



CMS Bulletin

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Guest Article

Baltic Prospects

By Rüdiger Stempel,
Chair of the Jastarnia Group

From August 27 - 29, 2013, the 20th Meeting of the ASCOBANS Advisory Committee (AC 20) will take Place in Warsaw. At the invitation of the Government of Poland, government officials, representatives of international and non-governmental organizations and scientists from across the ASCOBANS area will gather in the Polish capital to assess progress in implementing the Agreement and chart the course for future action – action that is urgently needed!

Consider the following: the Baltic Sea, the world’s largest body of brackish water and a unique element of Europe’s natural heritage, is regularly inhabited by only one cetacean species, the harbour porpoise (*Phocoena phocoena*). Sadly, in the Baltic Sea this species is in dire straits. Once abundant throughout the Baltic, these small marine mammals are now classified as critically endangered by IUCN. In less euphemistic terms, Baltic porpoises are threatened with extinction. From the middle of the 20th century to the 1990s the population

» p. 2

Contents

- **Guest Article** 1
- **Conservation News** 3
 - CMS Supports Draft Action Plan for High Andean Flamingos.....3
 - International Action Plan Adopted to Reduce Barriers to Migratory Species in Central Asia.....5
 - Project of the Month - August Restoring Dalmatian Pelicans and their Habitats in the Mediterranean Basin.....6
 - Project of the Month - July Old Slovakian Mines to Become Safe Roosts for Bats 7
 - Project of the Month - June Empowering Local Fishing Communities to Conserve Coastal Dolphins9
- **Conservation Policy** 11
 - Stakeholders to Develop Global Action Plan in Abu Dhabi for the Saker Falcon 11
 - Grid Expansion and Species Protection in Germany..... 12
 - IPBES Welcomes Contribution of CMS..... 15
 - Feasibility Study Assesses Implications of Incorporating the Central Asian Flyway into AEWA..... 16
- **Species Campaigns** 17
 - 17th International Bat Night to Attract a Large Audience across the World..... 17
- **News from the Secretariat**..... 18
 - Jillian Grayson Joins the CMS Secretariat as New Associate Programme Officer in Abu Dhabi..... 18
 - Draft Strategic Plan for Migratory Species 2015-2023 - Comments requested by 30 Sept 2013..... 18
 - CMS Family Meetings..... 19



Guest Article

in the central and eastern Baltic Sea, the so-called “Baltic Proper” plummeted from several tens of thousands to a few hundred and numbers may have dropped further since then. Porpoises in the western Baltic, the Danish Straits and the Kattegat have fared better, but recent research indicates that these populations are also in decline.

Several anthropogenic factors have likely contributed to decimating porpoise populations in the Baltic Sea. Undoubtedly, however, bycatch, in particular in set gillnets, is the primary source of concern. Since the nets are difficult for porpoises to detect, the animals become ensnared in them. Unable to surface, they suffocate. To achieve a favourable conservation status for the Baltic harbour porpoise ASCOBANS encourages its Parties to work towards zero bycatch in the Baltic. Given current bycatch figures, this seems a tall order.

Does this mean that a favourable conservation status for the Baltic harbour porpoise is not only elusive but illusory? For the population in the Baltic Proper, at least, time is rapidly running out. Immediate, decisive action is required. But there is reason for tentative optimism. The ASCOBANS recovery plan for the Baltic Sea and the conservation plan for the western Baltic provide clear guidelines as to the measures needed to improve the odds of survival for this species. The rate of implementation could and should be stepped up, but countries around the Baltic are taking action to save their only indigenous cetacean species. Promising trials of alternative, more porpoise-friendly fishing gear are being conducted in several countries and novel alerting devices designed to keep porpoises out of harm’s way are being developed, with the support of ASCOBANS. The results of the SAMBAH Project



(Static Acoustic Monitoring of the Baltic Sea Harbour Porpoise), which surveyed Baltic harbour porpoises using around 300 so-called C-PODs, will be available shortly. They will offer unprecedented insights into the distribution and total abundance of harbour porpoises in the Baltic, thus enabling more targeted bycatch mitigation measures. New approaches to stakeholder involvement – a vital component of any bycatch mitigation strategy – are also being tried with some success in various countries.

Though it may not seem immediately obvious to those concerned, there is a convergence of interests between conservationists, who want to protect porpoises, fishermen, who have no interest in catching them, and consumers, who are increasingly spurning fish that is caught in unsustainable ways. If we, the experts and decision-makers around the ASCOBANS table later this month, bear this in mind, wisely build on what has been achieved in order to achieve more, and allow ourselves to be inspired by the creativity and dynamism of Poland’s vibrant capital, AC 20 and the spirit of Warsaw can become a catalyst for enhanced cetacean conservation in the Baltic Sea and throughout the ASCOBANS area. ■



Conservation News

■ CMS Supports Draft Action Plan for High Andean Flamingos

A workshop to support the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the Conservation of High Andean Flamingos and Their Habitats – was held 8 to 9 August in Antofagasta, Chile, to finalize the draft of the Action Plan. The two species of Andean flamingos concerned – the Andean flamingo *Phoenicopterus andinus* and the James flamingo *Phoenicopterus jamesi* are listed in CMS Appendix I.

