities provided an opportunity to raise public awareness and build capacity and that some key bottlenecks such as Gibraltar had active teams whereas he was not sure whether this was true in the case of the Bosphorus. National reports were an important tool in determining where more monitoring effort should be concentrated.

**Action TAG1-16:** TAG Monitoring & Research Working Group to further consider the possibility of establishing a list of experts on monitoring, to potentially provide advice or participate in surveys.

## 6.6 Activity 6: Reporting - Supporting Measures

### Norway's National Raptor Conservation Strategy

122. Mr Williams, commenting that the response from Signatories to the call to submit National or Regional Strategies had so far been disappointing, called upon Mr Størkersen to explain how Norway had gone about devising its strategy. It was understood that the European Union would be completing its Regional Strategy shortly.

123. Mr Størkersen explained that Norway had identified areas where action was needed and where intervention could bring most benefit. The process had been quite complicated with many stakeholders to consult, but the task had been completed with support from the NGO and international communities. The Norwegian Ornithological Society had been commissioned two years previously to start compiling a report, which had recently been published.

124. Norway was among the first countries to sign the Raptors MoU in October 2008 and was building on existing activities both by the government, NGOs and individuals relating to population, taxonomy and the effects of pollution. The country had high environmental standards and the legislation enjoyed high levels of public acceptance and compliance.

125. Norway required full EIAs for large projects and even for small scale ones it had to be shown either that no harm would be caused to the environment or the mitigation measures explained. Some licences that had been issued incorrectly were being revoked and the number of birds killed was being monitored. A new Biodiversity Act had been passed in 2009 enshrining the 'precautionary principle' into Norwegian law. In order to retain subsidies, wind power operations and forestry had to be environmentally friendly. National monitoring schemes had been put in place for raptor species but none were listed in Category 1 of the MoU while 22 were in Category 2.

126. The Raptor Conservation Strategy would feed into the Norwegian National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) process and into reports to the Bern Convention. There was no direct linkage to the EC Birds Directive as Norway was not a member of the EU but Norwegian farmers had to pay heed to certain EU legislation. Mr Javed also mentioned the ongoing NBSAP process in the UAE and efforts to integrate Raptors MoU actions within the NBSAP action plan which provides a very good mechanism for the implementation of the Raptors MoU in the country.

127. The three main challenges faced in developing the report were funding, collating and sorting all the base information and meeting the tight deadlines. The process was helped by the fact that there was already considerable work being done for raptor conservation and the Minister at the time was very enthusiastic. Mr Musyoki also had concerns about the cost of compiling reports and ensuring that the requisite actions were taken afterwards. This in part was facilitated by careful coalition and consensus building. Mr Størkersen said that the next step would be a government-sponsored workshop and agreeing short and long-term actions.

128. There was a discussion about the best approach to engaging other stakeholders. Mr Musyoki said that the inclusive approach was new in Kenya where it had been normal for conservationists to develop a plan and then seek to press ahead. In Mr Stirling-Aird's experience all stakeholders fought their respective corners and so it was important to prepare the conservation case well and master the facts. Mr Botha felt that different approaches might be called for depending on the circumstances; a crisis might require prompt action and recalled how long it had taken for DDT to be banned after concerns first arose.

129. Mr Kenward asked about linkages between the MoU and the EU's Raptor Conservation Strategy. Mr Stroud said that there was a consolidated strategy being prepared on behalf of the EU by the European Commission but it was not yet finalised. He understood that the Ornithological Committee of the Birds Directive would be meeting in the spring of 2014 to do that.

#### Data Sharing

130. Ms Crockford initiated a discussion on data sharing. Mr Prommer said that some project managers were reluctant to disclose data for a variety of reasons: some information related to projects was confidential; some was commercially valuable; and some sensitive for conservation reasons. The Chair felt that nonetheless it would be useful to know who was doing what even if details of project work were not revealed. Mr Stroud said that through the UK's National Biodiversity Network, data sets could be added partially (and confidential information withheld). Mr Musyoki called for agreed protocols on data sharing, so that information would be volunteered in the knowledge that it would not be misused. Mr Williams was aware of mechanisms by which BirdLife International partners could share information through their data zone. Mr Kenward asked whether the Coordinating Unit was in contact with WCMC and the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF): the Coordinating Unit was not directly but the CMS Secretariat was and Mr Williams was anxious to avoid a proliferation of different databases and formats.

**Action TAG1-17:** TAG members to consider providing examples of data-sharing protocols.

#### CMS Online Reporting System

131. Mr Heredia made a presentation on progress concerning the Online Reporting System (ORS) that was being developed for the CMS Family and other MEAs. It was an electronic platform that allowed questionnaires to be tailored to particular needs and for responses to be filed online. The system had been designed by WCMC in conjunction with AEWA which had pioneered its use with the national reports submitted to the MOP5 in April 2012. CMS would use the adapted system for the national reports to be submitted to COP11 by Parties.

