

CAMI, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, 23-25 September 2014

1. Opening and welcoming remarks

Mr. Bakhtiyar Abdiev (State Secretary, State Agency of Environmental Protection and Forestry under the Government of Kyrgyz Republic) opened the meeting welcoming participants to Bishkek. He expressed his thanks to the German Government and others that had given assistance to Kyrgyzstan. His country was committed to international cooperation in the field of the environment and had therefore joined CMS, a treaty that did much to foster joint efforts to conserve endangered fauna.

Ms. Petra Hippman (Head of German Development Cooperation, German Embassy in Kyrgyzstan) described a range of activities concerning social and economic policy and sustainable development. Germany was committed to long-term sustainable use of biodiversity and ensuring that the benefits were enjoyed by local communities. Germany was also actively involved in international fora such as CITES and CMS and its development agency operated in thirty countries. Central Asia was a particularly important region, with a wide range of landscapes and habitats hosting a variety of fauna and flora. Unfortunately many species were under threat as a result of human pressures: the Caspian tiger had gone extinct and the Cheetah was critically endangered. The natural phenomenon of migration needed positive human intervention – requiring political will – if it was to survive, and this would necessitate comprehensive strategies including coordinated, transboundary actions. Governments would have to take greater account of environmental factors when permission was granted for infrastructure projects and mining operations to proceed. The GIZ and regional programmes such as the FLERMONECA (Forest and Biodiversity Governance, including Environmental Monitoring) project were already promoting international conservation efforts on the argali and Kyrgyzstan had taken the lead on the protection of the snow leopard.

Mr. Bert Lenten (Deputy Executive Secretary, CMS) thanked the Kyrgyz Government for hosting the meeting. Kyrgyzstan had joined CMS quite recently but was already a very active Party, involved in initiatives for the argali and the snow leopard. He also thanked the GIZ, whose support through the framework of the project FLERMONECA financed by the European Union, had been instrumental in making the current meeting possible. He also acknowledged the invaluable support of the Federal Agency for Nature Conservation of Germany (BfN) in organizing and funding the travel of participants as well as the financial support of the Government of Switzerland. Central Asia was also known as the “Serengeti of the North” hosting species such as the khulan, the saiga antelope, the argali and the snow leopard. There were still large intact habitats and landscapes but these were under threat. CMS recognized the importance of Central Asia and the German Government had funded a dedicated officer responsible for the region, but there were no guarantees that the post would continue in 2015. A decision on this would be made at the upcoming 11th Conference of the Parties (CMS COP11) in Quito, Ecuador (4-9 November 2014).

Ms. Mia-Fatima Dubois-Boussaid (EU delegation to Kyrgyzstan) also addressed participants explaining the role of the EU in assisting with sustainable development in the region.

2. Workshop and Structure

Dr. David Mallon, the facilitator, explained the proposed structure and schedule of the workshop. After an explanation of the vision and goals and a brief introduction to set the scene describing the background to the Central Asian Mammal Initiative (CAMI) and the main threats, a series of smaller group discussions would start, with the groups reporting their findings back to the plenary. The desired outcome of the workshop was an agreed draft programme of work and a resolution to be submitted to the CMS COP11 for approval as well as a declaration by the participants of the workshop.

Vision

Dr. Mallon described the vision of CAMI as ensuring that “secured and viable populations of migratory mammals that range across the landscapes of Central Asia in healthy ecosystems are valued by and bring benefits to local communities and all stakeholders”.

Goal

The more tangible goal of CAMI was “to improve the conservation of migratory large mammals and their habitats in the Central Asia region by strengthening coordination and cross-border cooperation”.

Both the vision and the goal had evolved after thorough consultation with the Range States and all stakeholders. The next stage would be to develop more concrete objectives that would contribute to achieving the Goal and realizing the Vision. Four principal objectives had been identified: addressing the main threats and issues; planning and implementing priority conservation actions on a regional scale; exchanging knowledge, communication and synergies and finally identifying resources.

The Central Asian Mammals Initiative comprised 14 States and the current proposal was that it should cover 14 mammal species. There had been a request that a fifteenth species be added and this would be considered in the appropriate working group.

3. Scene-setting

3.1 The CMS Central Asian Mammals Initiative (CAMI)

Ms. Christiane Röttger (CMS) recounted the history of CMS, which had been signed in 1979 following the initial idea to have an international instrument for migratory species which had been agreed at the 1972 Stockholm conference on man and the environment.

Migration was a fascinating phenomenon and some species such as the bar-tailed godwit and the Arctic tern undertook huge journeys.

CMS had 120 Parties and the country that had joined most recently was Kyrgyzstan. The Convention had two Appendices and the forthcoming Conference of the Parties would consider further species listings. The parent Convention had spawned a series of Agreements, Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) and Action Plans. Relevant to the Central Asian region were the MOUs on the Bukhara Deer (dating from 2001 with four Range State as Signatories) and the Saiga Antelope (from 2006 with five Signatory States)

as well as the draft Single Species Action Plan for the Argali, prepared following a workshop in 2012 and which would be submitted to COP11 for adoption.

COP9 had adopted Resolution 9.1 on Central Eurasian Aridland Mammals and the Appendices contained many species found in the region, beyond those proposed for inclusion under CAMI.

