

**JOINT SIDE EVENT OF THE CMS PRIORITIES FOR ADDRESSING THE ILLEGAL  
TAKE OF MIGRATORY BIRDS IN THE ASIA PACIFIC**

*(Brisbane, Australia, 14 March 2023)*

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UNEP/CMS/ITTEA1/Side Event Report

**SIDE EVENT REPORT**

“Priorities for addressing the illegal take of migratory birds in the Asia Pacific”

## SIDE EVENT REPORT

### **1. Welcoming remarks and introduction of participants**

1. Ivan Ramirez (Head of the Avian Unit) welcomed participants to the meeting and provided an overview of the agenda for the side event, titled “Priorities for addressing the illegal take of migratory birds in the Asia Pacific.” Susan Tsang (ITTEA Task Force Coordinator) provided some opening remarks and introduced Dr. Srey Sunleang (Cambodia) in his capacity as Chair of the EAAFP Task Force on Illegal Hunting, Taking, and Trade of Migratory Waterbirds. He explained how the formation of this collaboration between CMS and EAAFP is timely, as the activities of each Task Force are complementary to one another for addressing a priority issue, though the terminology currently used may still need some adjustment to fit regional sensitivities. The Chair of the ITTEA, Narelle Montgomery (Australia), sees the opportunity for using the CMS mandate as a way to protect more bird species and that this joint approach will allow for complementary work that avoids duplication.

### **2. Overview – Illegal Taking of Migratory Birds**

#### **2.1. Mandates, initiatives and major opportunities in addressing illegal taking of migratory birds**

2. A brief summary of the CMS approach and framework was presented by Mr. Ramirez.

#### **2.2. Brief presentation of situation report, leading into updates and discussion with wider Task Force representatives from range states and organizations**

3. Ms. Tsang provided a summary of the pre-MOP event held of 12 March 2023, which was the first time convening the ITTEA, including a brief overview of the situation analysis from Ding Li Yong (BirdLife International) and the updates from other participants. The floor was open to the participants to provide updates about work being done in by each of their governments or organizations. Dr. Sunleang gave an example of a successful campaign with restaurants in Cambodia called “Zero Snaring” and suggested that if CMS can fund public awareness activities and education programs, that could be very effective. Mr. Yong suggested working more with protected area managers and providing more training to rangers, who are often unfamiliar with the illegal bird trade. Both Mr. Yong and Ms. Tsang also underlined the need for translation of training materials and other resources into more dialects that are needed by local rangers. Angelique Songco (Philippines) stated that a combination of education and enforcement (soft and strong approaches) are needed, as they have shown that to be effective at some of their local sites. Rahman Ilias (Malaysia) stated that most waterbirds are protected by law in Malaysia, with some birds being permitted for hunting by license (which are no longer issued). She stated that there is a need for awareness raising around the public’s misunderstanding about the birds being migratory and origins of avian influenza. Md. Jahidul Kabir (Bangladesh, virtual participant) provided some

examples of work they have conducted in wetlands on illegal take of birds, and also mentioned interest in using the zoonotic disease and One Health aspect to interest more people in doing conservation work for birds. David Li (Singapore) recognizes that this is an important issue, though there is only a low level of these types of problems in Singapore, where there are snares and decoys for catching caged birds. He recognizes that bycatch in rice paddies is very common, and Mr. Yong added that this is very much an issue in razor clam farms in China. There is a need for more manpower for enforcement, and he suggests that CMS can help encourage the government to increase manpower or set up a public patrol system. Mr. Ramirez responded that these are both good points and there are good examples of how this work has been done before in the Mediterranean region to address these needs. If each country participates by outlining what their specific needs are, the Task Force could be a way for them to get capacity building for particular issues. Ms. Tsang also provided an example for how community patrols have been set up in Indonesian protected areas previously to fill in gaps in manpower. (Viet Nam) connected their work on illegal trade of birds primarily to their existing implementation of CITES and is looking to work more with international bodies like CMS and UNODC. There is a criminal court in Viet Nam that could address these issues but they needed more guidance on appropriate legislation and punishment for wildlife crimes.

### **3. Next steps of collaboration of both ITTEA and EAAFP Task Forces**

4. For the next agenda item, Ms. Tsang provided an overview of next steps, including how participants could contribute their comments or examples to the Programme of Work (POW).

### **4. Any other business**

5. The floor was open to any other business. There were some remarks from Mr. Li about alternative livelihoods being very important to address. Ziyong Yang (Spoon-billed Sandpiper Task Force) about the lack of enforcement for farmers who were illegally using nets that caught protected bird species as bycatch, the removal of which would require more financial resources that they do not have. They would like to try and put down a strict ban on using those nets but that would require more support from political representatives. Ms. Tsang provided examples for alternative deterrent methods used in Indonesia on large terrestrial mammals and mentioned that this type of research is one where NGOs like SBS in China could help fill in a vital gap in knowledge.

### **5. Closure of the meeting**

6. Mr. Ramirez and CMS thanked the participants for attending and their participation, reiterating that Task Force members did not need to be CMS signatories. He closed the meeting at 20:00 AEST.

**Annex 1: Participants List**

<b>Representatives from Parties and Range States</b>		
Australia	Narelle Montgomery	Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment, and Water, Australian Government
	Kevin Yang	Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment, and Water, Australian Government
Bangladesh	Md. Jahidul Kabir (virtual participant)	Deputy Chief Conservator of Forests, Forest Department, Bangladesh
Cambodia	Srey Sunleang	Ministry of Environment, Cambodia
Malaysia	Rahmah Ilias	Department of Wildlife and National Parks Peninsular Malaysia
	Ahmad Khusaini	Department of Wildlife and National Parks Peninsular Malaysia
Philippines	Angelique Songco	Tubbataha Reefs Natural Park, Philippines
Singapore	David Li	Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve, National Parks Board (NParks), Singapore
Viet Nam	Trang Truong	Nature and Biodiversity Conservation Agency, Viet Nam
	Dung Nguyen Xuan	Nature and Biodiversity Conservation Agency, Viet Nam
	Van Anh Nguyen	Nature and Biodiversity Conservation Agency, Viet Nam
<b>Observer Organizations</b>		
BirdLife International	Nicola Crockford	Principal Policy Officer, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (BirdLife in UK)
	Ding Li Yong	Regional Coordinator, BirdLife International (Asia)
James Cook University	Sara Kophamel	
Mangrove Foundation	Qing Chen	Mangrove Foundation
Spoon-billed Sandpiper Task Force	Ziyong Yang	Spoon-billed Sandpiper in China
WWF Hong Kong	Xianji Wen	Mai Po Nature Reserve and Regional Wetlands, WWF Hong Kong
<b>EAAFP Secretariat</b>		

EAAFP Secretariat	Hyeseon Do	Programme Officer
<b>CMS Secretariat</b>		
CMS Secretariat	Ivan Ramirez	Head of Avian Team
	Susan Tsang	ITTEA Coordinator
	Tilman Schneider	Associate Programme Officer, Avian Species Team