The signatories to the Andean Flamingo MOU, Bolivia, Chile and Peru, have taken on international commitments to conserve and sustainably manage the species and their habitats in the High Andes.

The objectives of the Action Plan are to promote the co-ordination of the conservation actions undertaken by the signatories and to establish a coordinated plan of capacity building, monitoring and research for the two species. The workshop was organized by the National Forest Corporation of Chile (CONAF-Antofagasta) with support from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and sponsored by



Andean Flamingo © Omar Rocha

the mining factory "Minera la Escondida". It was attended by the MOU signatory countries as well as representatives from the private sector, mining, tourism and academia. The participation from the *Grupo de Conservación de Flamencos Altoandinos* was especially appreciated.

For more than 15 years, the Conservation Group Andean Flamingos (GCFA), a group of private and



James Flamingos (*Phoenicopterus jamesi*) © Omar Rocha



Conservation News



Flamingo workshop © Francisco Rilla

public specialists in the conservation of flamingos and Andean wetlands management in Argentina, Bolivia, Chile and Peru, has been implementing the conservation actions. These would benefit from enhanced co-ordination.

High Andean flamingos undertake continuous migrations between the South American wetlands of Argentina, Bolivia, Chile and Peru to forage and to search for breeding sites. The populations of those flamingos have been subject to a drastic reduction and fragmentation of their habitats.

Flamingos occur in the Central Dry Puna of the Andes, an eco-region which is unique in the world. With the exception of Laguna Mar Chiquita in Argentina its altitude ranges between 2,300 and 4,800 metres above sea level. It is populated by biota well adapted to high elevations and climatic extremes. The High Andean wetlands are mostly saline in nature. They are home to several endemic and migratory, as well as nomadic, bird species and other wildlife dependent on these wetlands.

If you require more information, please contact Francisco Rilla, CMS Information and Capacity Building Officer at frilla@cms.int ■



Conservation News

■ International Action Plan Adopted to Reduce Barriers to Migratory Species in Central Asia

Government officials and experts from Germany, Mongolia, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan and CMS agreed on an action plan to mitigate the impacts on migratory wildlife of the rapidly growing infrastructure development associated with mining activities.

The Action Plan, adopted at a conference in Vilm, Germany, in June, aims to combine the use of natural resources with the conservation of Central Asia's largest intact and interconnected steppe and grassland ecosystems. It is also known as the "Serengeti of Asia" for the long-distance mass migrations and nomadic movements of Mongolian Gazelles, Khulan and Saiga Antelopes.

However, legal and illegal mining as well as large-scale infrastructure projects, particularly in Mongolia and Kazakhstan, can disrupt the migration patterns of ungulates. The projects bisect these ecosystems and restrict the migration of ungulates and other wildlife. Fences, roads and railways can also cause direct mortality.

In accordance with CMS Recommendation 9.1. on "Central Eurasian Aridland Mammals" and CMS Resolution 10.3. on "The Role of Ecological Networks in the Conservation of Migratory Species", the Convention is working to coordinate activities to conserve this unique ecological network in the Central Asian steppes.

Targeted measures outlined in the action plan aim to reduce conflicts between the mining and transport industry and migratory ungulates. Wildlife-friendly fences can be installed relatively quickly along international borders. They would be raised by 20 centimetres and barbed wire removed at the bottom. Fences along railways can be removed completely. As roads are noise and light barriers for migratory species, a night ban could

help animals overcome the artificial barriers.

Scientists will investigate to what extent wild animals will use these and other mitigation measures such as "green bridges" over and underneath roads and railways or temporary traffic bans on roads. The findings will be considered when planning transport infrastructure, including a national mitigation strategy. In Mongolia alone, 5,600 kilometres of railways will be built in the coming years.



Wild Camels in Great Gobi © Petra Kaczensky

Anti-poaching brigades, inter-ministerial coordination and capacity building to implement environmental legislation are also needed to reduce the pressure on the species. The aim is to reconcile the use of mineral resources and infrastructure development with the conservation of biodiversity in Central Asia.

CMS, Frankfurt Zoological Society and Fauna & Flora International launched a new **report** at the meeting: *Saiga Crossing Options*. It offers practical guidelines to decision makers to reduce the impact of the construction of infrastructure on Kazakhstan's migratory wildlife and landscape. ■



Conservation News

■ Project of the Month - August Restoring Dalmatian Pelicans and their Habitats in the Mediterranean Basin

The CMS Small Grants Programme is funding a project on the conservation of the Dalmatian Pelican (*Pelecanus crispus*) and Wetlands in the Mediterranean Basin. Wetlands are some of the world's most biologically diverse yet fragile ecosystems. They are home to a remarkable number of waterbirds such as the Dalmatian Pelican.