3.2 Assessing gaps and needs in migratory mammal conservation: process and results

Ms. Maria Karlstetter (CMS) said that 14 mammal species appearing on CMS Appendices I and II had been chosen for priority attention under CAMI. Other migratory species not on the CMS Appendices and some transboundary species would also benefit from the initiative. The countries participating were: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, where full consultations had taken place, plus Afghanistan, China, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Mongolia, the Russian Federation, Bhutan, India and Pakistan, but the last three had not been studied in as much depth.

As well as conducting a literature review, a stakeholder survey had been carried out using online questionnaires and face-to-face interviews where possible. Threats were assessed and current conservation measures were examined and any gaps and needs were identified. Response rates were very high, with all governments replying except for the Russian Federation. Threats were scored on a points system with 0 representing no threat and 4 being the highest. Illegal hunting was considered the worst problem, with illegal trade quite high and legal hunting considered low. Other issues identified were habitat loss, degradation and fragmentation, overgrazing, barriers to migration, climate (the region was prone to drought and extremely cold winter temperatures), disease, inbreeding, retribution killing and other human conflicts and depletion of prey. Obstacles to the effective implementation of conservation policies were: illegal hunting and trade, competition with livestock and other conflicts between conservationists and farmers, conflicts with economic development objectives and projects, poor enforcement (either as a result of corruption or insufficient resources), the proximity of human settlements to key habitats, lack of governance, insecurity, the absence of NGOs and poor scientific knowledge, lack of political support and low public awareness or acceptance of conservation priorities. There was also a different perception of the worst problems with NGOs rating illegal hunting higher than Governments did.

Supporting factors included the fact that engaging local communities had improved and children were particularly receptive to the conservationists' message. The quality and quantity of research were improving and legislation had been strengthened, enabling protected areas to be established and making specific reference to migratory species in some cases.

There was scope to build on existing collaborative arrangements. Synergies between different agencies could be improved through joint programmes of work and undertaking projects together. International exchanges could be fostered, for example through regular technical workshops in the regions, and locally based NGOs needed to be strengthened.

CMS could play a role as a vehicle for transboundary cooperation and facilitating dialogue with the private sector. It was also well placed to coordinate the drafting of guidelines on best practice, support

countries as they revised their legal framework and serve as the main hub for communications between governments and other actors.

The findings of the initial survey were discussed at national consultation meetings held in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan¹. The assessment was also considered by the 18th Meeting of the CMS Scientific Council, which met in Bonn in July 2014.

4. Draft Programme of Work

The objective of the workshop and the smaller working groups through which it would operate was to discuss and agree on the content of a draft Programme of Work for CAMI. The findings of the working groups would be discussed in plenary and the Secretariat would produce a draft version of the programme of Work incorporating the workshop's recommendations.

5. Addressing key threats and issues relevant for migratory mammal conservation

5.1 Illegal hunting and trade

Dr. Peter Zahler (Deputy Director Asia Program, Wildlife Conservation Society)

Central Asia was afflicted by the global biodiversity crisis and by poaching for food, pets and medicine. The saiga and chiru had both undergone dramatic collapses largely because of demand for their horns and hides respectively. Part of the solution lay in having better enforcement and having more rangers on the ground.

Central Asia was huge, made up of varied landscapes and many of its protected areas were massive (certainly compared with those in some other regions). The structures for protected areas were often complex involving national government and different levels of regional and local administration, meaning that coordination among them was important. This could be achieved by establishing multiagency task forces involving police, customs, inspection agencies, protected area management and government agencies. Mongolia had set up such a task force and had managed to undertake 75 inspections in one year, a level never achieved before, with visits to protected areas, markets, railways and border posts.

Hunchun in the north-east of China had ten separate agencies and a complex land management regime. Rangers were not empowered to arrest poachers or confiscate equipment and so were reliant on the support of other agencies. After arrests, suspects had to be prosecuted (a majority of the 128 cases in Hunchun did result in court proceedings) but often the punishments imposed did not serve as a deterrent.

The Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) had developed the Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool (SMART), a GIS-operated instrument designed to assist with national enforcement. Frontline staff,

¹ With support of the GIZ Offices in those countries.

indigenous people and local communities were being trained to use it. It helped patrols decide where to go and afterwards assessed how effectively they were working. The system operated on a simple cycle of data collection, debriefing, data entry, data analysis, report compiling, and planning patrols. Being GPS-based, the system could be adapted to collect any data relating to location, so rangers recorded sightings of evidence of poaching (cadavers and camps). It could help with monitoring wildlife disease, too, but experience showed that it was best to concentrate on a smaller range of activities. Field officers could easily be trained to use the basic functions; only the later data analysis needed more advanced computer skills.

In the past, combating wildlife crime had not been a high priority, but by bringing the agencies together, they were becoming more aware of how serious it was and how it was linked to other problems.

The system was being used in 117 sites in 27 countries, including Colombia, the whole of Gabon and Thailand.

The slides making up this presentation are attached to this report as Annex I.

Dr. Katalin Kecse-Nagy (TRAFFIC)

Dr. Kecse-Nagy described TRAFFIC as a strategic alliance linked to CITES (the Convention on the International Trade of Endangered Flora and Fauna) and other partners such as the World Customs Organization. Most of the species being considered under CAMI were already listed under CMS and CITES.

TRAFFIC intervened at various points in the trade chain, working on the ground with local officers, with national governments and with IGOs such as CITES and CMS.