132. Speaking from his experience from AEWA, Mr Størkersen said that completing the forms initially took some time, but as the data were stored, subsequently only updated information had to be entered. The system required reliable internet connections and the offline version was still being finished.

133. Mr Williams saw clear advantages with an online reporting system and noted that Signatories had agreed at MoS1 to adopt it. All but two of the Signatories to the Raptors MoU were Parties to the parent Convention. The details of the design of the MoU report could be worked on later.

**Action TAG1-18:** To devise a reporting system for Signatories which integrates with the existing CMS and AEWA Online Reporting Systems – see TTD Activity 6 ‘Reporting: Supporting Measures’, Task 6.1.

### 6.7 Activity 7: Additional Tasks - Emerging Issues and Horizon Scanning

134. Mr Stroud spoke of the experiences with both Ramsar’s Scientific and Technical Review Panel and the AEWA Technical Committee which dealt with a rolling list of issues such as avian influenza, wildlife disease and the potential to engage with specific sectors (e.g. faith and women’s groups). Some of these ‘watching briefs’ had resulted in daft Resolutions being tabled at AEWA Meetings of Parties. He advised that a list of emerging issues be prepared for consideration at the second meeting of Signatories (MoS2). The Chair agreed that it was now the norm for some form of horizon scanning to be undertaken by advisory bodies.

135. Mr Shobrak raised the issue of the loss of tagged birds, many of which appeared to be being intentionally targeted and shot. One problem identified by Mr Williams was that birds fitted with tags and transmitters were potentially easier to see and therefore were more vulnerable to hunters. Birds with transmitters were also seen as a military threat, and Mr Williams cited cases reported from Israel which had lost tagged birds that had been detained as ‘spies’ by the authorities of some neighbouring countries. Mr Shobrak explained that there were fears that such birds could be used to trigger radar defences rather than being used for spying as had been reported. It had emerged that a Spanish company was developing a drone that looked exactly like a Bonelli’s Eagle (*Aquila fasciata*); if this device became widely used, the consequence would probably be more birds being shot.

136. The Chair raised the issue of environmental impact assessments and the impacts of wind farms after construction. In general he felt that the standard of EIAs conducted had proven to be poor. He said that Miguel Ferrer in Spain had now devised a means whereby he could identify exactly where to place turbines to minimize collisions. Mr Kenward said that work by falconers in the US a generation ago had shown what types of power lines were responsible for most electrocutions. Recently, modelling movements of radio-tagged harriers had informed planning for a wind farm proposed near Langholm. He added that any projects funded by the Asian Development Bank or the Arab Development Bank needed an EIA, even if national legislation did not require one.

**Action TAG1-19:** Forward planning: (a) To develop and adopt a mechanism to routinely incorporate horizon-scanning into the work of TAG; and, (b) To capture emerging issues to be presented to MoS2.

### Vultures and the Poaching of Elephants and Rhinos

137. Mr Virani said that it was important to know how quickly the authorities could react to poaching incidents and how rigorously they enforced legislation and pursued cases through the courts. Killing birds should carry appropriately harsh penalties. Mr Shobrak said that the interrelationship between carnivores and scavengers was important, and the balances delicate with the loss of carnivores affecting the availability of carcasses for vultures.

## Climate Change

138. The meeting was reminded that Stuart Housden had mentioned the effects of climate change with greater rainfall reducing hatching and fledgling success among the Golden eagles in the Western Isles. A possible solution might be artificial feeding. Mr Williams expressed concerns that some measures conducted under the banner of raptor conservation were actually domestication of the birds, with consequences for the animals' behaviour. There were also inherent risks in artificial feeding programmes as they increased the danger of disease spreading. Mr Kenward thought that some benign intervention was appropriate in combination with efforts to counteract detrimental factors.

## Additional issues

139. Mr Prommer said that another problem was the loss of secondary habitat. Fewer residual seeds were being left on the ground after harvesting and a farming revolution was taking place in Ukraine and the Russian Federation where traditional agriculture was being supplanted.

140. Mr Virani said that when he was first doing fieldwork 16 years earlier, the idea of raptor education centres was first being developed. With the African landscape changing, there might be more demand for such education centres, run on commercial lines and charging people to enter.

141. Fernando Feas (Expert – Spain) commented that some species had recovered so well that they were now considered a problem and were allegedly attacking livestock. Mr Botha said it was credible that some new-born lambs or ewes giving birth might be attacked by birds of prey. The Chair said that the BBC TV would be joining the meeting the following day and one of the issues that they would raise was the interaction and conflicts between conservation and farming.

142. Mr Prommer said that with technologies improving and becoming more easily available, protocols should be established for tagging birds and a priority list drawn up for species to be the subject for PhD research.

143. The Chair said that more people needed to be trained to handle birds for tagging, pointing out that Mr Kenward had been called away twice during the meeting to provide training in tagging Common Buzzards (*Buteo buteo*).