In the Mediterranean Basin, there are 226 Ramsar sites which are considered as "Wetlands of International Importance". However, the Mediterranean wetlands are particularly vulnerable to human

made threats. Expanding agriculture is increasingly damaging these fragile ecosystems. Many are in a critical state or have already disappeared.

This widespread degradation of Mediterranean wetlands is also affecting the Dalmatian Pelican. Since the 17th century, 80 percent of its breeding sites have vanished. Today, the presence of the Dalmatian Pelican in Europe is limited to only 13 wetlands of the Balkans and the Caucasus. Without continued conservation efforts, the decline of breeding sites will eventually cause the total disappearance of Dalmatian Pelicans from the Mediterranean Basin.

The project of the month for August is being implemented by the French organization Noé Conservation, in partnership with a number of other international and regional research centres and specialist groups. It focuses on the Skadar Lake National Park in Montenegro, Kerkini Lake in Greece and Karavasta Lagoon in Albania. Improving the scientific knowledge on the species and its habitats and effective management of its breeding sites in the Mediterranean Basin are the major objectives. The project also aims to help local communities to establish sustainable management and use of natural resources. Increasing public awareness is a means of generating local support for the conservation of the species. In addition, other wetland flora and fauna as well as the overall management of breeding sites in the region will benefit from the protection of the Dalmatian Pelican as an umbrella species.

The Dalmatian Pelican, an emblematic bird protected by many multilateral environmental agreements, is listed on CMS Appendices I and II. It is also categorized as Vulnerable by the IUCN, and listed under AEW, Appendix II of the Bern Convention, Appendix I of CITES, and Annex I of the European Birds Directive.

Read more on the CMS website



Dalmatian Pelican © Giorgio Quattrone



Conservation News

■ Project of the Month - July Old Slovakian Mines to Become Safe Roosts for Bats

Many European bats are losing their roosts and feeding areas, which has driven them to extinction in certain countries. In Slovakia, bats use numerous old mines as wintering roosts; however these sites are threatened with destruction. The Slovak Bat Conservation Society is addressing this issue through a conservation project which is partly funded by the CMS Small Grants Programme. It is the project of the month for July.

Most of the underground mines of Slovakia are not safe for humans and bats, and the latter are also at risk of disturbance from the increasing number of people visiting the sites. People consider the old abandoned mines as dangerous; inhabitants of the villages nearby often request their demolition, on the grounds of public safety. Since the old mines might collapse and prevent tourism and recrea-

tional activities such as hiking in the area, there have recently been plans to blow them up.

The project of the month of July is conducted by the Slovak Bat Conservation Society (SBCS). Conserving bats in the old mines is the main objective. It focuses on four key species occurring in the country: Schreibers' Bent-winged Bat (*Miniopterus schreibersii*), the Mediterranean Horseshoe Bat (*Rhinolophus euryale*), the Greater Horseshoe Bat (*Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*), and the Lesser Horseshoe Bat (*Rhinolophus hipposideros*), the first two of them being listed as Near Threatened under the IUCN Red List. The objective is to identify the significant underground roosts and ensure their protection, as required under national legislation. This is a response to conservation requirements under EUROBATS and CMS.

The greatest challenge for bat conservation in Slovakia is the lack of information on the occurrence of bats in the old mines: data are only



Bat activity by protected old mine entrance © Slovak Bat Conservation Society



Conservation News



Swarming bats © Slovak Bat Conservation Society

collected randomly and in insufficient quantities. Moreover, bat populations are possibly not being targeted properly. An expert working group involving the State Nature Conservancy and the Bat Conservation Society would allow for close cooperation between government authorities, mining companies, local communities and conservationists, thus helping to fill the information gaps.

Coordinates of several hundred old mines were obtained from the State Geological Institute in October 2012. Field research started in Revúčka highland, an area of almost 1,000 square kilometres. SBCS undertook a systematic field survey to monitor the bat population and found about 150 entrances to old mines. In all 700 individuals of 11 different species were found hibernating in the old mines.

While bats use some underground roost sites only temporarily, they create breeding colonies in the other shelters. This gives a clearer picture of the importance of the underground mining systems in respect of bat species and season. In August 2013, bats will be tagged to find out about their habitat use and time-space activity.

Once some old mines have been identified as significant roosts, the SBCS will contact the relevant authorities to ensure the sites' protection. Research results will be used to deal with other mining areas in Slovakia and will serve as a good example for other countries.

