



# Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals



**BfN-CMS Transboundary Cooperation Workshop**

*Vilm, Germany, 30 June 2023*

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**TRANSBOUNDARY COOPERATION WORKSHOP**

## Introduction

The CMS-BfN transboundary cooperation workshop will provide an opportunity for Participants to introduce their projects and transboundary initiatives in their countries, to exchange ideas and identify synergies. It aims to facilitate discussions of how to enhance transboundary cooperation for the conservation of migratory species within the Central Asian Mammals Initiative and to agree on follow-up activities.

Building on existing projects and agreements, this workshop should help CMS Parties in CAMI Range to fulfil their obligations with respect to implementing CMS Resolution 11.24 (Rev.COP13), in particular, Activity 1.3 *to Implement the recommendations outlined in the [Transboundary Hotspots study](#) [...] and, inter alia, specifically to*

- b) Identify stakeholders and crucial actors for all identified hotspots;*
- c) Establish working groups for each of the proposed priority sites to elaborate work streams for establishing transboundary cooperation as appropriate;*
- d) Carry out targeted workshops for priority sites identified in the study;*
- e) Encourage countries to set up Memoranda of Understanding or Agreements for the conservation of those priority sites.*

And

*Activity 1.2 a) to use the Transboundary Hotspots study to identify entry-points for enhanced cooperation with other existing Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs), governmental/multi-partner agreements and platforms in the CAMI region;*

In working groups, the participants will be asked to reflect on the recommendations of the abovementioned Study and to discuss how to promote implementation of this mandate by CMS Parties in the region. Finally, to this end the Meeting will identify actions needed and responsible actors to enhance the conservation of selected hotspots.

## Agenda and Schedule

Time	Agenda Item	Comments/Meeting Outcomes
07:30 – 09:00	BREAKFAST	
09:00 – 09.10	<b>1. Opening</b>	CMS Secretariat, BfN
09:10 – 10:00	<b>Transboundary initiatives relevant to Asiatic Wild Ass and other species in its habitat.</b>	A. Introduction of CMS Mandate and relevant points from Transboundary Hotspots Study B. Introduction of German Development Agency's (GIZ) projects relevant to transboundary cooperation in conservation; introduction of

		relevant work of the Michael Succow Foundation
10:00 – 10:30	COFFEE BREAK	
10:30 – 11:20	<b>2. Current transboundary conservation agreements and initiatives in the Range States</b>	Participants will be asked to list any transboundary agreements and projects between their country and neighboring countries for conserving Wild Ass and its habitat and also other CMS-listed species in Wild Ass habitat.
	<b>4. Introduction of the Transboundary Hotspots Study</b>	The study will be introduced by its author including a brief overview of selected hotspots.
11:30 – 12:30	<b>5. Working groups</b>	
12:30 – 14.00	LUNCH BREAK	
14:00 – 15:00	<b>6. Working groups continue</b>	
15:00 – 15:30	COFFEE BREAK	
15:30 – 17:45	<b>7. Reporting back from Working groups and agreement on further steps in plenary</b>	The groups will present their work and the meeting will agree on the outcomes in the form of a list of actions and actors, depending on each regions' context and representation at the meeting.
17:45 – 18:00	<b>8. Closure</b>	
18:00 – 19:00	DINNER	

### Working Groups

Working group questions:

- 1) Are the recommendations of the Transboundary hotspots study (2019, updated 2021) still relevant?
- 2) What is missing in these recommendations? Include more specific information, if needed.
- 3) List (2-5) relevant stakeholders, actions needed and actors responsible to foster transboundary cooperation for the conservation of this hotspot
- 4) Are the recommendations already reflected in ongoing projects? If not, what needs to be done to include them?
- 5) Can the Participant's institutions play a role in implementing them?
- 6) Can this become a project proposal for transboundary conservation? If yes, develop a concept note.
- 7) If your region has more than one hotspot, please prioritize the hotspots relatively to one another in terms of its feasibility for implementation.
- 8) Is there another relevant hotspot in this region which is not mentioned?

## Topics of the working groups

The following contains excerpts (only recommendations) from [the Transboundary Hotspots Study](#) with some additions from Professor Petra Kaczensky that are relevant for each of the working groups. Background information can be found in the study itself.