144. Mr Botha said that a value should be calculated for the ecosystem services provided by raptors. The trade in raptor products for use in traditional medicine was thought to be South African Rand 100,000 each year in the Eastern Zululand alone. Mr Williams cited other cases: the insects eaten by Amur Falcons helped protect crops while reducing the need for pesticides and the collapse of vulture populations in India led to an increase in the number of feral dogs leading to more case of rabies in humans. Mr Stroud pointed out that the MoU's Action Plan made reference to investigating the superstitions surrounding owls in Africa.

## Action Plan

145. Ms Crockford presented a blueprint for prioritizing actions based on years of experience with MEAs and international fora. In tabular form she showed what activities were already being undertaken and which Species Action Plans were in the pipeline, with a colour-coded prioritization scale, indicating where Action Plans already existed (some from the 1990s had been prepared by Mr Heredia) or LIFE+ projects were under way and where they were most pressingly needed. The possibility of organizing workshops in the context of LIFE projects might be explored. One criterion for raising the level of priority might be the number of MoU Signatories that were also a Range State for a species.

146. Mr Prommer said that one of the conditions imposed by the European Commission on projects supported by LIFE was that five-yearly reviews be undertaken of Species Action Plans. Mr Williams added that the draft Saker Falcon Global Action Plan (SakerGAP) would be presented to the CMS COP11 and would take into account European aspects.

#### List of Project Proposals

147. Mr Williams ran through the list of research project proposals that had been received and collated by the Coordinating Unit and invited comments from the floor. The project outlines had been circulated electronically to TAG members in advance of the meeting. Mr Williams stressed that the TAG was only being asked for its opinion on the projects; it would be for the Signatories to decide which of the projects, if any, to fund when resources allowed. The list of projects would be periodically reviewed and new candidates added as had already happened after the Saker Falcon Task Force Stakeholders' Action Planning Workshop that had been held in Abu Dhabi in September 2013.

148. Mr Shobrak's view was that the TAG needed a sound scientific methodology upon which to base its opinions and found that the high-medium-low priority categories were too simplistic, preferring a scoring system. Mr Virani was concerned that species about which little was known might be at a disadvantage and might lose out even though the need for more research or conservation effort was greater. Mr Stroud suggested that the TAG adapt the guidelines used by AEWA which he said provided guidance without being excessively prescriptive and gave a brief description of the provisions and criteria, which included a requirement regular progress reports on funded projects. Mr Heredia said that the CMS Small Grants Programme (SGP) also had a set of eligibility criteria. The most recent call under the CMS SGP had resulted in 46 applications, some of which related to birds of prey.

149. It was agreed that the Coordinating Unit would prepare revised guidance for use by the MoU based on the AEWA model. Projects would be posted on the TAG Workspace. As there was no dedicated fund available to finance the projects, there would be no formal call for applications. TAG members would review the list of project proposals and make recommendations on the priority level of those proposals. The list would then be circulated by the Coordinating Unit to the Raptors MoU Signatories for expressions of interest for voluntary contributions.

**Action TAG1-20:** The Coordinating Unit to circulate the project proposals to TAG Members again with a revised assessment table incorporating some points from the template from AEWA.

**Action TAG1-21:** The Coordinating Unit to collate the comments from TAG Members and to circulate these to Signatories with the suite of Project Proposals.

## 7. Prioritization of Tasks

150. The Chair said that it was his intention to run through the tasks and assign responsibilities as speedily as possible, mindful that some participants would have to leave the meeting earlier to catch flights. The deadline for action unless otherwise stated would be mid-November 2014. It was also noted that four members of the TAG were not present and they too might wish to be involved in the intersessional work. The Coordinating Unit was requested to organise a teleconference with the missing TAG members ideally within two weeks of the meeting.

**Action TAG1-22:** The Coordinating Unit to organize a teleconference with the TAG members that could not attend the TAG1, ideally within two weeks of the meeting.

151. Jenny Renell (Coordinating Unit) had already taken the list of Activities and attempted to fill in the Task Tracking Documents (TTDs). The draft Work Plan contained a list summarizing all the TTDs. The Chair agreed that the proposed process seemed reasonable but asked what the timescales for action and reporting back were, given that there was no firm date yet for MoS2 of the Raptors MoU. The best estimate for completion of tasks allowing for the 60-day deadline for compiling MoS2 papers would be July 2015. Ms Renell pointed out that the documents being shown on screen had been prepared before the meeting and did not take account of the changed structure proposed by Ms Crockford. The Coordinating Unit would revise the documents afterwards to adapt the suggestions agreed by the TAG. MoS2 would need to be presented with a report by the TAG and would therefore have an account of the progress being made towards achieving a range of tasks.