As part of an EU-funded project, three reports relating to Central Asia had been produced, examining aspects of trade and hunting in the Eurasian Customs Union and other selected countries in the region. The reports had been launched on the occasion of the CMS Scientific Council in July 2014.

There was already a customs union operating among Belarus, Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation, with Kyrgyzstan joining soon, in which there were no border controls. There was no intention to affect CITES implementation but there were likely to be considerable consequences, with “permit shopping” being one (seeking permits from the countries with more lax licensing); this involved smuggling items across the borders and the removal of frontier controls might facilitate this. The credibility of all CITES permits issued by any country in the Union could be undermined.

The first report included summaries of national CITES legislation, an assessment of interagency cooperation among CITES authorities, a description of training and capacity-building efforts and levels of reported illegal trade. CITES also applied to other customs unions, such as ASEAN, the EU, NAFTA and SACU (in southern Africa).

Among the recommendations were a more coordinated approach to enforcement, improving mechanisms for information exchange and setting national quotas. Another undesirable consequence with negative impacts on animal migration might be the building of further border fences between

countries inside and outside the Union.

The second report concentrated on the CITES non-detriment findings (NDF), which were a requirement under the Convention, but which had not been described in any detail (hence the step-by-step guide in the report) and on the argali, a trophy species. The report's findings on the argali could have wider application. TRAFFIC was also working on adapting an existing guide on plans for shark species.

The third report, compiled by Dr. David Mallon, was about trophy hunting in Central Asia, and reviewed policies relating to the Argali. It included information on poaching and illegal trade. Good practice in wildlife management and community-based trophy hunting.

The slides making up this presentation are attached to this report as Annex II.

5.2 Overgrazing/competition with livestock

Mr. Morteza Eslami (Iranian Cheetah Society)

Mr. Eslami gave a presentation entitled "Creating a livestock-free National Park to safeguard the critically endangered Asiatic Cheetah in Northern Iran". There were fewer than 70 cheetahs remaining.

Turan National Park had an area of 14,648 km² and had been declared in 1972. It had very low rainfall and water management in semi desert areas was important. Anti-poaching patrols were undertaken and they supplied foliage to supplement the ungulates' food. The Park had a range of habitats and fauna, including a breeding population of cheetah, onager (wild ass) and Persian leopard. Each year 2-3 cheetah families were raised in the Park constituting 40 per cent of the breeding population in the country; there were twice as many sightings of cheetah in Turan than in the rest of Iran combined.

Promoting cheetah conservation had proven difficult when there were 100,000 livestock in the Park during the cheetah breeding season. Shepherds set their dogs on the cheetahs. Another problem was that overgrazing was driving the cheetah's prey away. Most cheetah sightings occurred in the north and north-east of the Park; corrals could be found everywhere but some were abandoned and other land was available for lease. The local environment department maintained a register of farmers using the land for grazing. The land was owned by the Government but nomads had permits to graze livestock. Many had agreed to surrender their permits once they were provided with alternative grazing. As some of the pasture in the Park was semi-desert, often the alternative land offered was of better quality. There were only six permits left to be bought out.

A stakeholder meeting had been organized involving the Government, NGOs, UNDP and nomad and herder organizations, where a steering committee had been established. All parties seemed to benefit from the arrangements.

The slides making up this presentation are attached to this report as Annex III.

5.3 Barriers and fencing / infrastructure

Ms. Onon Bayasgalan (WCS Mongolia)

Central Asia was experiencing rapid growth in the development of infrastructure and industry; this was

particularly true of Mongolia. Landscapes and species were being affected by roads, railways, canals, fences, pipelines and power and communications infrastructure, all having impacts on habitats and water regimes.

The Mongolian gazelle had been affected by the railway running north-south and by a border fence, neither of which could be crossed by the animals. Hundreds of cadavers had been found caught on barbed wire fences and the populations had been split leading to genetic isolation and altered behaviour.

A mitigation hierarchy, recognized by CBD since the 1990s, meant that where possible impacts should first be prevented and if that was not possible then at least minimized or offset. These principles could best be implemented where there was a good understanding of the species and the likely impacts of building infrastructure, by aligning different types of infrastructure to avoid creating multiple barriers, by engaging all stakeholders and by prohibiting linear infrastructure where satisfactory alternatives were available. Construction should not be allowed if the design was not wildlife-friendly or where mitigation measures were absent or inadequate. Some mitigation measures were straight-forward – having the lowest wire without barbs and building over- and underpasses for animals. International lenders (e.g. International Finance Corporation, the World Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the Asian Development Bank and Espoo) all had strict criteria to ensure that standards were met.

Many national policy frameworks had a dual approach with SEAs (strategic environmental assessments) setting broad parameters and Environmental Impact Assessments for each project. The details varied from country to country, and SEA legislation often made no explicit reference to linear infrastructure. In none of the countries examined did EIA legislation refer to fences.

One recommendation was that migratory species should be mentioned in all SEA and EIA legislation and steps should be taken to standardize and harmonize regulations.

The slides making up this presentation are attached to this report as Annex IV.

5.4 Policy and legislation

Mr. Almaz Musaev (Kyrgyzstan State Agency on Environmental Protection and Forestry)

Kyrgyzstan had recently enacted new hunting legislation. The starting point had been to look at gaps in the existing laws and to examine wildlife legislation from an international policy perspective. In a new departure, particular effort was made to engage local communities and enlist their direct support for implementing nature conservation policies. The importance of wide cross-sectoral acceptance was recognized, as passing laws did not necessarily lead to them being respected.