### Group 1

Members: Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, relevant organizations

Discuss Recommendations of the hotspots: Eastern Ustyurt (ID 29), Aral Sea/Western Kyzylkum Desert (ID30) and prospects for Aral Sea/Western Kyzylkum (ID30), South-Western Ustyurt (ID28)

### Eastern Ustyurt (29)

Species: Goitered Gazelle, Saiga, Urial, Kulan (re-introduced)

Regions: Mangystau, Atyrau, Aqtobe of Kazakhstan and Karakalpakstan of AR of Uzbekistan

Ustyurt population of Saiga, Goitered Gazelle former habitat, presence not confirmed currently, Urial

### Recommendations for action:

- Strengthen the work on bilateral cooperation between Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan within the framework of the cooperation agreement signed in 2010;
- Strengthen the fight against poaching;
- Continuous monitoring of Saiga population trends, movements and impact of railway and border fence and evaluate existing mitigation measures (at both railway and fence) and continue/expand Saiga satellite tracking;
- If necessary, adaptation of railway overpasses, temporary traffic stops for the railway (at nighttime) and turning off light along the railway and further modification of the fences to ease crossing by Saigas;
- Lobby for the creation of a migration corridor or other protected area in Kazakhstan, addressing as well safe crossings of the railway and the border fence.
- Development of community-based Saiga conservation across the population's range area with the perspective of sustainable use options benefiting local land users and making them responsible for Saiga conservation.
- Strengthen the efficiency of the Saigachiy wildlife reserve (e.g. organizing well-protected watering places, installing additional street signs indicating borders of the reserve, working with local people, interacting with law enforcement agencies, cross-border cooperation).
- Organize transboundary rangers meeting, including involvement of community rangers;
- Consider reintroduction of Asiatic Wild Ass (Kulan). - it is happening on the Uzbek side and it seems single kulan have showed up in the past.
- Strengthen monitoring on Kulan in the region, ideally deploy GPS satellite collars on released kulan
- Map available water sources.

### Aral Sea/Western Kyzylkum (ID30)

Species:

High significance for Kulan (re-introduced population), introduced Saiga in low numbers, transboundary Goitered Gazelle population in low density,

*Administrative:*

- Kazakhstan, Kyzylorda Province;
- Uzbekistan, Karakalpakstan Autonomous Republic.

*Geographic area:*

- Western part of Kyzylkum desert, eastern part of dry Aral Sea bottom, incl. former islands Barsa Kelmes and Vozrozhdenie.

**Recommendations for action:**

- Gather reliable data about the fence and its technical parameters.
- Continue the study of kulan in and around Barsa-Kelmes SPA;
- Continue to study the status of the gazelle and Saiga population on E Aral Sea with Barsa-Kelmes / Resurrection Island and impact of current development on these;
- Study the state of Goitered Gazelle in the Kyzylkum, including around Lake Aydar;
- Consider the possibilities for creating further protected areas or expanding Barsa Kelmes SPA.
- Monitor reintroduced kulan with GPS satellite collars to understand movements and identify possible movement corridors.
- Map available water sources.

**South-Western Ustyurt (ID28)**

**Species:** Asiatic Wild Ass, Goitered Gazelle, Urial, Persian Leopard, Saiga

*Administrative:*

- Kazakhstan, Mangystau Province;
- Turkmenistan, Balkan Province;
- Uzbekistan, Karakalpakstan Autonomous Republic.

*Geographic area:*

- Ustyurt SPA and areas south of it (1);
- Kaplankyr Plateau south east of salt pan (*shor*) (2);
- Chink at the border, Kazakhly shor (3);
- Kaplankyr SPA s of Sarygamysh lake (4);
- Assake-Audan (5);
- Areas south of the road Barsa Kelmes – Jaslyk and between KAZ-UZB border and Ustyurt SPA (6).

**Recommendations for action:**

- Cross-border collaboration at expert and political level: Coordinated assessments and monitoring, exchange of information, lobbying of border security authorities and their collaboration;
- Modification of border fence in Kazakhstan: Based on the experience from Eastern Ustyurt the responsible border authority shall be lobbied to modify the border fence with sufficiently large openings and underpasses. Along the border with Turkmenistan such modifications need to be sufficiently frequent to allow animals escape from the strip between the fences of the two countries.