152. The TTDs contained a description, a priority ranking, the name of a lead person or organization, the names of other people involved, the product or outcome, the geographic applicability, the audience, dependencies, financial needs and linkages to other process such as CMS, the CMS Scientific Council, the AEWA Technical Committee, the Ramsar Convention and others, and a miscellaneous section. The TAG was asked to identify the lead person or organization and to assign a level of priority at the current meeting.

153. Activity 1 'Improvement of protection' was deemed essential and Vicky Jones of BirdLife International nominated to take the lead, assisted by Mr Botha and Mr Shobrak.

154. Mr Shobrak said that the new BirdLife International taxonomy is expected to be published in May or June. The CMS COP11 was also expected to make a decision on which reference would be used for the Convention's Appendices. While not underestimating the importance of taxonomy, Mr Williams felt that this issue should not be allowed to cause delays in action on other more pressing conservation-related tasks.

155. Mr Virani said that the TAG could liaise with the IUCN Vulture Specialist Group and the Asian Raptor Research and Conservation Network (ARRCN) and proposed that Mr Botha and Mr Shobrak be involved.

156. With regard to sites, Mr Stroud said that this could be a delicate issue and so BirdLife International needed to consult the Signatories before a formal proposal was tabled. The list of sites presented to MoS1 contained some errors concerning the UK, and the British Government therefore wanted the chance to review any draft list.

157. Mr Kenward suggested that the Peregrine Fund and BLI should lead Activity 2 'Protection and/or Management of Important Sites and Flyways'. Mr Botha said relevant national BLI partners should be involved too and the following TAG members volunteered: Shobrak, Virani, Feas, Prakash, Crockford, Stroud and de Roland. This task was also categorized as essential. Ms Crockford suggested adding a sub-point regarding the need to develop Species Action Plans and Mr Stroud mentioned the link to the assessment of threats to and pressures on birds required under Article XII of the EC Birds Directive.

158. It was agreed that the tasks relating to power lines and sources of renewable energy should be kept together as these would in all probability be dealt with by the proposed CMS Working Group. Illegal persecution would be dealt with separately. Partners with which to liaise included BirdLife International, the Peregrine Fund and the Endangered Wildlife Trust because of its Birds of Prey Programme. Members chosen to serve on the Working Group on 'Power Grids & Renewables' (Activity 3, Task 3.1 and 3.2) were: Mr Virani, Ms Crockford (WG Leads); Mr Javed, Mr Botha, Mr Heredia, Mr Prommer and Mr Shobrak. This area of work was considered essential and a start would have to be made so that an interim report could be submitted to the CMS Scientific Council. Within the Working Group's remit were the IRENA project, the Rift Valley MSB Project and any draft Resolution for COP11.

159. Mr Virani said that the proposed Pan-African Energy Summit could proceed within six months as soon as the funding was secured.

#### Activity 3, Task 3.3 'Persecution (Illegal killing)'

160. Mr Williams reiterated that poisoning had been excluded from this item and was being dealt with as a discrete threat. While considered an essential item of work, it was recognized that finding solutions would be a long-term exercise. It was agreed that Mr Musyoki and Ms Crockford would take the lead assisted by Mr Botha, Mr Kenward, Mr Feas and Mr Prommer. The Working Group would have to liaise with the CMS Pan-Mediterranean Task Force (if established as anticipated), the Bern Convention and the Saker Falcon Task Force. Ms Crockford suggested consolidating the findings of the Amur Falcon case study. Mr Kenward urged caution in the wording of the Working Group's remit saying that mention of 'persecution' had emotional connotations and would not promote cooperation from the hunting community.

#### Activity 3, Task 3.4 'Poisoning'

161. Mr Williams acknowledged that in the run-up to the CMS COP11 it would not be practical to impose on Mr Heredia who was anyway not a member of the TAG. The Chair pointed out that the parent Convention already had a dedicated Working Group which was being chaired by Richard Shaw so this area of work should not prove too onerous for the TAG.

162. It was agreed that Mr Botha and Mr Prakash would lead the TAG Working Group on Poisoning, supported by Mr Stroud, Mr Kenward, Ms Crockford, Mr Prommer, Mr Musyoki and Mr Shobrak. The work was considered a high priority and the lead partners were the CMS Working Group, the IUCN's Sustainable Use and Livelihoods Group and international hunting associations.

163. Mr Heredia pointed out that the interest of CMS in this issue had originated through the Bern Convention's involvement in the Mediterranean region. It was understood that CMS might want to take a global rather than regional perspective of the problem.

#### Activity 4 'Awareness raising'

164. This was a cross-cutting issue and therefore there was some discussion about how appropriate it was to assign it as a separate task. Mr Kenward said that it was a complicated and potentially delicate task that was at risk of being relegated to a lower level of priority. The TAG however decided that it was a high priority. Ms Crockford suggested that the issues which needed to be subject of awareness raising should be prioritized.