Read more on the CMS website ■



Dangerous entrance to old mine © Slovak Bat Conservation Society



Conservation News

■ Project of the Month - June Empowering Local Fishing Communities to Conserve Coastal Dolphins

The CMS Small Grants Programme project of the month for June aims to halt the continuing decline of the Atlantic Humpback Dolphin. Up to nine scattered, small subpopulations of less than 1,000 animals each roam the tropical and sub-tropical coastal waters of western Africa. The total population is estimated to number a few thousand only.

Increasing targeted and incidental catches, habitat loss and human-made disturbance have triggered a dramatic decline. Unless immediate conservation measures are taken, the species might face extinction in many areas.

The project focuses on Gabon and Congo; both countries have some of the most intact coastal humpback dolphin habitats on the Atlantic coast of Africa. A low human population density along the seaboard may represent one of the last great hopes for this species. Conservation measures can therefore help preserve viable populations of humpback and other coastal dolphins.

In this area, the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) started the 'Atlantic Humpback Dolphin Conservation Project' in 2008 and in 2011 launched the 'Congo Basin Coast Programme'. In partnership with government agencies in Congo and the local NGO, COGEREN, WCS is seeking to engage and support local fishing communities in conservation efforts.



Atlantic Humpback Dolphin
© Tim Collins/Wildlife Conservation Society



Conservation News

Reducing humpback dolphin by-catch in Congo, and increasing public awareness and local support for the animals' conservation are major objectives. CMS is funding a whole range of activities involving fishermen as key players. Restrictions to fisheries will be established in coastal zones; fishers that release dolphins alive will be compensated. A new fisher-led "reporting and reaction network" will ensure the fishermen's safety during dolphin rescue attempts. Training for teachers and wildlife managers and education in local schools concerning the conservation of marine life are being organized in partnership with local authorities and NGOs. Other dolphin species and nesting marine turtles will also benefit from the project, which is a unique chance to restore populations in the region.

Covered by the regional CMS MOU concerning the conservation of the Manatee and small cetaceans of Western Africa and Macaronesia, the Atlantic humpback dolphin is listed on CMS Appendix I and is currently categorized by the IUCN as Vulnerable, with a revision to Endangered recommended by the IWC Scientific Committee in 2010.

Read more on the CMS website ■



Atlantic Humpback Dolphins

©Tim Collins/Wildlife Conservation Society



Conservation Policy

■ Stakeholders to Develop Global Action Plan in Abu Dhabi for the Saker Falcon



Saker Falcon (*Falco cherrug*) © Andras Kovacs

The conservation of the endangered Saker Falcon is taking another step forward. The Saker Falcon Task Force (STF) established under the auspices of Coordinating Unit of the CMS Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of Migratory Birds of Prey in Africa and Eurasia (Raptors MOU) will convene a Stakeholders' Action Planning Workshop 9 – 11 September 2013 in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.

The STF brings together over 50 representatives and specialists from more than 20 countries to work together to find long-term solutions for the conservation and management of the species, through the development of a coordinated Saker Falcon Global Action Plan (SakerGAP).

The Workshop offers a unique opportunity for the key Range State governments, organizations and individuals involved to develop the Global Action Plan.

Each Range State has a role to play in conserving the species. The SakerGAP will identify the actions required to promote the recovery of a flourishing wild population by linking conservation and management activities all along its flyway.

The 2nd Meeting of the STF will be convened right after the Workshop on 12 September at the same venue. It will review progress against the STF WorkPlan and, in light of the outcomes of the Workshop, agree the actions required to finalize the SakerGAP for presentation to 11th Conference of the Parties (CMS COP11) in 2014.

The Saker Falcon (*Falco cherrug*) is a large and spectacular migratory bird of prey with a range that spans over 50 countries, primarily in the Palearctic region. It breeds in Central and Eastern Europe and throughout Asia, and migrates south annually, including through the Gulf Region, to its wintering areas in Africa.

Due to rapid population declines which have reduced the number of breeding pairs by 50% in the last 25 years, the species is now classified as globally 'Endangered' by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and has been uplisted to Appendix I of the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS). The main threats to the Saker Falcon include habitat loss and degradation, electrocution by power lines particularly in breeding areas, use of agrochemicals, and trapping for use in falconry.

In November 2011, the 10th Conference of the Parties to CMS adopted Resolution 10.28 to establish a Saker Falcon Task Force (STF), under the auspices of the Raptors MOU.

If you require more information, please contact Nick P. Williams, CMS Programme Officer – Birds of Prey (Raptors) at nwilliams@cms.int. ■



Conservation Policy

■ Grid Expansion and Species Protection in Germany

By Hanna Tholen, Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nuclear Safety and Nature Conservation

Since 2011 the German Government has been striving to transform the country's energy system with the aim of covering energy demand with renewable energy. This requires expanding the electricity grid to transfer wind power from northern Germany and solar power from southern Germany to consumption centres. In order to accelerate this project, the planning procedure for grid expansion has been reformed. The new procedure encompasses a number of planning stages, which require a review of different aspects of species protection to varying extents; depending on how detailed the planning is at the respective stage.

