

53rd Meeting of the Standing Committee

Bonn, Germany, 19 – 20 October 2022

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REPORT OF THE COP PRESIDENCY

(Prepared by India)

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India hosted the 13th Conference of Parties to the CMS from 17th to 22nd February 2020 at Gandhinagar, Gujarat. Government of India with the help of the Scientific communities, Civil Society Organizations, have taken many actions during the year 2021-22 of India's COP Presidency.

Central Asian Flyway Conservation:

UNEP/CMS/Resolution 12.11 (Rev. COP 13) on 'Flyways' was adopted during the COP 13, which, *inter-alia*, calls on India to take the lead in supporting Parties with the implementation of conservation action for migratory birds along the Central Asian Flyway.

In pursuance of this Resolution, a two day online meeting on 6th -7th October 2021 was organized with CAF Range Countries. The programme was inaugurated by Hon'ble Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India. The best practices on conservation of migratory birds and the National Action Plan, was shared with the CAF range countries.

Conservation of Dolphins:

India had in CMS COP 13 proposed for taking up concerted action for the Gangetic River Dolphin (*Platanista platanista*) and the Irrawady Dolphin (*Orcaella brevirostris*), which was adopted.

A field guide for monitoring Ganges and Indus river dolphins, associated aquatic fauna and habitat was developed and released in October, 2021. This is being employed for synchronized Dolphin enumeration exercise being undertaken in states of Assam, West Bengal, Bihar, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Punjab. Dolphin estimation is an important process and constituent of "Project Dolphin".

Wetlands conservation and Ramsar Sites:

- The number of Ramsar sites in India has increased to 75 covering an area of 13,26,677 ha in the country in the 75th year of Independence. India has the largest number of Ramsar sites in South Asia and second in Asia.
- A dedicated **web portal for wetlands** has been developed and was launched on 2nd October, 2021. The portal ***indianwetlands.in*** is a publicly available information and knowledge platform to facilitate knowledge sharing, information dissemination, host capacity building material, and provide a single-point access data repository.
- **Health cards** have been prepared for **500 wetlands** under the four pronged approach for conservation of wetlands. Four pronged approach includes:(i) Developing baseline information; (ii) Rapid assessment of wetlands condition; (iii) Enabling stakeholder platforms; and (iv) Management planning.

Banning of single use plastic

India has banned manufacture, import, stocking, distribution, sale and use of identified single use plastic items, which have low utility and high littering potential, all across the country from July 1, 2022. The Plastic Waste Management Amendment Rules, 2018 also prohibit manufacture, import, stocking, distribution, sale and use of plastic carry bags having thickness less than seventy five microns with effect from September 30, 2021, and having thickness less than one hundred and twenty microns with effect from the December 31, 2022.

Conservation of Great Indian Bustards:

The Government of India is implementing a dedicated programme 'Habitat Improvement and Conservation Breeding of Great Indian Bustard-an integrated approach'. Under this, a conservation breeding centre has been established at Sam, Jaisalmer wherein a total of 20 Great Indian Bustard chicks have been hatched from the eggs collected from wild, till date. One rescued Great Indian Bustard is also being reared in the breeding centre. A large centre for Bustard Conservation Breeding is being established at Ramdevra, Rajasthan and would become operational soon.

Conservation of vultures and reintroduction of Vultures into the Wild

India released an Action Plan for Vulture Conservation, 2020-25. The Action Plan advocates prevention of misuse of veterinary non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, awareness of the importance of conservation of vultures, establishment of additional Vulture Conservation Breeding Centres, Vulture Safe Zones and rescue centres, carry out coordinated nation-wide vulture count and creation of database on emerging threats to vulture conservation including collision and electrocution, Unintentional poisoning etc.

As part of vulture conservation programme, ten Oriental White-backed Vulture (*Gyps bengalensis*) were released in July, 2022 from an aviary at Rajabhatkhawa, near the Buxa Tiger Reserve, West Bengal, in the second phase of reintroduction programme of critically endangered Oriental White-backed Vulture.

Conserving Migratory Species:

India has further strengthened its 'Species Recovery Programs' related to the CMS listed species such as dugong, sea turtle, dolphin, Great Indian Bustard over the last one year. In January-February this year a satellite tracking study of solitary nesting Olive Ridley turtles along the Arabian Sea coast of Maharashtra State was taken up. This is the first such tracking effort of the sea turtles along this coast of India. Further, a Pan India program to monitor sea turtle populations and assess the status of their nesting habitats has been launched.

A detailed study on the long-distance migratory Amur Falcons that started in October 2013 as part of the Amur Falcon Conservation Initiative has come to an end. Throughout the nine years of this initiative, at least one Amur falcon was being satellite tracked. This has helped in creating large-scale awareness among local people and as a result, there is little or no hunting of the falcons in Nagaland and in the adjoining parts of neighbouring States.

Protected Areas:

India has over 20% of the total geographical area under managed forests and thus under effective nature conservation, thereby exceeding the 17 % Aichi target 11. The Protected Areas (PAs) coverage in the country which stood at 1,65,012.59 sq.kms during the January 2020 has increased to 1,73,053.69 sq.kms by January 2022. This accounts for 5.26% of the country's total geographic area.

Hosting IUCN Steering Committee on Asia Protected Area Partnership:

India hosted and co-chaired the 7th Steering Committee meeting of the IUCN- Asia Protected Area Partnership, on 6th October 2021 and also the 8th Steering Committee meeting of the IUCN- Asia Protected Area Partnership, on 7th July 2022, through virtual mode.

Participation in CITES Standing Committee:

India participated in the 74th meeting of the CITES Standing Committee held at Lyon, France in March 2022. India had supported the draft decisions on marine turtles and jaguars also.