165. Mr Prommer and Mr Botha were nominated as the leads to be assisted by Mr Kenward, Mr Shobrak, Mr Feas and Mr Javed. Mr Kenward stressed the need for the TAG Working Group to be multilingual and it was agreed that it should liaise with public relations and communications experts. No particular deadline was set for completion of the tasks of this Working Group.

#### Activity 5 'Monitoring'

166. Monitoring work was considered essential and Mr Valkama and Mr Stroud were appointed to lead the Working Group, with Mr Prommer, Mr de Roland, Mr Javed, Mr Botha, Ms Jones, Mr Virani and Mr Shobrak as members. Nyambayar Batbayar (Representative of Asia - Mongolia) who was not present would also be invited to participate. Mr Kenward would propose a suitable person to serve [subsequently Mr Kenward nominated Mr Janusz Sielicki from the International Association for Falconry and Conservation of Birds of Prey].

167. The Working Group should liaise with EURAPMON, EURING, MoveBank, the African Raptor Database, WCMC/GEOSS, the European Bird Census Council, the Pan-European Bird Monitoring Project, GBIF, the Abu Dhabi Global Environmental Data Initiative (AGEDI), Migratory Soaring Birds Project, the Mediterranean Raptor Migration Network and the Siberian Environmental Center.

#### Activity 6 ‘Supporting Measures’

168. Mr Williams recalled that there were a number of developments: Mr Heredia had reported on progress of the Online Reporting System which CMS Parties were using for their forthcoming COP based on the model pioneered by AEWA; Mr Størkersen had made a presentation on the elaboration of Norway’s Strategy; the EU Member States would be producing reports for the Commission (and of the 28 Member States, 13 were Signatories of the MoU). The aim of the Coordinating Unit should be to go to MoS2 with a draft model of the reporting template and this could not be done until there was some indication of what the strategies would look like and how the MoU was being implemented by Signatories.

169. Ms Crockford said that raptors could be integrated into NBSAPs as this would provide some additional political weight. She, however, questioned whether there were sufficient resources and capacity to allow this to happen and suggested that a Signatory be asked to trial some options. Mr Williams referred to the CMS guidance, the Raptors MoU Guidance on developing strategies and the draft EU Report where linkages had been made to NBSAPs.

170. This task was assigned high priority and Mr Thompson, Mr Størkersen and Mr Javed were asked to lead supported by Ms Crockford, Mr Stroud, Mr Musyoki and Mr Prakash. Umeed Khalid (Representative of Asia – Pakistan) who was not present would also be invited to participate. It was also agreed that the AEWA Secretariat should be consulted on this issue.

#### **Other issues**

##### Fundraising

171. Mr Williams reported that the Coordinating Unit had limited core funds but was working with the Secretariat of the Dugong MoU to develop a joint fundraising strategy.

##### Climate Change, Food Security, and Landscape Change

172. These issues should be considered alongside other threats and pressures (see above).

##### Horizon-scanning

173. The Chair proposed this as a discrete task and suggested that it be the subject of a paper for MoS2 along the lines of the AEWA paper presented by Mr Stroud. It was agreed to add this task to the list as Activity 7.

174. Mr Thompson and Mr Javed were asked to lead with the support of the entire TAG. The task was assigned high priority.

**Action TAG1-23:** The Coordinating Unit to include ‘Horizon-scanning’ to the TAG WorkPlan in ‘Other Activities/Actions’- no TTD required.

##### Vultures

175. Mr Stroud raised the question of the perilous state of vultures, which he thought might be an appropriate subject for a Resolution at MoS2. Mr Virani said that they were certainly a very

threatened group in Africa and Mr Botha agreed. Mr Stroud said that he would gladly coordinate the drafting but needed help with the factual input. Mr Williams suggested that the possibility of raising the issue at the CMS COP11 should also be considered, possibly through organizing a side-event. Ms Crockford suggested that as there were likely to be many Resolutions at the CMS COP11, it might be better to ensure that issues relating to vultures should be mentioned in appropriate texts and that it would be better to have a specific Resolution at MoS2. As there were also indications that some further Gyps species were migrants, consideration might be given to adding some of the more threatened ones to the CMS Appendices. Background information could be provided to any party interested in pursuing this option. Mr Kenward said that there were benefits in listing species as it drew attention to them but he was concerned that the listing procedures might be a distraction. Mr Prommer pointed out that under some funding mechanisms listing on international agreements was a qualifying criterion.

**Action TAG1-24:** The Coordinating Unit to follow up David Stroud's offer to coordinate the drafting of a Resolution on the perilous state of vultures for MoS2.

## 8. Development of the TAG Work Plan 2014-15

176. Mr Williams sought general approval of the structure of the Work Plan rather than a point by point examination. The Coordinating Unit would produce a more refined version consisting of a brief text with a timeline and would circulate this for TAG's comments. The intention was for there to be a flexible document that could be adapted as needed.