The old hunting regulation was ineffective leading to a discrepancy between the law in theory and the reality on the ground. It was therefore essential to involve local people in the management of reserves and draft legislation so that communities' long-standing rights were taken into account. Because of the consultations required, framing the new legislation was a time-consuming exercise, and the GIZ assisted with both public and parliamentary hearings. In all, the process took five years, with the law finally

entering into force in March 2014. Its main aims were to stabilize the population of protected species, to combat corruption and to minimize the scope for lobbying for personal gain.

NGOs, the private sector and government were all involved. Transparency and openness were important factors in the new legislation which had been introduced alongside other land reforms, as one lesson learned was the need to harmonize laws. Fees charged for hunting were being used fairly, with local authorities determining how a large share of the revenue was used and local communities receiving 25 per cent. The State authority received 35 per cent to help cover the running costs of the system.

The State agency compiled an inventory of hunting land and stocks. Hunters – individuals and those belonging to clubs and associations were expected to help themselves to a large degree. The new legislation provided for 15-year permits (it had been 10 years under the old system), which was a period that allowed for longer-term planning. Previously a plethora of small hunting associations had been issuing licences without proper control.

The decision on whether to allow hunting on particular areas needed to be based on sound science. A national strategy was devised and a central analytical department was established to coordinate the drawing up of maps showing migration routes and other non-hunting zones. As a result the number of areas where hunting was allowed in one province was reduced from 30 to 18 and from 40 to 24 in another. Authority was spread preventing too much power from remaining in the hands of too few people; this served the interests of transparency. A commission had been set up to set quotas for the number of licences and hunters were included in the membership.

The State authority was issuing hunting certificates in keeping with the philosophy of the new law that only responsible individuals that had passed an examination were allowed to take part in hunting, addressing failings of the previous law which had not worked well. The new law provided for two levels of monitoring, with hunters and the State Hunting Agency respectively doing annual and five-yearly reviews.

Rangers in hunting areas were required to report on any infringements within their areas and 30 per cent of fines levied were passed to the hunting area concerned. Previously, investigations of poaching were hampered because of the unwillingness of witnesses to come forward and testify, and gathering evidence was difficult because of the remoteness of the areas. Now however, photographic and video evidence was permitted by the courts.

The slides making up this presentation are attached to this report as Annex V.

5.5 Engaging local communities

Ms. Madhu Rao (WCS China)

High in the Tibetan Plateau, the Changtang Nature Reserve at 298,000 km² was the second largest in the world and was part of a wider landscape covering 700,000 km². The Park contained species such as the chiru, the Tibetan gazelle and the blue sheep.

WCS was active in protected areas, working with a community-based network of rangers and helping

with mitigation measures to reduce human-wildlife conflicts.

Livestock herding was the main livelihood in the region and recent years had seen a large increase in the human population and the number of herds and flocks. New roads and settlements were being built leading to increased human-wildlife conflicts. The policy of the Tibetan Autonomous Region to privatize grasslands had also contributed to the growing number of fences being erected.

Herders were facing economic losses from conflicts with wildlife and compensation payments of US\$1.5 million had been made in the Garco and Gumu townships on the basis of tripartite agreements drawn up by WCS China together with the Tibetan Forestry Committee and township and village representatives. Herders were provided with incentives such as bear-proof fencing for animal enclosures and in return passages were guaranteed for chiru movements and areas were set aside exclusively for yaks to graze in. As a result, the number of bear attacks dropped by between 90 per cent and 100 per cent. In Garco, 108 families signed up, and 50 km² was set aside for yaks and 5,000 head of livestock were protected from bears. In Gumu, 38 of 66 families were given bear-proof fencing and 15 wildlife passages were established.

The challenges ahead were to ensure the sustainability of the schemes when outside injections of finance ceased and integrating the local projects into wider national schemes. Implementing the project faced difficulties because of the remoteness of the area and the lack of capacity on the ground. Wildlife-friendly livelihoods were feasible in parts of the Park such as yak wool production and the Forestry Administration was helping with this. It remained to be seen how well the herders adhered to the agreements and pressure needed to be exerted on higher levels of political power, as the greatest threats were associated with road construction opening the region up to more human settlement.

5.6 Improving scientific knowledge

Dr. Petra Kaczensky (Vienna University)

The drivers for migration were the quality and quantity of food in a given place and avoiding conflict and predators. Animals adopted various strategies with some being sedentary, some nomadic and others migratory. Nomadic species differed from migratory ones in that their movements were less organized and did not follow a set pattern. While they moved seasonally, they did not go to the same places every year, meaning that more areas were needed to be protected.

The triggers for and timing of migration were better understood for birds than ungulates. It was not known whether the animals could sense far distant rainfall and what role memory played in their behaviour.

While many people were aware of the zebras in the Serengeti, awareness of the migratory species of Central Asia, despite its sobriquet of “the Serengeti of the North” was low. In North America, the plight of the pronghorn stirred public reactions, after conservationists prepared the scientific case to put to the public. With convincing evidence, the public, the company and politicians could be lobbied more effectively and legal and management frameworks could be established, funds raised and stakeholders engaged.