I. Scenario and grid development plan

In the first stage, a **scenario** is drawn up. Based on statistical data, this scenario presents potential developments regarding the consumption and generation of energy. This scenario is the basis for further planning.

As a next step, the **grid development plan** is prepared. The aim of the grid development plan is to set out all necessary measures for optimizing and expanding the grid in such a way as to ensure secure and reliable operation. At this stage, the starting and end points of power lines are determined, while the exact route is not yet laid down. A market simulation is used to calculate power flow in order to identify necessary measures. Based on the results, plans are drawn up for those grid reinforcement and expansion measures that will best ensure supply security while taking into account all relevant aspects. This process also includes a strategic environmental assessment



Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety

and a corresponding environmental report. The report must identify, describe and assess likely environmental impacts as well as alternatives. In this way, the planning procedure already takes species protection into consideration. In the case of overhead lines that includes impacts on bird species, especially whether power lines in certain regions cross important migration routes of birds protected under CMS or AEWA. The procedure thus already takes into account the requirements of CMS and AEWA, i.e. UNEP/CMS/Resolution 10.11 par. 2.3 and AEWA Resolution 5.16 par. 1 regarding early identification and consideration of species and their behavioural patterns. As at this stage no details are planned yet for individual power lines, the aim of the review is limited to establishing whether obstacles that are hard to overcome exist in certain regions.



White Stork approaching power lines
© Manfred Löffler



Conservation Policy



Dark-bellied Brent Geese (Branta b. bernicla) Langeness, Schleswig-Holstein Wadden Sea National Park
© Peter Prokosch/www.grida.no

Scenarios and grid development plans are both developed by transmission system operators and reviewed and authorized by the competent authority (Federal Network Agency).

II. Federal Requirement Plan

The next step is to discuss the results of the grid development plan at legislative level. Finally, a list of high-voltage lines, which are a priority from the energy management point of view, including starting and end points, is laid down by law (**Federal Requirement Plan Act**). The legislators' decisions are based on the outcome of the previous planning that has taken all concerns and interests into consideration as well as the results of the environmental report.

III. Specialized national planning

Where the planned power lines cross Länder or state borders, the planning procedure includes **specialized national planning** as another step. In this case, strips of land (corridors) with a width of

around 500-1000m are determined on which the power lines will be built. The exact route will only be laid down in a last step, the planning approval procedure that follows, but it will have to be located within the previously determined strip of land. Specialised national planning also reviews whether reservations against the realisation of a project in a certain corridor are mainly public (including environmental concerns) or private. Alternatives for routes and their impacts on the environment must be taken into account as well. The aim is to ensure that a route is found within such a corridor that is in line with the interests of nature conservation including species protection. The approval of the power line should not be denied in the following approval procedure (see below) on account of conflicts with species protection (or other environmental concerns) that were foreseeable and avoidable when the corridor was chosen. With a view to species protected under CMS or AEWA this means that, where migratory routes might be affected, either other possibilities must be avail-



Conservation Policy

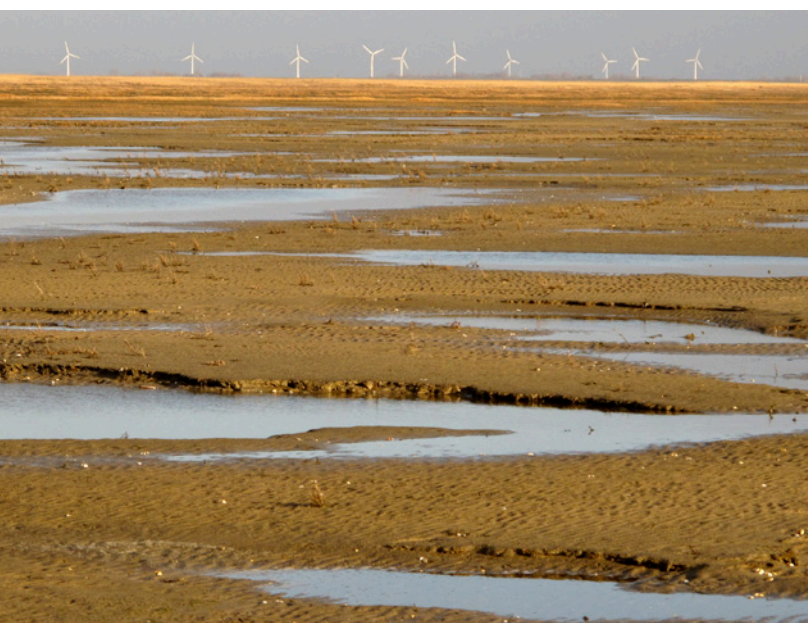
able for the power line route within the corridor that will avoid conflicts with birds protection or that conflicts can actually - and legally - be solved at the next planning stage. The authorities weigh up all arguments and private and public concerns and decide on a corridor. Thus, requirements under CMS, in particular UNEP/CMS/Resolution 10.11 par. 2.3 and 2.4, and AEWA, in particular AEWA Resolution 5.16 par. 1, are implemented.