**Action TAG1-25:** Once the TTD's are finalised, the Coordinating Unit to: (a) produce a consolidated WorkPlan including a brief legend with a timeline; and, (b) circulate it to TAG members for comment.

### Membership

177. The terms of reference of the TAG allowed for the Chair to invite additional people to attend meetings where their expertise would assist the TAG. The Chair recalled that it had been suggested that the presence of land managers and hunters would be beneficial as well as experts in the fields of consensus building and communications. Mr Virani suggested that Rob Davies with his knowledge of the ARDB or Ian Newton currently working in Uganda might be invited in the future.

### A Gyps Initiative

178. Building on the Bulgarian BirdLife partner's project dealing with the Egyptian Vulture, it was suggested that all Gyps species could be considered together, with a view to holding a workshop before MoS2. Mr Musyoki felt that rather than having a multitude of Single Species Action Plans, it would make sense to deal with a group of species facing similar threats together. This suggestion was approved, subject to resources being available.

**Action TAG1-26:** The Coordinating Unit to include the proposal for a Gyps Workshop to the TAG WorkPlan as a potential Action under Horizon Scanning.

## 9. Allocation of Tasks and Timelines

179. This exercise had essentially been completed under the previous Agenda item with the development of the Task Tracking Documents, with those responsible (Working Group Leads) and the deadlines for completion of the tasks already identified.

## 10. Online WorkSpace Training Session

180. Ms Renell led a live demonstration of the features of the Raptors MoU Online WorkSpace. There were separate sections for the TAG, Sooty Falcon Working Group and Saker Falcon Task Force. Ms Renell explained how the Wiki facility worked and David Stroud said that this feature was still in its early days on the pioneering AEWa Workspace.

181. The Coordinating Unit would endeavour to have all the Task Tracking Documents posted on the WorkSpace by the end of January.

182. Members of the TAG were encouraged to use the Workspace and familiarise themselves on how it worked. Staff members at the Coordinating Unit were ready to provide guidance and help, including via telephone, as required.

## 11. Closure of the Meeting

183. As there was no 'Any Other Business' the Chair drew the proceedings to a close commenting that it had been a very productive meeting thanks to the good organization by the Coordinating Unit and the active participation of the TAG members. Thanks were expressed to the Scottish Government, SNH and Defra who had supported the meeting. Ideas for where the next meeting of the TAG, in about a year's time, might take place should be conveyed to the Coordinating Unit.

## Annex I: List of Participants

### MEMBERS OF THE TECHNICAL ADVISORY GROUP

Mr. Andre Botha  
 Manager: Birds of Prey Programme  
 Endangered Wildlife Trust  
 Private Bag X11 Building K2, Pinelands Office  
 park, Ardeer Road, Modderfontein  
 1609 Johannesburg  
 South Africa  
 Tel: +27829625725  
[andre@ewt.org.za](mailto:andre@ewt.org.za)

Ms. Nicola Crockford  
 RSPB International Species Policy Officer  
 BirdLife International  
 The Lodge  
 SG19 2DL Sandy  
 United Kingdom  
 Tel: +44 1767 693072  
[nicola.crockford@rspb.org.uk](mailto:nicola.crockford@rspb.org.uk)

Mr. Fernando Feas  
 Board Member  
 International Association of Falconry (IAF)  
 Lagasca 36  
 28001 Madrid  
 Spain  
 Tel: +34609209212  
[ffeasc@telefonica.net](mailto:ffeasc@telefonica.net)

Dr. Salim Javed  
 Manager, Terrestrial Assessment & Conservation  
 Environment Agency - Abu Dhabi  
 Maroor Street  
 P.O. Box 45553, Abu Dhabi  
 United Arab Emirates  
 Tel: +97126934711  
[sjaved@ead.ae](mailto:sjaved@ead.ae)

Dr. Vicky Jones  
 Senior Flyways Officer (Science)  
 Birdlife International  
 1 Wellbrook Court, Girton Road  
 CB30NA Cambridge  
 United Kingdom  
 Tel: +44 1223277318  
[vicky.jones@birdlife.org](mailto:vicky.jones@birdlife.org)

Dr. Charles Mutua  
 Ag. Head of Species Research Programs  
 Kenya Wildlife Service  
 Langata Road  
 P.O. Box 40241  
 00100 Nairobi  
 Kenya  
 Tel: +254 722826911  
[cmusyoki@kws.go.ke](mailto:cmusyoki@kws.go.ke)

Mr. Vibhu Prakash  
 Dy. Director/Principal Scientist  
 Bombay Natural History Society  
 Hornbill House, S. B. Singh Road  
 400001 Mumbai  
 India  
 Tel/Fax: +91 1733264426  
[vibhu.mathur@gmail.com](mailto:vibhu.mathur@gmail.com)

Mr. Mátyás Prommer  
 MME/BirdLife Hungary  
 Költő u.21.  
 1121 Budapest  
 Hungary  
 Tel: +36205531296  
[prommer.matyas@mme.hu](mailto:prommer.matyas@mme.hu)

