



**CONVENTION ON
MIGRATORY
SPECIES**

UNEP/CMS/Resolution 10.11 (Rev.COP13)

Original: English

POWER LINES AND MIGRATORY BIRDS

Adopted by the Conference of the Parties at its 13th Meeting (Gandhinagar, February 2020)

Recalling Article III 4(b) of the Convention which requests Parties to endeavour, *inter alia*, to prevent, remove, compensate for or minimize, as appropriate, the adverse effects of activities or obstacles that seriously impede or prevent the migration of species,

Further recalling Resolution 7.4 *Electrocution of Migratory Birds*, which encourages Parties to take appropriate measures to reduce and avoid the electrocution of migratory birds from medium voltage transmission lines by implementing a number of mitigation measures,

Noting that Resolution 7.4 and the *Suggested Practices for Bird Protection on Power Lines* (UNEP/CMS/Inf.7.21) are still fully valid,

Noting with satisfaction Recommendation No.110, which was adopted in 2004 by the Standing Committee of the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention) on minimizing adverse effects of above-ground electricity transmission facilities (power lines) on birds,

Welcoming the Report by the Governments on the implementation of Recommendation No. 110/2004 (T-PVS/Files (2010) 11), as presented to the *30th meeting of the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention* and describing valuable measures taken by Parties to reduce the adverse effects of power lines,

Further welcoming the *Position Statement on Birds and Power Lines: On the risks to birds from electricity transmission facilities and how to minimise any such adverse effects*, adopted in 2007 by the *BirdLife International Birds and Habitats Directives Task Force*, calling for appropriate technical measures to reduce the adverse effects of power lines,

Highlighting the need to collect data on bird distribution, population size and movements as an essential part of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), including an appropriate ecological assessment in case protected areas are likely to be affected, prior to and/or during the planning phase of a power line, and the need to monitor regularly the mortality caused by electrocution and collision with existing power lines,

Welcoming the *Budapest Declaration on Bird Protection and Power Lines*, as adopted on 13 April 2011 by the *Conference on Power Lines and Bird Mortality in Europe* which calls for, *inter alia*, an international programme consisting of groups of national experts on bird safety and power lines, wider dissemination of knowledge, and improved planning of power lines in relation to bird distribution data,

Recalling the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement's *Guidelines on how to avoid, minimize or mitigate impact of infrastructural developments and related disturbance affecting waterbirds* (Conservation Guidelines No. 11), which contain a number of relevant recommendations,

Recognizing the need for closer cooperation and synergies amongst the CMS Family, other biodiversity-related conventions and other multilateral environment agreements including the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) as well as relevant national and international stakeholders with respect to implementation of decisions and guidelines to reconcile energy sector developments with migratory species conservation needs,

Recognizing the importance for society of maintaining a stable energy supply, as also reflected in the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, particularly in Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 7 on energy as well as SDG 13 on climate change, as well as the need to achieve the targets adopted by the UNFCCC in Paris on global warming, including through the increased use of renewable energy sources, which often requires the deployment of large scale power line infrastructure,

Also noting that electrocutions, in particular, sometimes cause outages or disruption, and thus that determining appropriate locations of and putting in place mitigation measures for power lines that minimize impact, provide a win-win situation for birds and the stability of power provision,

Noting the *Review of the conflict between migratory birds and electricity power grids in the African-Eurasian region* (UNEP/CMS/Conf.10.29), and concerned that within the African-Eurasian region tens of millions of migratory birds are killed annually as a result of electrocution and collision, including storks, cranes, many other waterbird species, birds of prey, bustards and grouse,

Noting that many of the birds killed by electrocution and/or collision are internationally protected, including under CMS and the CMS instruments on African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds, Middle-European Great Bustard and African-Eurasian Birds of Prey, as well as national legislation in a number of countries,

Concerned that further research and monitoring on birds and power lines are urgently required, that only few studies are currently available that are sufficiently well-designed to assist in guiding policy, and that there is a serious geographical bias in research that needs to be addressed,

Recognizing the conclusions and recommendations concerning birds and power lines presented in document UNEP/CMS/Conf.10.29 which, inter alia, highlight that the number of birds killed can be substantially reduced if mitigation measures are applied during the planning and construction of power lines,

Welcoming the *Guidelines on How to Avoid or Mitigate Impact of Electricity Power Grids on Migratory Birds in the African-Eurasian Region* (UNEP/CMS/Conf.10.30; Technical Series CMS No. 29/AEWA No. 50/Raptors MOU No. 3), which provide extensive practical guidance on, inter alia, mitigation measures, bird surveys and monitoring and the technical design of power lines,

Acknowledging that a number of Range States are already applying mitigation measures, for example, during planning of the location and route of new power lines, or retrofitting of hazardous overhead power lines, utility poles and any technical hardware,

Noting with satisfaction that funding has been made available, inter alia, through the EU/LIFE programme, to take immediate measures to protect a number of rare species, including the Great Bustard (*Otis tarda*), the Bonelli's Eagle (*Aquila fasciata*), the Spanish Imperial Eagle (*Aquila adalberti*) and Imperial Eagle (*Aquila heliaca*), from electrocution and collision,

