



# Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals

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CMS/StC36/8  
Agenda Item 5

### REPORT OF THE CMS SECRETARIAT OVERVIEW OF 2009 ACHIEVEMENTS

*Document prepared by the CMS Secretariat*

1. 2009 saw a considerable effort on the part of the Secretariat to follow up the Ninth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties. Delegates had reached agreement on a number of important agenda items, including several proposed species listings on the Convention's Appendices. Key issues such as climate change impacts on migratory species, wildlife diseases, cooperation with other organisations, ocean noise, by-catch and marine species and capacity building strategy were among the subjects covered by the resolutions adopted. In addition, an inter-sessional working group for the consideration of various options on the future shape of the CMS Family was established. In financial matters, the COP adopted a core budget for the next triennium with a 3.3% increase and providing for two new Secretariat posts.
2. The proceedings are being prepared in all three CMS languages with the kind support of the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety. They are available on the CMS website and can be requested as paper copies from the Secretariat. Further information on the Ninth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties was summarised in the Earth Negotiations Bulletin reports published on the CMS website early in the year.
3. The Convention reached another milestone – the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary on 23 June 2009. A celebration was held in the Old Town Hall of the City of Bonn, which included the launch of a new publication on Flyways and the signing of the Saiga Antelope MoU by the Russian Federation. An anniversary poster and a banner were produced for the occasion depicting 30 species listed on the CMS appendices. In order to reach out to the local community, the image, thanking the city for its hospitality was placed on a bus circulating in the entire Bonn area for one month. In addition, posters were distributed to surrounding schools to involve even the youngest of the nation in nature conservation. The anniversary theme was reflected once again at this year's UN Day on 24 October 2009.
4. In mid-2009 the Secretariat underwent a change at the managerial level following the outcome of an extraordinary meeting of the Standing Committee, held in Geneva in June, in which the Executive Director of UNEP took part. Mrs Elizabeth Mrema and Mr Bert Lenten were appointed respectively as Officer-in-Charge and Acting Deputy Executive Secretary until the recruitment of a new management team is completed.
5. A variety of new developments took place this year and numerous meetings were held or attended. Among the most crucial events were the First Meeting of the Signatories to the

MoU on the West African Populations of the African Elephant in Accra, Ghana in March 2009; the Scientific Council Activity Planning Meeting; the CMS 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration with the launch of Flyways Publication (Bonn) and the Year of the Dolphin closing ceremony and launch of Year of the Gorilla in Mombasa, Kenya both in June; one month later the second Meeting of Signatories of the CMS Pacific Islands Cetacean MoU in Auckland; in August, a representative of CMS took part in a joint CMS/Ramsar Advisory Mission to Mozambique and went on an official visit to Swaziland, and finally, the Inter-sessional Working Group on the Future Shape of CMS met in Bonn in October.

6. The CMS Secretariat under the new management has placed even greater emphasis on the multi-faceted linkage with its daughter agreements. One way of realising this was in the form of a CMS Family excursion on 14 October to a nature park in the region where the most crucial agenda item was increased bonding and team building of the staff of all Bonn based Secretariats of the CMS Family.

7. After the proven successes of the establishment of the CMS internship programme, a further 13 interns assisted the Secretariat in the fields of information management, science and agreements as well as administration this year – an ever thriving synergy of students or young professionals and the Convention. A further call for applications for 2010 was made on the CMS website in October, reaching out to students worldwide.

8. Pursuant to Res. 9.2, an inter-sessional working group was created within the Scientific Council to review existing flyway arrangements and to further elaborate CMS policy on flyways. Its membership has also been extended to relevant outside organisations and experts. The Group is currently working in close cooperation with the Working Group on the Future Shape to integrate their separate remits.

9. The Strategic Plan, by which the Convention operates, has four main objectives. They were realised in the following way.

**Objective 1: To ensure that the conservation and management of migratory species is based on the best available information**

10. One significant event reflecting Objective 1 was the Activity Planning Meeting of the Scientific Council held at the UN premises in Bonn on 13 June. This experimental meeting with participation restricted to officers, COP appointed councillors and working group convenors was intended to address the need for an additional Scientific Council meeting requested by COP9 while taking account of the limited financial resources available.

11. The meeting consisted of twelve participants, including six from the CMS Secretariat. Agenda items discussed covered a Survey of the Expertise of Scientific Council Members, the Small Grants Programme, the Inter-sessional Work of Taxonomic and Thematic Working Groups, the Conservation Status of CMS Appendix I Species and Listings of Appendix II Species as well as taxonomic refinement.