Mr. Lily Arison Rene de Roland  
 National Director  
 The Peregrine Fund Madagascar Project  
 Lot Vr 58 Ter Fenomanana Mahazoarivo  
 P.O. Box 4113  
 261 Antananarivo  
 Madagascar  
 Tel: +261 202221546/261337365719  
[lilyarison@yahoo.fr](mailto:lilyarison@yahoo.fr)

Prof. Mohammed Shobrak  
 Professor at University of Taif  
 Al Haweyah Street  
 P.O. Box 888  
 21974 Taif  
 Saudi Arabia  
 Tel/Fax: +966 12 7241880  
[mshobrak@gmail.com](mailto:mshobrak@gmail.com)

Prof. Des Thompson  
Principal Adviser  
Scottish Natural Heritage  
Silvan House, 231 Corstorphine Road  
EH12 7AT Edinburgh  
United Kingdom  
Tel: +44 131 316 2630  
[Des.Thompson@snh.gov.uk](mailto:Des.Thompson@snh.gov.uk)

Dr. Jari Valkama  
Senior Curator  
Finnish Museum of Natural History  
Pohjoinen Rautatiekatu 13

00100 Helsinki  
Finland  
Tel: +358 50 582 0572  
[jari.valkama@helsinki.fi](mailto:jari.valkama@helsinki.fi)

Dr. Munir Virani  
Africa Program Director  
The Peregrine Fund  
P.O. Box 45111-00100  
00100 Nairobi  
Kenya  
Tel: +254733748922  
[tpf@africaonline.co.ke](mailto:tpf@africaonline.co.ke)

## OBSERVERS

Mr. Hugh Dignon  
Head of Wildlife Management for the Scottish  
Government  
Wildlife Protected Areas, Directorate for  
Environment and Forestry  
The Scottish Government  
United Kingdom  
[Hugh.Dignon@scotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Hugh.Dignon@scotland.gsi.gov.uk)

Dr. Borja Heredia  
Head of Avian Species Team  
CMS Secretariat  
Platz der Vereinten Nationen  
53113 Bonn  
Germany  
Tel: +492288152422  
[bheredia@cms.int](mailto:bheredia@cms.int)

Mr. Stuart Housden  
Director  
Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)  
Scotland  
United Kingdom  
[stuart.housden@rspb.org.uk](mailto:stuart.housden@rspb.org.uk)

Prof. Robert Kenward  
Vice-chair (Europe)  
IUCN Sustainable Use and Livelihoods Specialist  
Group  
Stoborough Croft  
BH20 5AJ Wareham  
United Kingdom  
Tel: +447720843684  
[reke@ceh.ac.uk](mailto:reke@ceh.ac.uk)

Mr. Stephen Murphy  
Ornithologist  
Natural England  
United Kingdom  
[Stephen.Murphy@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:Stephen.Murphy@naturalengland.org.uk)

Mr. Paul Robertson  
Scottish Natural Heritage  
Leachkin Road  
Iv3 8NW  
United Kingdom  
Tel: +441463 725 265  
[paul.robertson@snh.gov.uk](mailto:paul.robertson@snh.gov.uk)

Mr. Patrick Stirling-Aird  
Secretary  
Scottish Raptor Study Group  
Old Kippenross  
FK15 0LQ Dunblane  
United Kingdom  
Tel: +441786 824048  
[pkstirlingaird@live.co.uk](mailto:pkstirlingaird@live.co.uk)

Mr. Øystein Størkensen  
Principal advisor  
Norwegian Environment Agency  
P.O.Box 5672 Sluppen  
Brattørkaia 15B  
7485 Trondheim  
Norway  
Tel: +47 7358 0500  
[oystein.storkensen@miljodir.no](mailto:oystein.storkensen@miljodir.no)

Mr. David Stroud  
Senior Ornithologist  
Joint Nature Conservation Committee  
Monkstone House  
City Road PE1 1JY  
United Kingdom  
Tel: +44 1733 866810  
[David.Stroud@jncc.gov.uk](mailto:David.Stroud@jncc.gov.uk)

#### **COORDINATING UNIT OF THE RAPTORS MOU**

CMS OFFICE - ABU DHABI  
c/o Environment Agency - Abu Dhabi  
P.O. Box 45553  
Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates

Mr. Nick P. Williams  
Programme Officer (Birds of Prey - Raptors)  
Tel: + 97126934624  
[nwilliams@cms.int](mailto:nwilliams@cms.int)

Ms. Jenny Renell  
Associate Programme Officer  
Tel: + 97126934523  
[jrenell@cms.int](mailto:jrenell@cms.int)

## Annex II: TAG1 Actions

**Action TAG1-1:** In the future, to consider the possibility of establishing an alliance of ‘Friends of the Raptors MoU’ with the aim of enabling interested groups to engage with the MoU and contribute to its work.