- Lobbying with Government of Turkmenistan and border authorities: The government should be further encouraged to implement measures for mitigation of the border fence. Focus should be (Rustamov et al., 2015) on the junction of the borders of the three countries and the Sarykamysh depression as well as Kazakhly Shor, Kara Shor and the area Kulantakyr, located in between and showing in its name previous occurrence of Asiatic Wild Ass (Kulan).
- Anti-poaching: Enforcement of wildlife protection is difficult in this remote area and requires an increase in staff, involvement of local people, and work with border police in the three countries. Approaches of involvement of hunters interested in sustainable hunting opportunities and assignment of hunting grounds should be explored.
- Map available water sources and strengthen anti-poaching around these key resources.

## **Group 2**

Iran – Turkmenistan

### **Kopet Dagh (ID22)**

#### *Administrative:*

- Iran, Khorasan-e Shomali, Khorasan-e Razavi Provinces;
- Turkmenistan, Akhal Welayet (Province);

#### *Geographic area:*

- Mountain and hill areas in the entire border region.

**Species:** Goitered Gazelle ( possibly small transboundary population of high importance due to local extinction risk), Wild Ass separate sub-species on both sides, large population of Urial, transboundary populations of Urial and Persian Leopard, theoretically also Cheetah, but given the low numbers presently of low probability

#### **Recommendations for action:**

- Transboundary collaboration, particularly on Leopard monitoring and conservation;
- Mitigation of border fences to create wildlife corridors and establish connectivity;
- Livestock grazing regulation and enforcement of grazing bans and restrictions in protected areas;
- Prevention and persecution of poaching;
- Conflict mitigation and prevention of killings in the course of conflicts through appropriate measures (e.g. prevention of livestock losses and insurance schemes);
- Identifying of corridors for wildlife movement, especially of Leopard, Cheetah, Urial, Goitered Gazelle and Asiatic Wild Ass.
- Map past distributions of CAMI species and their date of disappearance.
- Map available water sources.

## **Group 3**

Mongolia-China, China and India

### **Gobi Desert-Yin Mountains (ID17)**

**Administrative:**

- China, Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, Bayannur, Baotou, Ulanqab and Xilingol Prefectures;
- Mongolia, Ömnogovi and Dornogovi Aimags.

**Species:** Goitered Gazelle, Wild Ass (here is the location of the largest population in the World in Mongolia), Argali, Snow Leopard, Mongolian Gazelle.

**Recommendations for action:**

- Fence removal proposed at the railroad crossing the site in the east as well as further to the north. Fence removal would be between Station 21 (N 43.749708°, E 111.856505°) which lies a few kilometers north of Zamyn-Uud near the border with China, and Airag (N 45.778356°, E 109.335991°); north of Airag, the fence should be modified; only in areas with human settlements sections with fences should remain to prevent accidents (Olson, pers. comm. 2019).
- Regulation of grazing, veterinary measures to prevent disease transmission and the creation, and/or expansion of livestock exclusion zones.
- Coordination of wildlife crossings along the international border.
- Consider the possibility to re-design the Mongolian border fence to provide crossing possibilities for Kulan and for gazelles without the risk of entanglement.
- Map suitable habitat on the Chinese side
- Map available water sources

**South-western Gobi (ID18)****Administrative:**

- China, Gansu Province, Kumul, Jiayuguan and Jiuquan Prefectures;
- Mongolia, Govi-Altai and Bayanhongor Aimags.

**Geographic area:**

- Mongolian Trans-Altai Gobi Desert, largely identical with Great Gobi A SPA.

**Species:**

The CAMI Atlas shows range area overlaps between species of plain semi-desert (Wild Camel, Asiatic Wild Ass, Goitered Gazelle) and species of mountainous areas (Argali and Snow Leopard).

