



## Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of Migratory Birds of Prey in Africa and Eurasia

Distribution: General  
UNEP/CMS/Raptors/TAG3/Doc.4.2a

12 November 2018

Third Meeting of the Technical Advisory Group | *Sempach, Switzerland, 12-14 December 2018*

### SPECIES ACTION PLANNING FOR THE MOST THREATENED MIGRATORY BIRDS OF PREY

*Prepared by BirdLife International in consultation with the Coordinating Unit*

1. The purpose of this document is to review the measures needed to address problems facing the most threatened species listed on Annex 1 to the Raptors MOU, and to consider ways in which to prioritise future efforts to develop international Species Action Plans for migratory birds of prey.
2. Activity 2, Task 2.3 in the TAG WorkPlan includes the following three components:
  - a) assessing threats to Annex 1 species;
  - b) identifying appropriate measures to alleviate these problems for the most threatened species; and,
  - c) prioritising the most threatened species which would benefit from the development of international species action plans.
3. The most threatened species on Annex 1 referred to under b) and c) above are those listed in Category 1 of Table 1 (of Annex 3). A revised draft of Table 1 (see Annex 1 to this document) to take account of the most recent IUCN Red List assessment has already been circulated and agreed by TAG members via the online WorkSpace. The additional information provided below is therefore based upon this revised draft Table 1 species list with the provisional addition of the Tawny Eagle (*Aquila rapax*). This species is currently under IUCN Red List review and may be uplisted from Least Concern to Vulnerable in the imminent 2018 Red List release, in which case it would qualify to be listed in Category 1 of Table 1 (of Annex 3 of the Raptors MOU).
4. It is anticipated that all three sub-tasks a) to c) of Task 2.3 will be considered at TAG3. Based on current knowledge, the information summarised in Annex 2 to this document and graphs summarising the threats, which will be presented during TAG3.
5. When considering sub-task a), TAG members will be asked to suggest the most important measures required to address the threats identified for Table 1, Category 1 species. Annex 2 to this document comprises a table which lists each species with its current status on the IUCN Red List (pending the imminent release of the 2018 Red List), CMS Appendix and CITES listing and a brief overview of the threats facing it according to the BirdLife database (this latter information is also relevant to sub-task b)). It contains information and, if available, weblinks to existing Species Action Plans and any previous Action Plans which may have been superseded (this latter information is also relevant to sub-task c)). The table also includes information from the Birdlife International database on conservation actions in place, as well as those proposed but not necessarily implemented already (this information is relevant to sub-tasks b) and c)).
6. TAG will be requested to review the information compiled, in particular concerning the existence or otherwise, of international Species Action Plans and to highlight any additions or improvements. It will then be important identify which Table 1, Category 1 species are currently

underrepresented in terms of conservation attention and action. Pending TAG advice on improvements to the existing information, those which immediately stand out as ‘gap’ species are those which appear to be without any formal Action Plan and few proposed conservation actions, such as Beaudouin's Snake-eagle (*Circaetus beaudouini*) and Tawny Eagle. Other Species to note are Black Harrier (*Circus maurus*), Pallas's Fish-eagle (*Haliaeetus leucoryphus*), Steller's Sea-eagle (*Haliaeetus pelagicus*) and Steppe Eagle (*Aquila nipalensis*) which have quite a number of conservation actions listed, but appear to be lacking any formal international Action Plan.

7. Some Table 1, Category 1 species have an international Action Plan under development; For example, a dedicated Working Group has been established by the Coordinating Unit to develop an International Single Species Action Plan for the Sooty Falcon (*Falco concolor*).

8. Other species have international Action Plans which are relatively old and due for review including Red-footed Falcon (*Falco vespertinus*), Pallid Harrier (*Circus macrourus*) and Spanish Imperial Eagle (*Aquila adalberti*). Likewise, in 1996, an International Action Plan was developed for the Eastern Imperial Eagle (*Aquila heliaca*) which was followed by a regional Species Action Plan for the Southern Caucasus in 2006.

9. The Saker Falcon (*Falco cherrug*) has a detailed Global Action Plan adopted by CMS Parties in November 2014. The 15 species of Old World vultures have been comprehensively covered by the Vulture MsAP, with some vultures species also covered by specific Regional or Flyway Action Plans, such as Bearded Vulture (*Gypaetus barbatus*), Egyptian Vulture (*Neophron percnopterus*) and Cinereous Vulture (*Aegypius monachus*).

10. It is important to recognise that although an international Species Action Plan can be a useful vehicle to stimulate and coordinate measures on the ground to alleviate the threats to a species, it is only a tool to guide conservation actions. The effectiveness of Species Action Plans in stimulating effective action on the ground varies significantly. While the immediate focus of this task for TAG members is to identify clear gaps concerning international species action plans for Table 1 Category 1 species, at a future stage it may also be appropriate for TAG to review how effectively existing action plans are being implemented to achieve their stated goals.

11. TAG members will also be asked to prioritise the most threatened species which would benefit from the development of international Species Action Plans. In relation to this task it might be useful for TAG to review the Prioritization Criteria for International Single Species Action Plans adopted by the African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement (AEWA) at its MOP6 in 2015 (AEWA MOP Doc 6.33). These AEWA criteria are:

- 1) IUCN Red List status – in descending order: Critically Endangered (CR) to Least Concern (LC).
- 2) Population size estimate – in descending order from lowest to highest estimate. When two or more populations have the same population estimate, those belonging to less numerous species within the Agreement area have been ranked higher.
- 3) Population trend estimate – in descending order: Declining, Fluctuating, Unknown, Stable and Increasing.
- 4) Vulnerability to climate change - classified as high, moderate or low.

12. TAG may also consider modifying these criteria to assist with the task of prioritising species listed in Category 1, Table 1 of Annex 3 to the Raptors MOU, which it considers would benefit from the development of Species Action Plans. It is anticipated that the next IUCN Red List assessment will be released in advance of TAG3. Should this happen, BirdLife International should be able to provide

global population sizes and trend information for all Category 1, Table 3 species for consideration by TAG members during the prioritisation aspect of sub-task c) of Task 2.3.

**Action requested**

TAG will be invited to contribute to the following activities including in Task 2.3 of the WorkPlan:

- a. Assessment of the threat so species listed on Annex 1 to the Raptors MOU;
- b. Identifying appropriate measures to alleviate problems affecting the most threatened species; and,
- c. Selecting and prioritising those most threatened species which would benefit from the development of international Species Action Plans.