**Action TAG1-2:** To adopt a pro-forma Task Tracking Document template as a means of organising and planning for TAG tasks, and to identify Working Groups and a Lead member for each task.

**Action TAG1-3:** Taxonomic issues: (a) To defer further consideration of the taxonomic issue until consideration at CMS CoP 11; (b) Post COP11, to re-assess implications of the wider taxonomy issue for the specific MoU listings; and, (c) To generally minimise TAG work on taxonomic issues as one where the direct conservation benefits are limited.

**Action TAG1-4:** To develop a revised List of Key Sites included in the Action Plan annexed to the Raptors MoU and for the Coordinating Unit to circulate this to Signatories for review.

**Action TAG1-5:** To establish a sub-group led by the representative of BirdLife International to collate evidence of the migratory status of African Vultures to consider the potential listing of the relevant species within the MoU (and CMS) Appendices.

**Action TAG1-6:** To develop a TAG WorkPlan, taking into account some of the aspects proposed by a representative from BirdLife International.

**Action TAG1-7:** To await the outcome of deliberations of the Saker Falcon Task Force before deciding whether or not any additional guidance on species reintroduction is required.

**Action TAG1-8:** The Coordinating Unit to ask the Lead of the ‘Improvement of Protection’ Working Group [Vicky Jones] to include listing of data relevant to threats for raptors in her groups activities.

**Action TAG1-9:** The Coordinating Unit to post on the Raptors MoU WorkSpace the CMS ‘Guidelines for Mitigating the Conflict between Migratory Birds and Electricity Power Grids’ and the CMS Res.10.11 ‘Power Lines and Migratory Birds’.

**Action TAG1-10:** Power Grids: (a) The Coordinating Unit to request the map of Hungary from Mátyás Prommer showing the network of power lines and important bird sites; and, (b) TAG Power Lines & Renewables Working Group to recommend a way for Signatories to develop and utilise maps for planning purposes that incorporate power line networks and IBAs.

**Action TAG1-11:** The Coordinating Unit to liaise with the CMS Secretariat to consider approaching IRENA as to the potential for an industry-supported workshop on energy impacts on migratory birds.

**Action TAG1-12:** The Coordinating Unit to work with the CMS Secretariat to encourage the Executive Secretary to write to USAID, welcoming the Power Africa Initiative, noting risks to migratory birds of expansion of African power-grids and highlighting opportunities to build-in best standards from the outset.

**Action TAG1-13:** The Coordinating Unit to encourage the CMS Family to work closely with the ‘chemicals cluster’ and continue its collaboration with the Bern Convention in Europe and beyond and continue to be proactive in promoting the threat to migratory raptors from poisoning.

**Action TAG1-14:** The lead of the TAG Poisoning Working Group to ensure that the points made about poisoning, including the various types, are incorporated into the relevant Task Tracking Document (Activity 3, Task 3.4).

**Action TAG1-15:** TAG Monitoring & Research Working Group to identify mechanisms to more effectively communicate volunteering opportunities for raptor conservation activities, particularly aimed at recruiting volunteers from European States.

**Action TAG1-16:** TAG Monitoring & Research Working Group to further consider the possibility of establishing a list of experts on monitoring, to potentially provide advice or participate in surveys.

**Action TAG1-17:** TAG members to consider providing examples of data-sharing protocols.

**Action TAG1-18:** To devise a reporting system for Signatories which integrates with the existing CMS and AEWA Online Reporting Systems – see TTD Activity 6 ‘Reporting: Supporting Measures’, Task 6.1.

**Action TAG1-19:** Forward planning: (a) To develop and adopt a mechanism to routinely incorporate horizon-scanning into the work of TAG; and, (b) To capture emerging issues to be presented to MoS2.

**Action TAG1-20:** The Coordinating Unit to circulate the project proposals to TAG Members again with a revised assessment table incorporating some points from the template from AEWA.

**Action TAG1-21:** The Coordinating Unit to collate the comments from TAG Members and to circulate these to Signatories with the suite of Project Proposals.

**Action TAG1-22:** The Coordinating Unit to organize a teleconference with the TAG members that could not attend the TAG1, ideally within two weeks of the meeting.

**Action TAG1-23:** The Coordinating Unit to include ‘Horizon-scanning’ to the TAG WorkPlan in ‘Other Activities/Actions’- no TTD required.

**Action TAG1-24:** The Coordinating Unit to follow up David Stroud’s offer to coordinate the drafting of a Resolution on the perilous state of vultures for MoS2.

**Action TAG1-25:** Once the TTD’s are finalised, the Coordinating Unit to: (a) produce a consolidated WorkPlan including a brief legend with a timeline; and, (b) circulate it to TAG members for comment.

**Action TAG1-26:** The Coordinating Unit to include the proposal for a Gyps Workshop to the TAG WorkPlan as a potential Action under Horizon Scanning.