Migratory species provided ecosystem services while also posing some threats. On the positive side, they were an intrinsic part of their habitats, dispersing seeds, spreading nutrients, and helping plants regenerate through grazing. For humans, they were an essential component of hunting, tourism and culture. On the negative side, they sometimes contributed to overgrazing and raided crops leading to human-wildlife conflicts. An economic case could be made for wildlife, and the monetary contribution of a species could be calculated. This had been done for the Chinook salmon in Canada.

Barriers to migration were a growing problem with the expansion of the railway network in Mongolia. Khulan had been studied to see where they crossed the highways but there was no guarantee that the animals' behaviour would not change if the road became busier.

Studies of minimal viable populations showed a non-linear relationship between population numbers and the area available. The relationships were also considerably different for sedentary, nomadic and migratory species. A loss of 25 per cent of available area might lead to a 12.5 per cent loss of population for sedentary a species but a loss of 25 per cent for a migratory one. The removal of a key stepping stone habitat which might account for a relatively small percentage of the area used by a species could however lead to a huge loss in animal numbers.

Catastrophic weather events could take a high toll of animals. One incident claimed 57 per cent of all livestock in an area, 60 per cent of Przewalski's horses but none of the khulans fitted with collars, because they had all moved away.

Re-establishing migration and reintroducing species had been tried in a few cases. One in Botswana presented the puzzle of how the zebras knew where to go on migration. For Przewalski's horses areas could be chosen by seeing where wild asses were present. Training birds to migrate by guiding them with microlite aircraft was expensive and might not be applicable to other taxa.

The slides making up this presentation are attached to this report as Annex VI.

Break-out Groups

Following the presentations, the meeting formed six break-out groups, one for each of the topics covered under agenda items 5.1 to 5.6. The groups were asked to identify ten key activities to address the respective issue and to also identify priority and timing if possible, with the objective to include those activities in the draft programme of work for the CAMI.

Illegal hunting and trade

The group presented its recommended ten activities to help reduce poaching and illegal trade. In the following discussion it was also suggested that the issue of hunting within protected areas should be further explored. The delegate from Pakistan mentioned that hunting areas could be moved around so as to not deplete animals in one area. He also mentioned that "photo shooting" and tourism could provide opportunities. The need to establish incentives for rangers to enforce the legislation was highlighted, as well as the fact that sustainable hunting was likely to be more significant than trophy hunting.

Overgrazing/competition with livestock

The group presented its findings and recommended actions to reduce the pressure on habitat from overgrazing. The activities are included in Annex Y. In the discussion, it was suggested to also focus on improving the existing pastures.

Barriers

The group presented its findings and recommended actions to reduce the negative impact from infrastructure and other barriers on the habitat and movement of migratory mammals. The results are included in the POW in Annex XVI.

Communities

The group recommended a set of activities to ensure involvement of local communities in conservation. In the following discussion it was highlighted that the focus should be on conservation issues, i.e. ensuring that all wildlife was assigned a value and that alternative livelihoods were wildlife friendly.

Policy and Legislation

The group identified the following policy areas as priorities: to develop unified standards for infrastructure (transport and border) and agricultural sectors; to create the Best Practices Policy Guidelines for issues affecting migratory and transboundary species; and to compile a legal atlas of relevant national legislation.

Scientific knowledge

The group proposed to strengthen scientific communication in the region through capacity-building and the establishment of research networks. The participants also stressed the necessity to fill the knowledge gaps about the species in focus to facilitate better design of policy and conservation measures, and to develop and implement science-based national conservation programmes harmonized across the region and monitored through unified indicators.

6. Regional cooperation

6.1 Global Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Protection Program, GSLEP (Mr. Chyngyz Kochorov)

A global forum had been held in 2013 with the support of the President of Kyrgyzstan and the participation of twelve Range States. The forum led to the establishment of the Global Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Protection Program (GSLEP) and a coalition of international partners to implement a global action plan. A secretariat had been formed to coordinate the work and liaise with Range States and other stakeholders.

Snow Leopard Day would be celebrated annually on 23 October (starting in 2014) and 2015 had been declared the Year of the Snow Leopard. An annual award would also be presented.

The programme being followed include engaging local communities and creating culturally and socially responsible incentives; identifying key landscapes; combating poaching and illegal trade through better enforcement and interagency and international cooperation; conserving key landscapes to ensure sustainable breeding populations, building the capacity of the secretariat and national focal points and setting the objective of ensuring that twenty landscapes were secure by 2020.

The slides making up this presentation are attached to this report as Annex VII.

6.2. Altay-Sayan Ecological Region (ASER) (Dr. Lkhagvasuren Badamjav)

Dr. Lkhagvasuren described existing and proposed transboundary protected areas in the Altay-Sayan Ecological Region (ASER).

The Uvs Nuur Lake Basin had been recognized by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site in 2003 and it had been designated as a Ramsar Site in 2004. A joint management plan had been agreed in 2010 with the Russian Federation and this included joint activities such as common research projects and ecological camps for children.

In the planning stage were two others transboundary sites, one covering Siilkhem in Mongolia and Sailugem in the Russian Federation (this would involve combining the two separate national areas to form one), and another for Khuvsgul Lake and Tunkinskii. Khuvsgul was the second largest freshwater lake in the world containing 1 per cent of the world's supply.