12. During CMS COP9 it was decided to form an additional task force with a broadened focus on the response to a variety of emerging and re-emerging wildlife diseases threatening migratory species (Resolution 9.8). The initial steps were made and much thought has gone into the composition and structure of the new task force including the drafting of the Terms of Reference. A dedicated website was developed and the formal formation of the Task Force is

underway.

13. The existing Task Force on Avian Influenza has continued and successfully held its 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> teleconferences in February and June of this year. Topics included capacity building, provision of more user-friendly information, implementation of the various resolutions on avian influenza, global updates on HPAI and publications. One important item discussed by the Task Force most recently was the next face-to-face meeting on Avian Influenza during the first quarter of 2010, now confirmed for March 2010.

**Objective 2: To ensure that migratory species benefit from the best possible conservation measures**

14. Objective 2 was firstly targeted through the creation of a Working Group on the Future Shape of CMS and its Agreements. Mandated by CMS COP9 Resolution 9.13 the initial phase of the Future Shape of CMS and the CMS Family served to collect data of past procedures of the Convention and its daughter Agreements and through consequent analysis offered improvement of their efficiency. After the report was compiled by the external consultant agency ERIC (Environmental Regulation and Information Centre), the Working Group convened in Bonn from 19 to 20 October. Parties attending the Working Group were Switzerland, France, the UK, South Africa, Kenya and Cuba, together with Saudi Arabia and Ghana participating in their respective capacities of Chair and Vice-Chair of the Standing Committee. The report and meeting were facilitated through generous voluntary contributions from the governments of France and Germany respectively. The outcome of the Phase I report can be found under StC 36/16.

15. Core work on regional species agreements and Appendix 1 species projects is also covered by this objective. Various meetings took place with examples given below:

- The first meeting of the Steering Group of the re-launched Slender-billed Curlew Working Group (SbCWG),
- AEW/CMS Workshop to Revise the Sociable Lapwing Action Plan,
- an Abu Dhabi based workshop to improve the conservation status of the Saker Falcon,
- the First Meeting of the Signatories to the CMS Agreement to conserve West African populations of the African Elephant,
- the third ACAP MOP in Bergen,
- the second Meeting of the Signatories to the Pacific Cetaceans MOU,
- ASCOBANS MOP6 and Action Plans for Harbour Porpoises in the North and Baltic Seas,
- the final Steering Committee meeting and Project Completion Workshop for the UNEP/GEF Siberian Crane Wetland Project.

The third Sharks Meeting, planned to be held in the Philippines at the end of the year, was postponed to the first quarter of 2010.

16. To mark the Year of the Gorilla, a Symposium was held in Frankfurt-am-Main from 9-11 June 2009. An ad hoc Meeting of the Gorilla Agreement was convened on June 11 to discuss further actions towards improvement of gorillas' conservation status. The meeting had been called to take advantage of the presence of key players in Frankfurt for the symposium and to report on progress achieved so far. Emphasis was placed on the adoption of GTZ's (the

German Technical Cooperation Society) Spatial Management Information System (MIST), an information management tool, which could facilitate monitoring and surveillance efforts. It was agreed that a temporary solution to provide technical advice to the Agreement Parties while the Technical Committee was still being established would be for the Terrestrial Mammals Working Group of the CMS Scientific Council to act as interim advisory body.

**Objective 3: To broaden awareness and enhance engagement in the conservation of migratory species amongst key actors**

17. Objective 3 has achieved by numerous missions to non-Party states, where every opportunity was seized to promote the benefits of accession and to demonstrate co-operation with other organisations in the effort to conserve wildlife and habitats. The CMS consultant based in Washington liaised with a number of governmental and non-governmental bodies not only to promote the uniqueness of CMS's potential but also to create an environment conducive to collaboration.

18. A number of delegations visited the CMS Secretariat in the course of the year. On their visits, dialogues on accession with the Russian Federation, Venezuela, Turkmenistan and Sierra Leone seemed promising. The Secretariat has, however, not only pursued recruitment at its headquarters but also promoted membership elsewhere on missions. Opportunities were seized during the African Elephant MOU meeting in Ghana, and missions to Swaziland and Zambia for the African Region, the Pacific Cetacean MoU for Oceania, the Interim Steering Committee Meeting of WHMSI plus the Bolivia mission for the Americas and the regional office in Abu Dhabi to cover Western Asia and North Africa.