IV. Plan approval

The last stage of planning procedures is **plan approval**, the authorization procedure for the concrete power line route. In this step, the details of the power line including the exact route, transmission technology etc. are reviewed and laid down. The impacts of construction and operation of the planned power line on private and public interests are determined and weighed up against each other as well as possible alternatives for route

and design. Also, environmental requirements are reviewed intensively at this stage, for example national provisions on nature conservation and species protection which transpose European or international law, specifically bans on capture, killing or disturbing or the protection of breeding and resting areas. Environmental assessments may refer to those of previous planning stages, but they will have to be supplemented with a view to the concrete power line, as previous assessments were much more general. In the case of overhead lines, this includes species protection requirements for birds where a power line crosses migratory routes or resting areas of bird species protected under CMS or AEWA. Where the option of underground power cables is reviewed as a more suitable alternative with regard to bird protection, other ecological impacts must be assessed.

During the review procedure attempts are made to avoid or solve conflicts with the provision of species protection legislation by reviewing alternatives or setting pre-conditions. One option might be a different route for a power line that reduces the risk of collision with an overhead line, for example by building the power line along high road or railway bridges or along a forest, by pooling lines or building them close to industrial sites. Other options include arranging conductors horizontally, applying suitable markers or regular monitoring. Where a breach of provisions cannot be ruled out and no exemptions from international, European or national law can be made, the construction of the power line will not be permitted. Species protection requirements are strictly binding and cannot be overruled when considering conflicting interests. Therefore, the last stage of the procedure also fulfils the species protection requirements of CMS and AEWA, i.e. UNEP/CMS/Resolution 10.11 par. 2.3 and 2.4 in particular and AEWA Resolution 5.16 par. 1.



Tidal flats and windmills, Westerhever, Schleswig-Holstein Wadden Sea National Park, Germany
© Peter Prokosch/www.grida.no



Conservation Policy

■ IPBES Welcomes Contribution of CMS

By Fernando Spina, Chair of the CMS Scientific Council

IPBES, the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services under UNEP will be one of the key components of the global strategy for biodiversity conservation in the years to come.

IPBES has established a Bureau and a Multi-disciplinary Expert Panel (MEP). The Plenary invites chairs of the scientific advisory bodies of the various Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) to attend meetings of the Bureau and MEP as observers. In this capacity, the chair of the CMS Scientific Committee has attended the First IPBES Bureau and MEP meetings, which took place last June in Bergen at the invitation of the Norwegian Government.

The meeting offered an interesting opportunity to follow the work of these IPBES bodies and contribute to the discussions concerning the organization and strategic workplan of this new conservation platform. Ahead of these meetings, IPBES had requested MEAs to submit project proposals for the Platform's attention and action. In this regard, CMS has been one of the most active MEAs. A joint proposal of the CMS, AEWA and EUROBATS Secretariats, and signed by the Standing Committee Chair Prof. Alfred Oteng-Yeboah was submitted. It comprised six proposals covering a large array of issues affecting migratory species and the global challenge of conserving biodiversity and ecosystem services. These proposals focus on:

- The function of migratory species in ecosystems
- The economic valuation of ecosystem services provided by migratory species
- Traditional knowledge and migratory birds
- Protected areas systems and the needs of migratory species

- Migratory species in areas beyond national jurisdiction
- Migratory species and climate change

CMS has an important role in addressing the need for the existence of IPBES. Migration is the best concrete example illustrating the need for a global perspective on conservation. Knowledge and conservation of biodiversity as well as sustainable use of its components should be set in a global context. Migration links continents, oceans, habitats, seasons and human cultures in time and space; and migratory species are the living proof that the Earth is a single ecosystem.

The very nature of migratory species means that monitoring and acquiring knowledge about them require international and trans-boundary cooperation and sharing of scientific information. This exchange can only be efficient when data are collected based on identical protocols adopted across countries and continents; this calls for capacity building and international scientific cooperation and participation of the general public through citizen science. All this strengthens the need for shared responsibilities and political decisions in biodiversity conservation.

The IPBES audience received with interest the CMS views on the global challenge to preserve the planet as a living ecosystem, essential for human life.

CMS was invited to offer a closing statement to the meeting, which was circulated to all participants. The CMS proposals have been positively considered and given the means the Convention would be ready to implement them in the important start-up phase of this new global Platform.