The challenges facing the transboundary sites in ASER were; the general lack of coordination with the two countries following different monitoring methodologies; uncontrolled grazing of pasture, especially in critical seasons; the harsh and changeable weather conditions; and lack of financial and human resources. The lessons learned included confirmation that integrated planning and evaluation were effective (the annual team meetings and quarterly reports worked well) and economic incentives for local enterprises were a useful tool.

Products of the collaboration were joint research into the Argali and the Snow Leopard, international conferences and proposals to create new or expand existing protected areas under a bilateral commission on environmental cooperation involving UNESCO.

The slides making up this presentation are attached to this report as Annex VIII.

6.3 Saiga MOU and the Altyn Dala Project, Kazakhstan (Mr. Steffen Zuther)

Saiga populations had fallen by 95 per cent in the 1990s due to the hunting of the males for their horns. The first listing under CMS took place in 2002 and the Mongolian sub-species had been added in 2008.

The species migrated across several countries and was subject to international trade and so it was necessary for conservation action also to be done across boundaries.

There were three Saiga populations in Kazakhstan; two were recovering and one was not. Kazakhstan was also a signatory of the CMS MOU, along with China, Mongolia, the Russian Federation, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

The Work Programme associated with the MOU identified information exchange as one of the main objectives; one means of achieving this was Saiga News, which was produced in English, Russian and four other languages. Seven of the areas of activities had recorded good progress; more need to be done on sustainable use and trade and the Ustyurt population. The MOU had led to better information exchange, the creation of a Saiga constituency which had galvanized the response to the mortality incidents and started serious consideration of options for incorporating Saiga crossings on railways. While Kazakhstan would have implemented Saiga conservation policies even without the MOU, international cooperation and bilateral work between Kazakhstan/Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan/the Russian Federation were reinforced and greater political attention had been achieved, although conservation was usually overshadowed by other concerns such as the economy. Lack of human and financial resources was the main drawback.

The second meeting of the signatories to the MOU assigned a coordination role to two organizations, one being the Association for the Conservation of Biodiversity of Kazakhstan (ACBK) and the other being the Saiga Conservation Alliance.

Altyn Dala Conservation Initiative

The initiative was based in central Kazakhstan and was started in 2006 using an ecosystem approach. It aimed to restore steppe, desert and semi-desert habitats over an area of 560,000 km² of historic Saiga range. Partners included the RSPB, the scope of the project going beyond Saigas.

The area included a variety of ecological zones and different types of Protected Area. Large amounts of the area were not designated and decisions were needed on identifying the best places for protection, candidates being corridors linking clusters of existing sites. The new area had a lower level of legal recognition and did not have its own staff; instead it was administered from a nearby reserve.

Capacity-building and the acquisition of equipment were priorities. Greater use of telemetric methods would be made and more aerial censuses undertaken. Involving local communities would also be an important aspect of the initiative.

The decision to adopt a whole ecosystem approach rather than concentrating solely on Saigas had proven to be correct. The Initiative had a long-term vision and required long-term commitment. Close relations had been developed with the Government which had been strongly lobbied to ensure that Protected Area status was granted. The wide remit had however increased the chance of the project being stretched too thin.

The slides making up this presentation are attached to this report as Annex IX.

6.4 Dr. Olga Pereladova (WWF Russia) Bukhara Deer MOU

Ms. Pereladova gave a historic overview of Bukhara Deer conservation, saying that the threats had begun to become apparent in the 1960s. By 1990 the population had fallen to 900 and it dropped further in the early stages of the post-Soviet era to just 350. With the independence of the new Central Asian republics, the Bukhara Deer was now crossing new international boundaries, so was migratory in the sense of the CMS meaning. The CMS MOU was signed in 2002.

Conservation work had been driven forward by a dedicated group of people; some had unfortunately died but new enthusiasts had come forward. The Government of the Netherlands had provided some funding. Numbers of the species remained low making it vulnerable in the event of the outbreak of disease or flooding in its prime habitats.

Good work was being done in Uzbekistan where competitions had been organized for the rangers and activities arranged for children such as drawing and painting. Animals bred in captivity had been successfully released, but administrative and financial complexities had put an end to the releases and cooperation with the UNDP project partner had broken down and the project had been cancelled.

In Turkmenistan, local people were helping with work on the ground, but there was a lack of official data from the Government. Work suffered a set-back when one of the leading figures died. In addition, WWF had ceased operations in the country.

The situation in Tajikistan had been made complicated by serious civil unrest, but some seed project money had been made available. Nine learning centres had been set up to educate local people. Some hydrological work had been done, as there had been problems with floods (resulting in some animals drowning) and lack of water. Norway had provided some money for forestry work to be carried out.

Access to funding and cooperation with officials had proven to be easier in Kazakhstan. The majority of the Syrdaria Delta had been designated a protected area.

While it was feared that the number of deer in Turkmenistan may have fallen, overall the species' population had risen from a low point of possibly 250 to 1,900 by 2011. The latest estimates indicated that it was higher still now. The Karatchingil National Reserve had even seen an increase without any external assistance.

With regard to outreach and educational activities, some publications had been produced in Russian and translations into English had been done.

The problems encountered include the high turn-over of staff in national ministries, with new staff having no institutional memory

The slides making up this presentation are attached to this report as Annexes X and XI.

