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IMPACT OF INVASIVE ALIEN SPECIES ON SPECIES UNDER THE CONVENTION ON MIGRATORY SPECIES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

(Prepared by the IUCN SSC Invasive Species Specialist Group)

This study undertook an assessment of the impacts of Invasive Alien Species (IAS) on migratory species that are protected under the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals Appendix I and II with the aim of:

- Identifying those migratory populations that are most threatened by IAS;
- Specifically assessing the impact of IAS on migratory species on islands;
- Identifying those CMS-listed species that are known to be invasive;
- Evaluating how the threat of IAS on migratory species is likely to develop in the light of climate change and identifying those CMS listed species that will be most severely affected as a result;
- Identifying gaps in the international regulatory framework where CMS could play a role in relation to IAS; and
- Identifying synergies with other organizations that are already working on IAS management and where CMS could benefit from initiatives already underway.

This report is divided into two parts, PART I, which assesses the impact of IAS on CMS listed species and PART II, which evaluates the gaps in the international regulatory framework in relation to the management of IAS and identifies synergies between organizations that address this threat so as to promote collaboration.

PART I

Extent of the impact of IAS

Key findings of this assessment on the extent of the impact of IAS on migratory species globally and especially on island ecosystems are as follows:

- Just over one third of species protected under CMS Appendix I and II are under some level of threat from IAS.

- Most of these migratory species upon which IAS are having an impact occur in the terrestrial/marine biome followed by those in the terrestrial and terrestrial/freshwater biome.

- Seabird and marine turtle populations in their breeding/nesting grounds on island ecosystems are most under the threat of IAS.

- Predominant threat mechanisms are predation, habitat loss, disease transmission, competition and interspecific hybridization.

Migratory species that are known IAS

An assessment was undertaken of those CMS listed species that are known to be invasive in their introduced range. Only three species on the CMS Appendix I and II are well known IAS. They include introduced populationS of aoudad (*Ammotragus lervia*), mouflon (*Ovis ammon*) and the Sacred ibis (*Threskiornis aethiopicus*).

An additional initial analysis was undertaken of comparing all migratory species names listed in the Global Register of Migratory Species (GROMS) with lists of known IAS in the two global resources of IAS information – the IUCN Invasive Species Specialist Group's Global Invasive Species Database (GISD) and the CAB International's Invasive Species Compendium (ISC). Ninety-one migratory species, most of them migratory fish species are known IAS. The introductions of a majority of these fish species have been intentional, either through the aquaculture trade or through the aquarium trade.

Impacts of IAS on CMS listed species in light of climate change

Biological invasions and climate change are both drivers of biodiversity loss. A warming globe and predicted impacts such as changes in precipitation, increased weather events such as tropical cyclones and hurricanes, flooding and coastal erosion, shift in species ranges and species phenology, decline in species richness, sea level rise, ocean acidification etc. are likely to exacerbate the IAS threat. This preliminary review indicates that all CMS-listed migrants that are currently under risk by IAS will continue to be vulnerable with climate change disturbances providing more opportunities to the IAS for establishment and impacts. Climate change predicted changes may also enable novel pathways of introduction and spread thus increasing the risk to newer migrant populations.

PART II

Gaps in international regulatory framework related to IAS

In recognition of the urgent need to address the impact of IAS on biodiversity, several global conventions and agreements have developed policies to address this issue. An analysis of the state of current policy in relation to IAS was undertaken through a dedicated desk review. Additionally an analysis was undertaken to identify gaps as well as synergies. It is apparent that the inadequate action related to the management of IAS is not a result of gaps in international policy but rather it is caused by inadequate implementation of existing international provisions at national level.

Synergies between organizations working on IAS management

An important development at the international level is the increase in inter-sectoral cooperation on IAS issues between institutions and organizations. In this context, systematic cooperation between different global conventions and multilateral environmental agreements can definitely provide greater and more effective opportunities to address biodiversity issues, including those related to the management of IAS.

With the aim of further developing and strengthening the relevant IAS policy within the CMS and other MEAs, a draft Resolution including recommendations has been proposed.