19. 2009 marked the Year of the Gorilla (YoG), a significant annual campaign run in partnership with the UNEP/UNESCO Great Ape Survival Partnership and the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA) to raise public awareness of the endangered status of the great ape and, at the same time, the importance of its ecological role in the rainforest habitat. Numerous global events, starting in December 2008 with the launch at CoP9, culminating with the Frankfurt Symposium and Declaration (June 2009) and continuing throughout the year were organised by a large partnership including governments, NGOs, the zoo community and many individuals to place the Gorilla in the public eye. The publication "Gorillas – the Gentle Giants" was released to complement this year's species campaign. YoG Ambassador and Wildlife Conservationist Ian Redmond raised awareness and funds locally and globally. Additionally, the YoG Blog was created and featured updates from projects as well as news from Ian Redmond's fact-finding trip to the gorilla range states, where he gathered information on the current conservation requirements as well as obstacles. For details, consult the YoG website [www.yog2009.org](http://www.yog2009.org).

20. Under the title 'Gentle Giants in Need' 160 government officials, experts, corporate representatives and conservationists from 20 countries attended a symposium in Frankfurt-am-Main, 9-10 June held as part of YoG. In the "Frankfurt Declaration" they highlighted major threats to gorillas and their habitats, as well as the strategies available for the conservation of the second closest relative to humankind. Delegates appealed to governments, the international community and industrial companies to enhance activities to reduce threats to the remaining gorilla populations in the wild, potentially contributing to peace-making and prosperity in Central Africa

21. An ever-increasing importance was placed on the 2010 International Year of

Biodiversity, as witnessed by the liaison with the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). This was particularly facilitated by the appointment of a dedicated CBD Secretariat member of staff currently based in Bonn to promote and increase the liaison and synergy between the two Secretariats.

22. A number of press releases and publications enhanced the visibility of the Convention. Topics of particular interest were the Year of the Gorilla Campaign, Conservation Action for the West African Elephants (Accra, April), and World Migratory Bird Day (May), the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of CMS with signing of the Saiga Antelope MoU by the Russian Federation in Bonn (June), new conservation plans endorsed at the 6<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Parties to ASCOBANS in Bonn (September). This year saw the publication of a CMS brochure on global flyways, highlighting the necessity of a network for migratory birds and providing a tool for stakeholders to strengthen capacities in this field of conservation. Key aspects of the flyway strategy are monitoring, conservation action, awareness raising, measuring success and a sound legal framework for environmental issues at an international level.

**Objective 4: To reinforce CMS's overarching and unifying role in the conservation and management of migratory species**

23. This is mainly defined by membership and resources and recorded two new Parties (Mozambique and Montenegro) to CMS in 2009. Efforts to increase CMS's influence internationally were made including official visits to the governments of various Parties and non-Parties aiming to raise funds and promote accession to the Convention respectively.

24. Two further signatures to MOUs were obtained, namely to the Saiga Antelope MoU by the Russian Federation during the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration and the Grassland Birds of South America by the Government of Bolivia during Ramsar's Sixth Workshop of the Regional Strategy for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of High Andean Wetlands. The latter thereby completed with its signature the participation of all Range States to the MoU.

25. In addition to this, a new regional project office was opened and financed through the Environment Agency Abu Dhabi (EAD). Its focus lies in the implementation of the MoUs on Raptors and Dugongs and in part on the conservation of the African population of Indian Ocean Turtles. The Abu Dhabi office serves as a contact station covering the African and West Asian area. Head of this regional Secretariat is the former Deputy Executive Deputy of CMS, Lahcen El Kabiri. CMS Officer-in-Charge Elizabeth Mrema visited the new Office in October and also signed the Donor Agreement between EAD and UNEP. Funds have been secured for the next three years; thereafter the agreement is subject to renewal.

**Conclusion**

26. Looking back it is clear that 2009 has so far been a very busy year. It has become more and more clear that the resources available are not sufficient to match the expectations of the Parties. Therefore the management is looking into ways to increase the financial and human resources in the coming years.

27. The management has done its utmost to fill the existing vacancies during this year. In addition to this, the management approached several Contracting Parties to consider supporting the Secretariat by providing additional Staff e.g. through secondment and/ or Junior Professional Officers.

28. Extra attention has been given to fundraising. For example, a strong plea was made to all Contracting Parties to provide funds for forthcoming meetings, in particular the meetings on the Future Shape of CMS, Capacity Building and Sharks. Without such support, it will be impossible to hold several of the meetings as planned in 2010. It is hoped that the necessary funds will materialise.

**Action requested:**

The Standing Committee may wish to:

- (a) consider this report and provide comments and advice which can be incorporated into a composite Secretariat report to be submitted to COP10 in 2011,
- (b) endorse the transitional steps described in paragraphs 1 - 24 of the report,
- (c) provide guidance and advice on how to increase the needed resources.