Noting with satisfaction also the UNDP/GEF Migratory Soaring Birds Project, which is being implemented by BirdLife International, and which aims to ensure that the conservation needs of migratory soaring birds are addressed by industry, including the energy sector, along the Red Sea/Rift Valley Flyway, and the potential this project has to promote the implementation of this resolution and the above-mentioned guidelines at national and local levels,

Noting with satisfaction that the publicly accessible sensitivity mapping tool pioneered by the Migratory Soaring Birds project to support planning of energy infrastructure in the Rift Valley/Red Sea flyway has been extended to cover North Africa, southern Europe and the Middle East,

Acknowledging with thanks the generous financial support provided by RWE Rhein-Ruhr Netzservice GmbH towards the development and production of the above-mentioned review and guideline documents (UNEP/CMS/Conf.10.29 and UNEP/CMS/Conf.10.30), and

Noting with satisfaction the discussions at the 17th Meeting of the Scientific Council and those during the AEWAs Technical Committee at its 10th meeting on the drafts of the above-mentioned review and guideline documents on power lines and birds, and aware of the guidance provided by these fora, which has been incorporated into both documents.

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

1. *Welcomes* the *Guidelines on How to Avoid or Mitigate Impact of Electricity Power Grids on Migratory Birds in the African-Eurasian region* (UNEP/CMS/Conf.10.30; Technical Series CMS No. 29/AEWA No. 50/Raptors MOU No. 3);
2. *Urges* Parties and encourages non-Parties to implement these Guidelines as applicable and to:
 - 2.1 apply, in the African-Eurasian region as far as possible, and as applicable elsewhere, AEWAs Conservation Guidelines No. 11 on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) procedures, including an appropriate ecological assessment in case protected and critical areas for the affected species are likely to be affected, regarding the development of power lines, and make use of recent global best practices for SEA and EIA adopted by the World Bank and International Finance Corporation;
 - 2.2 consult regularly relevant stakeholders, including government agencies, scientific bodies, non-governmental organizations and the energy sector, in order to monitor jointly the impacts of power lines on birds and to agree on a common policy of action;
 - 2.3 establish a baseline of bird distribution, population sizes, migrations and movements, including those between breeding, resting and feeding areas, as early as possible in the planning of any power line project, over a period of at least one year, and with particular emphasis on those species known to be vulnerable to electrocution or collision and if such studies identify any risks, to make every effort to ensure these are avoided;
 - 2.4 design the location, route and direction of power lines on the basis of national sensitivity and zoning maps and avoid, wherever possible, construction along major migration flyways and in habitats of conservation importance, such as Important Bird Areas, Ramsar sites, the East Asian-Australasian Flyway Site Network, the West/Central Asian Site Network for Siberian Crane and other waterbirds and other critical sites as identified by the Critical Site Network (CSN) Tool for the African-Eurasian region, and avoid existing protected areas in the broadest sense;
 - 2.5 identify those sections of existing power lines that are causing relatively high levels of bird injury and/or mortality due to electrocution and/or collision, and modify these as a matter of priority by applying the techniques recommended by the Guidelines in UNEP/CMS/Conf.10.30, and use mitigation measures, for which their effectiveness has been assessed and published in the scientific literature;

- 2.6 regularly monitor and evaluate the impact of power lines on bird populations at the national scale, scientifically assess the effectiveness of mitigation measures put in place to minimize the impact of power lines on bird populations, and make data on effectiveness of the mitigation measures publicly available;
 - 2.7 make data and results of surveys and monitoring undertaken publicly available, including data on mortality of species due to collisions and electrocutions from transmission and distribution infrastructure; and
 - 2.8 review the adequacy of existing national safeguard measures in regard to protecting migratory birds and *enact* appropriate legislation, and put in place licensing and permitting procedures, that integrate biodiversity and migratory bird considerations into infrastructural design, planning and deployment and mitigation of the impact of power lines, and include clear procedures to address cases of noncompliance;
3. *Urges* Parties and *invites* non-Parties, inter-governmental organizations and other relevant institutions, as appropriate, to include the measures contained in this Resolution in their National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans and relevant legislation, if applicable, in order to ensure that the impact of power lines on bird populations is minimized, and *calls on* Parties to report progress in implementing this Resolution to each Conference of the Parties as part of their National Reports;
 4. *Encourages* electricity companies such as RWE Rhein-Ruhr Netzservice GmbH, development banks and other relevant stakeholders to disseminate the Guidelines widely within their networks as well as at relevant events and conferences, to be used *inter alia* in their planning of new infrastructure and refurbishment of existing infrastructure;
 5. *Requests* the Scientific Council, specifically the Working Groups on birds and flyways, to monitor the implementation of this Resolution and to provide further guidance when relevant new developments on reducing the impact of power lines on birds become available, such as improved mitigation techniques and standardized monitoring protocols;
 6. *Instructs* the Secretariat, in close cooperation with relevant CMS agreements, to consult the Secretariat of the Bern Convention in order to update the mitigation guidelines regularly, as appropriate, and to disseminate these to their respective Parties; and
 7. *Urges* Parties and *invites* the United Nations Environment Programme and other relevant international organizations, as well as the energy sector, to promote and support financially the implementation of this Resolution.