A report on the meeting is available at: <http://www.ipbes.net/events-feed/352-1st-full-mep-and-bureau-meeting-2.html>



Conservation Policy

■ Feasibility Study Assesses Implications of Incorporating the Central Asian Flyway into AEWA

The CMS and AEWA (African Eurasian Waterbird Agreement) Secretariats have initiated a feasibility study to assess the implications of the possible incorporation of the Central Asian Flyway (CAF) Action Plan into AEWA. This follows the decision of a meeting of range states of the CAF of migratory waterbirds in December 2012 in Abu Dhabi. The purpose is to provide the AEWA Parties with sufficient information to take a decision regarding the proposed integration of the Central Asian Flyway region into AEWA. A first draft of the assessment will be discussed at the forthcoming meeting of the AEWA Standing Committee in September.

The study had become necessary after the decision taken at the third meeting of CAF range states. Incorporating the CAF Action Plan into AEWA was the preferred way forward to ensure its effective implementation and would involve extending the geographical area of the Agreement eastwards. In the Final Declaration of the meeting, range states requested the AEWA Standing Committee to consider how to take this matter forward with a view to presenting a proposal to the next AEWA Meeting of the Parties for decision.

The CAF Action Plan covers at least 279 migratory waterbird populations of 182 species, including 29 globally threatened and near-threatened species that breed, migrate and spend the non-breeding period within the Eurasian region. The flyway region covers 30 countries of North, Central and South Asia and Trans-Caucasus. Many of the bird populations are declining rapidly and the wetlands, grasslands and other habitats upon which they depend are seriously threatened along the CAF, making it necessary to improve regional environmental cooperation among the Central Asian Range States.

In order to address these needs and identify co-



White-fronted Geese (Anser albifrons), Seomangeum, South Korea © Peter Prokosch/www.grida.no

ordinated actions to conserve those species, CMS convened two meetings of Range States (Tashkent 2001, New Delhi, 2005). The second agreed on the content of the CAF Action Plan to Conserve Migratory Waterbirds and their Habitats, which was formally adopted in 2008. During their third meeting in 2012, Range States also took a decision regarding their preferred institutional and legal framework of the CAF Action Plan.

The feasibility study, which is being financed by the German Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) Regionale Programme for Sustainable Use of Natural Resources in Central Asia, is a first step towards implementing this decision.

More info on the Abu Dhabi meeting including the final declaration is available here:

http://www.cms.int/species/CAF/ngs_meetings.htm



Species Campaigns

■ 17th International Bat Night to Attract a Large Audience across the World

By the EUROBATS Secretariat

The upcoming 17th International Bat Night on 24-25 August will put these reclusive nocturnal species in the spotlight. Over 30 countries will join the celebrations to highlight conservation needs of bats.

Traditionally held on the last weekend of August, International Bat Night is an annual event celebrated all across Europe, the Middle East, Northern Africa and beyond. Lectures, children's games and contests, exhibitions, walks with detectors and

strong lamps to watch the flying bats and many other events are organized by Nature Conservation Agencies, NGOs and volunteers and target the general public. The event aims to bring us closer to these misunderstood mammals and their fascinating world by disproving superstitions and raising awareness of the need for bat conservation.

The EUROBATS Agreement strives towards the conservation of bat species. Despite the positive trends visible in several populations, the conservation status of many species remains critical. Many challenges remain ahead for bat conservationists, such as the insulation of buildings, expansion of wind farms, intensive

farming practices and prejudice. It is therefore important to demystify these winged mammals and raise awareness of their importance for biodiversity, the threats they are facing and the need for conservation action.

Bat Night 2013 has so far triggered approximately 400 events being organized all over Europe, the Middle East and the United States. What better way is there to spend the night of 24 or 25 August than by celebrating the "International Bat Night" on the last weekend of August? Visit www.eurobats.org for more information

International Bat Night

Nox Internationalis Chiropterorum
Nata Nderkombetare e Lakuriqit të Natës
ليلة الخفافيش (الطوفان)
Nä Internationalis dakt Batpenata
Պատմական Երեւոյան Միջազգային Կիւնի
Bayunaklıq Yaxasa Gecəsi
Міжнародная Ноч Качаной
Internationale Nacht van de Vleermuis
Međunarodna noć šišmiša
Международна ноц на прилепите
Međnarodni noc netoperiju
International Flaggermsnatt
Rahvusvaheline nahkhilreoo
Kansainvälinen lepakkoyö
Nuit Internationale de la Chauve-souris
Եվրոպական Երեւոյան Միջազգային Կիւնի
Internationale Fledermausnacht
Միջազգային Ուղտ Ուղտերթիւն
Nemzetközi denevér-éjszaka
شب خفاش
Oiche Idirimáisiúnta na nialóg
ليل الخفافيش
Notte Internazionale del Pipistrello
Starptautiskā Sikspārnu nakts
Tarptautinė šikšnosparnių naktis
International Nuecht van der Fliedermaus
Il-Lejla Internazzjonali tal-Friefet il-Lejl
Noaptea Internațională a liliecilor
Međunarodna noc slijepih miseva
Internasional flaggermsnatt
Międzynarodowa Noc Nietoperzy
Noite Internacional dos Morcegos
Международная ночь летучих мышей
Međunarodna noć slemeh miševa
Međinardna noc netoperiov
Međnarodna noć netoperijev
Noche Internacional de los Murciélagos
Internationella fladdermsnatten
Международна ноц на лилјацие
Uluslararası Yaras Gecesi
Міжнародна ніч качаніс
International Bat Night