**Recommendations for action:**

- It is crucial to begin more active collaboration between China and Mongolia. Participants in Wild Camel conservation from both sides of the border will need to trust one another and have a desire to communicate more frequently and openly. Perhaps the most important tasks are increasing awareness of cross-boundary issues and improving communication between agency personnel, biologists, and conservationists working on Wild Camel conservation in China and Mongolia. Additional joint meetings on camel conservation would facilitate this process, as would joint research projects. Addressing border issues may require involving military border guards and foreign affairs officers.
- Specific measures should include:
  - Protect and remote monitoring of the water in the border area;

- Joint monitoring and observation of wildlife movement along the border in China and Mongolia, with continuous monitoring by a camera trapping study along the border in Mongolian side and, if possible, in Chinese side in the near future;
- To establish wildlife movement corridor area in the unfenced area of the Great Gobi A SPA based on joint research study between Mongolia and Chinese researchers;
- Stop the operation of the mining site near border in China.
- Regulation of grazing and livestock in critical areas of the buffer zone at the boundaries of Great Gobi A SPA.

### **Jungarian Gobi (ID19)**

#### *Administrative:*

- China, Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, Kumul and Changji Hui Autonomous Prefecture;
- Mongolia, Khovd Aimag.

#### *Geographic area:*

- Western (Jungarian) Gobi desert, in Mongolia largely identical with Great Gobi B SPA.

**Species:** Przewalski's Horse ( largest wild population), Asiatic Wild Ass, Goitered Gazelle, Argali, Snow Leopard, no transboundary movements to due fencing

#### **Recommendations for action:**

- Urgent restriction of grazing of domestic horses and reduction, or at least prevention of any increase in grazing of other livestock and studies to better understand pasture competition between the full range of wild and domestic ungulates (Burnik Šturm et al., 2017);
- Creation of transboundary wildlife corridor(s), mainly for Khulan and Przewalski's Horses but also Goitered Gazelles, Argali and Snow Leopard.

### India-Pakistan

Potential for transboundary cooperation for Asiatic Wild Ass: Little Rann of Kutch ( not included in the Transboundary Hotspots Study)

#### From the Overview Report:

The Asiatic Wild Ass population in India is expanding. Cross-border movements are currently impossible due to the fenced international border. It is currently unknown, if there are any Asiatic Wild Ass left on the Pakistan side (last records were from 2013)

### **Changthang and Spiti (ID 11)**

India-China

#### *Administrative:*

- China, Tibet Autonomous Region and Xinjiang Autonomous Region;
- India, Ladakh and Himachal Pradesh.

#### *Geographic area:*



- Changthang plateau in eastern Ladakh and Spiti valley in Himachal Pradesh with adjacent areas of northern Tibetan plateau. The delimitation towards site 21 (Eastern Karakoram-Ladakh) is difficult and both sites might be considered as continuous.

**Species:** The area is of high significance for the conservation of Kiang, but also of the Ladakh subspecies of Urial. It is further of significance for Snow Leopard conservation at least regionally. Presence of small populations of Wild Yak, Tibetan Argali, Chiru and Tibetan Gazelle further adds to the conservation significance of the site.

**Recommendations for action:**

- Assessment of range areas, habitat use, and population sizes and trends of target species;
- Recovery and maintaining pockets of high-density wild prey populations can immensely facilitate Snow Leopard conservation in multiple-use landscapes (Sharma et al. 2021);
- Determination and implementation of conservation interventions specifically addressing identified threats;
- Transboundary collaboration, exchange of experience and mitigation of barrier effect of border fences.

**Western Trans-Himalaya (ID 10)**

China-India-Nepal

*Administrative:*

- China, Tibet Autonomous Province;
- India, Uttarakhand;
- Nepal, Far-Western.

*Geographic area:*

- Trans-Himalaya between Bandarpunch Mountain range in the west and the eastern watershed of Upper Humla in the east.

**Species:** of high significance for: Snow Leopard, Wild Yak, Kiang, Argali, Tibetan Gazelle and potentially in the future of Chiru.

**Recommendations for action:**

- Assessment of range areas, habitat use, and population sizes and trends of target species;
- Determination and implementation of conservation interventions;
- Transboundary collaboration, exchange of experience and mitigation of barrier effect of border fences.
- Research on the status and transboundary movements of kiang (GPS collaring, camera trapping, genetics.)