Break-out Groups

After the presentations, the meeting formed break-out groups, one for each of the following four landscapes: Mountains; South-West Drylands; the Gobi Desert Steppe System; and the Tibetan Plateau and a fifth group dealt with transboundary issues. The groups were asked to identify a set of key actions for the landscapes to be included in the POW.

Mountains

The group identified 11 areas that were also considered interesting for transboundary sites for both the snow leopard and argali (see Annex XII for the list of the sites). It was recommended that the actions to protect those areas should be in line with the GSLEP and the Argali Action Plan.

Transboundary cooperation

The group stressed an importance of overall understanding of how political process functions at the national level to facilitate the promotion of transboundary collaboration. Furthermore, the necessity to promote the results and benefits of already existing collaboration not only through traditional means (reports), but through creative alternatives (e.g. videos) was seen to be of crucial significance. The transboundary collaboration should aim to involve wide range of stakeholders governmental, NGOs, INGOs, international conventions, scientific communities. The group also noted the role and further potential of CMS involvement in coordinating such collaboration in the region.

Gobi Desert Steppe

The group primarily focused on the key threats to the Gobi Desert Steppe ecosystem. Thus, threats to the animals' migration from various infrastructures, a need to change land-use policies, and a political will to undertake required changes at the national level were the core of the discussion.

South-West Drylands

The group based its discussion on different species, covered by the CAMI, inhabiting the ecosystem in focus. For example, the establishment of migration corridors and transboundary Protected Areas (PAs) were defined as crucial conservation measures for cheetah and wild ass. The group proposed to formally include chinkara (*Gazella bennettii*) as a target species for the CAMI.

Tibetan Plateau

Due to the absence of Chinese representatives it was difficult for the group to discuss some concrete conservation measures. Thus, the participants focused on the identification of knowledge gaps, e.g. animals' distribution maps across the plateau, assessment of threats from illegal hunting, infrastructure impacts, and discussion of possible measures to strengthen PAs legislation and management.

7. Knowledge exchange, communication and promotion of synergies

Ms. Stephanie Ward (RSPB) described how CMS was developing the African-Eurasian Migratory Landbird Action Plan (AEMLAP), the idea for which had originated at CMS COP10 in 2011. Although the action plan concerned birds and a different region, there were still parallels that could be useful for the CAMI process.

Landbirds migrated across a broad front and had a wide distribution. They depended on a large variety of habitats, unlike waterbirds which had quite specific needs and raptors whose migration routes tended to have bottle necks.

CMS COP Resolution 10.27 set up a working group of which BirdLife International was one of 120 members. A smaller steering committee was also set up. A number of recommendations had been elaborated for presentation to COP11, largely based on the outcomes of a workshop held in Accra, Ghana.

The AEMLAP complemented two other CMS instruments covering much the same geographic area – the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement (AEWA) and the Raptors MOU. The Action Plan had 128 Range States and included 34 globally threatened species and many others less severely threatened. The AEMLAP had five thematic actions, three addressing threats (habitat loss; taking, trade and disease; and collisions) plus research and education/information.

Scientific advice was being provided by the Migrant Landbird Study Group which had first met in March 2014 and the Action Plan was also being supported by the Friends of the Landbird Action Plan (FLAP) on educational and outreach issues. A social media presence had been set up and a newsletter was planned.

BirdLife International had modified its data zone in order to address a range of CMS-related issues better. It also offered a range of means through which partner organizations of different kinds could collaborate in its work.

The slides making up this presentation are attached to this report as Annex XIII.

8. Implementation, coordination and resourcing of the CAMI (Mr. Peter Damerell)

Mr. Peter Damerell (SCA) described how the Saiga Conservation Alliance and its partners undertook their communications work.

The saiga was a migrant species that had suffered a dramatic population crash in the 1990s, provoking an international response involving local communities, Range State governments, consumer and transition States, NGOs, researchers, businesses and IGOs (notably CMS and CITES).

An important lesson learned by the SCA was to avoid reinventing the wheel and making the same mistakes as others with regard to sharing information. It was important to decide what information was appropriate for different audiences.

Saiga News was produced twice a year and was a non-peer reviewed publication appearing in six language versions both in printed and digital form. Printing and distributing paper copies were expensive, but the readership seemed to appreciate them and liked to see reports of local activities. A separate publication, Saiga Spotlight, was aimed at donors.

The Saiga Resource Centre was an online information repository and should be the first port of call for anyone interested in Saigas. It was maintained in four languages (English, Russian, Chinese and Kazakh). Mr. Damerell demonstrated some of the features of this site, including the education section which contained suggested activities for school pupils with teacher guides and games tailored for different regions and the specialist resource section, which was password-protected.

The Saiga Resource Centre had been developed free of charge and maintained by volunteers, many of whom had now moved on being replaced by people having to learn the basics. It would have been better to have had a dedicated team for continuity's sake. The site was a work in progress and continually needed new material to keep it fresh and to gain new visitors and retain their interest

visitors and to encourage them to return regularly. The structure of the site could however be easily adapted for other species. A campaign to promote the resource in the Range States would be one approach to widening the user base.

Ms. Röttger added that the Saiga MOU's medium-term work programme was aligned to the Resource Centre. Creating such a site had been identified as a priority but the take-up for using the facility was still too low.

Dr. Mallon commented that in 25 years working with the IUCN, he had never encountered an initiative with such good coverage of local languages.

The slides making up this presentation are attached to this report as Annex XIV.

