



CONVENTION ON MIGRATORY SPECIES

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Agenda Item 10.8

SUMMARY REPORT OF THE SAKER FALCON TASK FORCE

Summary:

Under Agenda Item 10.8 of the 18th Meeting of the Scientific Council, three documents are presented to inform discussion, as follows: this cover note as the Summary Report of the Saker Falcon Task Force, the third draft Saker Falcon Global Action Plan (SakerGAP) UNEP/CMS/ScC18/Inf.10.8 and a draft Resolution annexed to this cover note. These papers emanate from CMS Resolution 10.28 on the Saker Falcon *Falco cherrug* that enacted an immediate Concerted Action for the species, including establishing a Saker Falcon Task Force to bring together Range States, Partners and interested parties to develop a coordinated Global Action Plan, including a management and monitoring system, to conserve the species.

The Task Force was instructed to report to the ScC18 and COP11, as per CMS Resolution 10.28.

SUMMARY REPORT OF THE SAKER FALCON TASK FORCE

(Prepared by the Coordinating Unit of the Raptors MOU)

1. CMS Resolution 10.28 on the Saker Falcon *Falco cherrug* was adopted in November 2011 at the tenth meeting of the Conference of Parties (COP10) to CMS. It established an immediate Concerted Action, including the establishment of a Saker Falcon Task Force (STF) under the auspices of the Coordinating Unit of the CMS Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of Migratory Birds of Prey in Africa and Eurasia (Raptors MOU). The overall mission of the Task Force was to bring together Range States, Partners and interested parties to develop a coordinated Global Action Plan (SakerGAP), including a management and monitoring system, to conserve the Saker Falcon.
2. Pursuant to Resolution 10.28, the first meeting of the Task Force took place on 29 March 2012 in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates (UAE). It was attended by 27 participants from 11 countries. At the meeting, a Chairman and Vice-Chairman were elected for the Task Force, Terms of Reference and a STF Work Plan 2012–2014 were agreed, and the Coordinating Unit of the Raptors MOU was asked to lead in drafting the SakerGAP.
3. A consultant Specialist Technical Advisor was hired by the Coordinating Unit in 2012 to facilitate the work of the STF, and to begin the development of the SakerGAP. The Coordinating Unit established a list of contacts in 80 Saker Falcon Range States and has actively communicated with these countries throughout the development of the SakerGAP. Limited funds (€10,000) were allocated to the STF by CMS Parties at COP10. Accordingly, the Coordinating Unit spent much of 2012 fundraising.
4. In line with Resolution 10.28, the STF Chairman presented a report to the first Meeting of Signatories to the Raptors MOU, held in December 2012 in Abu Dhabi, UAE. By the end of 2012, the Coordinating Unit had secured substantial financial support from the following three sources: the Saudi Wildlife Authority on behalf of the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia; a grant under the ENTRP Cooperation Agreement between the European Commission (DG Environment) and UNEP; and via an internal co-operation agreement with the CITES Secretariat.
5. In February 2013, a full meeting of the STF took place by teleconference involving 18 participants from 14 countries. Four Working Groups were established to address the following key topics: international policies and legislation; knowledge gap analysis; sustainable use of wild origin falcons; and fieldwork, including methodologies. In addition, the Coordinating Unit commissioned a short study to elaborate a modelling framework to integrate population dynamics and sustainable use of the Saker Falcon, which reported in July 2013.
6. A first draft of the SakerGAP was published in August 2013. This document formed the basis for detailed discussions at a three-day STF Stakeholders' Action Planning Workshop held in September 2013 in Abu Dhabi. Over 70 participants attended from 31 countries, intergovernmental organizations, institutions, non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders. Deliberations at that Workshop informed the subsequent development of the second draft of the SakerGAP.

7. The second meeting of the Task Force was held back-to-back with the Stakeholders' Workshop in September 2013. The meeting reviewed actions from the first meeting of the STF, identified key issues from the Stakeholders' Workshop, the timeline required to finalize the SakerGAP and considered options to promote and implement the SakerGAP, including funding.

8. The second draft of the SakerGAP was published in February 2014 and started a two-month period of public consultation. Thirty-eight separate responses were received involving over 200 detailed comments. Subsequently, all these contributions were carefully reviewed and considered to inform development of the third draft of the SakerGAP (UNEP/CMS/ScC18/Inf.10.8)

9. A last review of the draft by the Saker Falcon Task Force is planned before the final version of the SakerGAP is published for presentation to CMS COP11, in accordance with the reporting timeline established in Resolution 10.28.