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News from the Secretariat

■ Jillian Grayson Joins the CMS Secretariat as New Associate Programme Officer in Abu Dhabi



Jillian Grayson during Dugong Aerial Survey
© J. Grayson

The CMS Secretariat welcomes Ms. Jillian Grayson who has joined the organization as of 30 June. Jillian has a keen interest in marine species conservation and management, particularly dugongs. She was awarded a PhD from James Cook University in 2012. For her PhD, Jillian worked with communities in Torres Strait, Australia to investigate community-based monitoring and management of dugongs and marine turtles. For the last few years, Jillian has worked for the Australian Government on the conservation of threatened and migratory marine species.

Jillian has a longstanding interest in Environmental Science, particularly Marine Ecology. In 2002, she achieved a Master of Science degree in Marine Ecology, having previously been awarded a Graduate Diploma in Environmental Science and a Bachelor of Science from the University of Sydney. She has also worked extensively in environmental science and marine ecology projects.

The CMS Abu Dhabi Office is home to the Secretariat for the CMS Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on the Conservation and

Management of Dugongs and their Habitats Throughout their Range and the Coordinating Unit for the CMS MOU on the Conservation of Migratory Birds of Prey in Africa and Eurasia. With Jillian's entry on duty the Abu Dhabi office is now fully staffed with a team of six full-time professional and administrative staff and four short-term team associates. ■

■ Draft Strategic Plan for Migratory Species 2015-2023 - Comments requested by 30 Sept 2013

As decided by CMS COP10, a Strategic Plan for Migratory Species 2015-2023 is being prepared by the Strategic Plan Working Group. The Secretariat takes this opportunity to remind readers that a first draft of the Strategic Plan has been released for comments by 30 September 2013. The draft presents proposed Goals and Targets for migratory species, based on the Aichi Biodiversity Targets in the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020.

The draft Plan is for all migratory species as defined by the Convention and as a *Strategic Plan for Migratory Species* it will thereby serve as a guiding framework for all work supporting their conservation. All CMS Parties and stakeholders are highly encouraged to engage in this important exercise by commenting on this first draft. This will ensure the development of a strong and realistic Plan in support of the conservation of migratory species.

The draft Plan is available in English, French and Spanish on the CMS website:

http://www.cms.int/bodies/StC/strategic_plan_2015_2023_wg/strpln_wg_drafts.html



News from the Secretariat

■ CMS Family Meetings

Date	Event	Venue
26 August	ASCOBANS: 3 rd Meeting of the North Sea Group	Warsaw, Poland
27-29 August	ASCOBANS: 20 th Advisory Committee Meeting	Warsaw, Poland
29 August 10:00-16:30hrs	Wadden Sea Day 2013: Salt Marshes: Our Heritage between Land and Sea	Wilhelmshaven, Germany
9-12 September	Saker Falcon Task Force: Stakeholders' Workshop	Abu Dhabi, UAE
18-20 September	AEWA: 9 th Standing Committee Meeting	Trondheim, Norway
Sept-Oct	ACCOBAMS/RAC-SPA Workshop on the Impact of Climate Change on the Marine Environment	tbd
9-10 October	CMS Scientific Council Strategic and Planning Meeting	Gaeta, Italy
29-31 October	CMS Capacity Building Workshop for Africa NFPs on the CMS Family Manual	Cape Town, South Africa
1 st November	CMS Strategic Plan for Migratory Species: Regional Consultation Meeting for Africa	Cape Town, South Africa
5-8 November	ACCOBAMS: 5 th Meeting of the Contracting Parties	Tangier, Morocco
25-26 November	Strategic Plan Working Group Meeting	Bonn, Germany
26 November (aft)	Budget and Finance Sub-Committee Meeting	Bonn, Germany
27-28 November	CMS: 41 st Standing Committee Meeting	Bonn, Germany
Events in 2014		
7-9 April (tent)	EUROBATS: Joint 9 th Standing Committee Meeting and 19 th Advisory Committee Meeting	Crete, Greece
15-16 April	Joint WDC-CMS Workshop on Cetacean Social Complexity and Culture	London, UK
15-17 Sept	EUROBATS 7 th Meeting of Parties	Brussels, Belgium
October	AEWA 12 th Technical Committee Meeting	Israel
Last Quarter	CMS 42 nd Standing Committee Meeting	TBA
Last Quarter	CMS 11 th Conference of the Meeting of Parties	TBA
Last Quarter	CMS 43 rd Standing Committee Meeting	TBA



Imprint

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