8.1 Ms. Lira Joldubaeva (GIZ)

Ms. Joldubaeva described two approaches to biodiversity conservation – one involving the strict protection and the other promoting sustainable use. Both required habitats to be maintained and could best be achieved through community management. Providing alternative livelihoods was an important element in reducing the potential for human-wildlife conflicts.

The German Development Agency, die Gesellschaft für internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) was active in all five former Soviet republics in Central Asia and its work was being funded by the German Government and the EU.

The main project was called FLERMONECA (Forest and Biodiversity Governance Including Environmental Monitoring) with the components: FLEG (Forest Law Enforcement and Governance in Central Asia), ERCA (Ecological Restoration and Biodiversity Conservation in Central Asia) and MONECA (Environmental Monitoring in Central Asia). The planned duration was 2½ years in the five countries. One element in Kazakhstan was Saiga conservation, in Tajikistan new hunting legislation was promoted and in Kyrgyzstan, as well as supporting legislative reforms and encouraging accession to CMS, work was done on building up community-based NGOs and ungulate monitoring.

Experiences gained in the three countries were being exchanged. One novelty was incorporating the concept of ecosystems into development plans and drawing a wider range of ministries and interests into the process.

The slides making up this presentation are attached to this report as Annex XV.

Break-out Groups

Following the presentations, the meeting formed three break-out groups, covering the agenda items 7 to 8.1., namely: Coordination of CAMI, knowledge and data sharing, and funding. As before, participants were asked to identify a set of key activities to be included in the POW.

Coordination

The group discussed a range of issues related to the options for coordination of CAMI. It was agreed that nomination of the Species Focal Points and National CAMI Focal Points would be a good way forward.

Furthermore, it was seen as necessary to identify or develop a suitable information sharing mechanism, as well as to review existing relevant platforms (SLN, IUCN groups etc.) in search for synergies and cooperation, to make best use of available knowledge networks. The group suggested to ensure regular CAMI meetings (every 2,5 years) to follow-up the implementation progress. Lastly, it was suggested that information including species action plans should be published on the CMS website and Action Plans developed for the species that do not have such mechanisms.

Knowledge and data sharing

The group stressed the crucial importance of knowledge and data sharing. However, the participants pointed out several critical issues that were necessary for improving such a process. Firstly, the facilitation of sharing, namely, assignment of responsibilities for facilitation, and defining a mechanism, whether to promote the use of existing tools or create new ones. Secondly, the question of reliability, quality, legitimacy and comparability of existing data was addressed. Thirdly, the possible options for a species e-library were discussed (single species repository as opposed to a common catalogue).

Funding

The group discussed various funding sources that could be activated for biodiversity and wildlife conservation relevant for the CAMI. Together with governmental (national environmental funds, “green” taxes etc.) and inter-governmental funding (GEF, donor agencies etc.) the possibilities from private resource-use sectors (mining, hunting etc.) and general public could be explored. It was noted that for the successful fundraising further capacity-building in the region was required.

9. Conclusions

9.1 Draft POW and Resolution on the CAMI

Draft Resolution for CMS COP11

The draft had been posted on the CMS website for some time, but it was still open for amendment and would be discussed at the COP11. The text was projected on screen with some changes proposed by Kyrgyzstan inserted.

A discussion started regarding the legal status of Action Plans and whether it was desirable to seek to make them legally binding through COP decisions, when Range States in other fora understood that they were agreeing to less formal arrangements. All of the Parties present expressed the view that such an approach would be unacceptable. Mr. Lenten (CMS) pointed out that some Range States and signatories to various MOUs were not Party to the parent Convention and would not feel bound by COP decisions. Dr. Mallon (Facilitator) explained that the documents would not become legally binding, but that they would be endorsed and become officially approved should COP11 decide to adopt the Resolution and its associated documents.

Declaration

The English text of the draft was projected on screen. A paper copy of the Russian translation was circulated.

Some minor linguistic and translation issues were addressed and there was a discussion about whether the text concerning the ability of species to support the carbon storage capacity of grasslands was appropriate. Agreement was eventually reached on alternative wording. Ms. Bahareh Shahriari (Islamic Republic of Iran) asked that her country be listed in the Declaration as “Iran (Islamic Republic of)”. Mr. Abdul Wali Modaqiq (Afghanistan) said that in the constitution of his country, the official name was “the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan”. The country names in the Declaration would reflect the official short names used by the United Nations.

The meeting agreed to the Declaration in principle, subject to a final linguistic check.

9.2 Next steps and timelines

Dr. Mallon said that the Programme of Work was being amended to reflect the findings of the various Working Groups. As the plenary had had the opportunity of reviewing the Working Groups’ deliberations and decisions, and no objections had been raised, he proposed that the Secretariat should proceed with preparing a final draft, clearing any outstanding points with key individuals as necessary.

Mr. Schnidrig (Switzerland) suggested that the Secretariat add costs where they could be provided as the COP would almost certainly want to know the financial implications.

Mr. Grigoryants (Uzbekistan) said that approval of the Programme of Work would need to pass through the appropriate governmental channels in his country and he did not think that the procedures could be completed within the timescales being suggested.

9.3 Any other business

There was none.

10. Closure of Meeting

After the customary expressions of gratitude to all who had contributed to the success of the meeting, in particular the hosts, the sponsors and organizers, the facilitator, the Secretariat and the interpreters, the workshop was declared closed.