Action requested:

The Scientific Council is invited to:

- (a) Note this Summary Report of the Saker Falcon Task Force and the third draft of the Saker Falcon Global Action Plan (SakerGAP) (UNEP/CMS/ScC18/Inf.10.8);
- (b) Review the draft Resolution annexed to this cover note;
- (c) Consider recommending to COP11 that the Saker Falcon be retained within the CMS Concerted Action process to enable initial implementation of the 10-year SakerGAP to begin.

DRAFT RESOLUTION

SAKER FALCON *Falco cherrug* GLOBAL ACTION PLAN (SakerGAP)

(Prepared by the Coordinating Unit of the CMS Raptors MOU)

Noting that at its tenth meeting the CMS Conference of the Parties in Resolution 10.28 decided on an immediate Concerted Action supported by all Parties, including the establishment of a Task Force under the auspices of the Coordinating Unit of the CMS Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of Migratory Birds of Prey in Africa and Eurasia (Raptors MOU) to bring together Range States, Partners and interested parties, to develop a coordinated Global Action Plan, including a management and monitoring system, to conserve the Saker Falcon;

Further noting that CMS COP 10 decided that improvements in the conservation status of the Saker Falcon in any Range State may allow sustainable taking from the wild in that Range State under a management system, and that in such cases a Party or Parties may request an exclusion from the Appendix I listing to apply in that Range State, and that the Task Force would endeavour to facilitate this process through the Scientific Council inter-sessionally and through the Conference of the Parties;

Recalling that the Saker Falcon Task Force was mandated to report to: the first Meeting of the Signatories to the CMS Raptors MOU held in the last quarter of 2012; the eighteenth inter-sessional CMS Scientific Council meeting; and, to the eleventh meeting of the CMS Conference of the Parties, with consideration given to down-listing the Saker Falcon at that time;

Recognizing that the listing of the Saker Falcon in CMS Appendix I excludes the population in Mongolia, in recognition of their Saker Falcon conservation and management programme, which has been carried out in collaboration with the Environment Agency - Abu Dhabi, on behalf of the Government of the United Arab Emirates;

Further recognizing that the work of the Saker Falcon Task Force has been a unique and productive partnership involving a wide range of parties, and appreciative in particular of the financial contributions made by the Parties at CMS COP10, the European Union, the Saudi Wildlife Authority on behalf of the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and by the CITES Secretariat, as well as of the wider support in the form of working time contributed by all the members of the Saker Falcon Task Force;

Stressing the need for immediate action by Range States and stakeholders to address the principal threats to the Saker Falcon at all stages of its life cycle and across its full range;

The Conference of the Parties to the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals

1. *Congratulates* the Saker Falcon Task Force on its work, including especially the transparent consensus-building approach that has been employed, and *recognizes* the

importance of the development of the Saker Falcon Global Action Plan (SakerGAP) for the conservation and management of the species;

2. *Adopts* the 10-year SakerGAP presented in UNEP/CMS/Conf.11.x as the basis for action on the conservation and management of the Saker Falcon in the coming triennium and beyond, with the overall goal ‘to re-establish a healthy and self-sustaining wild Saker Falcon population throughout its range, and to ensure that any use is sustainable’;

3. *Decides* to continue the Concerted Action for the Saker Falcon during the next triennium at least, to enable initial implementation of the SakerGAP to begin;

4. *Further decides* to continue the Saker Falcon Task Force, under the auspices of the Coordinating Unit of the CMS Raptors MOU, and *instructs* the Task Force to:

- Actively promote the implementation of the SakerGAP, including by continuing to facilitate engagement, communication, cooperation and collaboration between the stakeholders;
- Further develop, refine and implement an adaptive management and monitoring framework to improve the present conservation status of the Saker Falcon through, *inter alia*, regulated and sustainable use;
- Keep under review the option to down-list the species;

5. *Recommends* the following reporting framework and timeline for the Task Force:

- Report to the second Meeting of Signatories of the CMS Raptors MOU;
- Report to the nineteenth meeting of the CMS Scientific Council;
- Review progress on implementing the SakerGAP and report to the twelfth meeting of the CMS Conference of the Parties;

6. *Urges* Parties, Range States and stakeholders to actively support, including by voluntary financial contributions, the work of the Saker Falcon Task Force;

7. *Further urges* Parties, Range States and stakeholders to collaborate to begin the immediate mobilization of the considerable resources required to implement the SakerGAP fully throughout the species’ range;

8. *Invites* Parties and Range States to integrate implementation of the SakerGAP into their national biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs), developed under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD);

9. *Instructs* the CMS Secretariat to convey this Resolution to the secretariats of the other Multilateral Environmental Agreements, in particular CITES, seeking their support and contributions to the implementation of the SakerGAP.