

Press Release

**Environment Agency – Abu Dhabi Recognized as a CMS
Migratory Species Champion Plus
&
Extends its Unique Decade-Long Partnership with Convention
on Migratory Species**

Bonn/Abu Dhabi, 18 February 2020 – Environment Agency — Abu Dhabi (EAD) and the Secretariat of the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) have extended their decade-long partnership, protecting Dugongs, African-Eurasian birds of prey and other migratory animals of regional importance.

Established in the United Arab Emirates' capital in 2009, CMS Office — Abu Dhabi is the only regional hub for the Convention outside its headquarters in Bonn, Germany. With the extension of the partnership agreement, CMS Office — Abu Dhabi will continue its UAE operations for another four years.

The partnership agreement was signed during a high-level event on the opening day of the 13th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, held in Gandhinagar, India from 17 to 22 February 2020.

“We value our partnership with CMS Office-Abu Dhabi in the UAE and are proud of all the important conservation outcomes we have achieved together across the ranges of many threatened migratory species since the partnership started in 2009,” said Dr. Shaikha Salem Al Dhaheri, Secretary General of EAD.

Among the achievements are the successful development of scientific tools to better study dugongs and seagrass habitats, supporting grassroots initiatives in developing countries, and facilitating adoption of strategic policies for the protection of species at high-level international fora. The history and achievements of the CMS-EAD partnership are described in a special 10th anniversary section of the [CMS website](#) launched in December 2019.

Because of its contributions to the conservation of Dugongs and African-Eurasian birds of prey, EAD was recognized in Gandhinagar as a CMS Migratory Species Champion Plus. Launched in 2014, the CMS Migratory Species Champion Programme recognizes significant contributions supporting the Convention and is open to governments,

companies, organizations, and individuals. EAD has already received two such awards for its commitment towards conservation of Dugongs and their habitats, as well as birds of prey in Africa and Eurasia, for the period 2015-2019.

“These Champion Plus awards serve to highlight the leading role that EAD and the UAE are playing in migratory species conservation internationally,” said Lyle Glowka, Head of CMS Office – Abu Dhabi. “Their long-term commitment and generous support are immeasurable.”

“Following a decade of fruitful cooperation, we have set an ambitious agenda for the immediate future and we look forward to collaborating with EAD and with other important national and regional stakeholders,” said Glowka.

Under one of the important new initiatives spearheaded by CMS Office — Abu Dhabi will provide a detailed, site-specific assessment of seagrass ecosystem services through community capacity-building. The €4.7 million project is funded by the International Climate Initiative (IKI) of the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety in Germany.

The IKI Seagrass Ecosystem Services Project will run until 2022 in five Dugong Range States. The information collected through this project will be used not only to create better policies, but also to design economic development opportunities connected to Dugong and seagrass conservation.

CMS Office — Abu Dhabi is home to two CMS international agreements — the Memorandum of Understanding concerning the Conservation of Migratory Birds of Prey in Africa and Eurasia (Raptors MOU) and the Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation and Management of Dugongs and their Habitats throughout their Range (Dugong MOU).

The Dugong is a large, slow-moving animal which feeds on seagrass. The calm, shallow waters along the Abu Dhabi coastline offer the perfect environment for this marine mammal and are home to an estimated 3,000 individuals, part of the second-largest Dugong population in the world, shared with three other Gulf countries. According to the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, Dugongs are vulnerable to extinction with the global population declining by 30 per cent in the last 60 years.

Raptors, especially some species of falcons, are also very important for the UAE, not only in terms of conservation value but also because of their special role in traditional falconry. Unfortunately, many species of raptors are also under increasing pressure with many vulnerable to extinction from human threats.

Note to Editors:

About the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS):

CMS is the only global biodiversity-related treaty specializing in the conservation and sustainable use of a wide array of terrestrial, aquatic and avian migratory species, their habitats and migration routes. Parties to the Convention work individually and cooperatively to ensure favorable conservation status for migratory species across their ranges. At present, there are 130 Contracting Parties to the Convention. The CMS Secretariat's headquarters are in Bonn, Germany. www.cms.int

About CMS Office - Abu Dhabi:

Established in 2009, CMS Office – Abu Dhabi comprises the Coordinating Unit of the Raptors MOU, alongside the Secretariat of the Dugong MOU and is hosted by Environment Agency – Abu Dhabi, on behalf of the Government of the United Arab Emirates. The vision and long-term support of the UAE, combined with the rich scope of a United Nations forum, is supporting the conservation of raptors, Dugongs and other migratory species, as well as promoting the well-being of associated human communities, to contribute towards achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

About Environment Agency - Abu Dhabi (EAD):

Environment Agency - Abu Dhabi (EAD) was established in 1996 to preserve Abu Dhabi's natural heritage and to raise awareness about environmental issues. EAD is Abu Dhabi's environmental regulator and advises the UAE Government on environmental policy. It works to create sustainable communities, and protect and conserve wildlife and natural resources. EAD also works to ensure integrated and sustainable water resources management, to safeguard clean air and to minimize climate change and its impacts. www.ead.ae

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