

Second Meeting of Signatories | Trondheim, Norway, 5-8 October 2015

NATIONAL OR REGIONAL RAPTOR CONSERVATION STRATEGIES

Prepared by the Coordinating Unit of the Raptors MoU

1. Strategic planning is a critical process for articulating a shared vision, and for building the partnerships that are necessary for disparate organizations to work together on common goals, especially at the international level. Effective planning is essential for moving collaborative programs forward and for gaining the required support from stakeholder groups for successful implementation.
2. According to the provisions of Paragraph 12 of the CMS Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of Migratory Birds of Prey in Africa and Eurasia (Raptors MoU) (UNEP/CMS/Raptors/MOS2/Inf.1), within two years of it becoming effective (i.e. the first day of the month following in which the MoU was signed), Signatories will aim to prepare and submit to the Coordinating Unit, where appropriate a National or Regional (e.g. European Union) Strategy or equivalent documents (e.g. Single Species Action Plans) for Category 1 and, where appropriate, Category 2 species listed in Table 1 of the Action Plan (Annex 3 in the MoU text). The Raptors MoU came into effect on 1 November 2008.
3. In 2012, the Coordinating Unit published ‘Guidelines for Preparing National or Regional Raptor Conservation and Management Strategies’ (UNEP/CMS/Raptors/MOS2/Inf.3) to assist Signatories with this important task, which effectively translates the Action Plan set out in Annex 3 of the Raptors MoU into strategic implementation plans at the national or regional levels.
4. Paragraph 16 of the text of the Raptors MoU states that “[...] [t]he Coordinating Unit will make available to all Signatories all of the strategies and equivalent documents it receives”. At the time of the First Meeting of Signatories (MoS1) in December 2012, no National or Regional Raptor Conservation Strategies had been received by the Coordinating Unit, although Madagascar had submitted a Species Action Plan covering two migratory falcons – Eleonora’s Falcon (*Falco eleonora*) and Sooty Falcon (*Falco concolor*). Chad had submitted a project proposal to develop a National Raptor Conservation Strategy during 2010–2011 but this had not been implemented.
5. At MoS1, Signatories acknowledged the relative complexity of the process to develop National or Regional Strategies, the need for common standards and the importance of engaging stakeholders in a meaningful way, which all takes time. Nonetheless, Signatories resolved to aim to develop their National or Regional Strategies for submission to the Coordinating Unit within 18 months of the meeting (i.e. by June 2014).
6. Through bilateral communications with Signatories during 2013 and 2014, the Coordinating Unit became aware that some progress was being made towards the development of National or Regional Raptor Conservation Strategies. However, no final documents had been received by the end of June 2015, a year beyond the deadline proposed at MoS1.

7. In August 2015, in preparation for MoS2, the Coordinating Unit circulated a concise email enquiry to the National Contact Points of all 52 Signatory States. The aim was to seek an update from Signatories on the state of preparation of their National or Regional Strategies or equivalent documents. The email posed the following three questions:

- Have you already begun preparing your National or Regional Raptor Conservation Strategy in the context of the Raptors MoU?
If the answer is 'yes', what stage has the process reached?
If 'no', what are the main challenges causing the delay?
- Do you require any specific support or assistance to develop your Strategy?
If yes, please specify your needs.
- Are you planning to finalise and submit your National or Regional Strategy to the Coordinating Unit in advance of MoS2 in October 2015?

8. Seven Signatories responded to the enquiry, namely France, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Madagascar, Niger and Norway. Their complete replies are compiled as an Annex to this document and are also summarised below:

- **Finland** reported that whilst it has no National Raptor Conservation Strategy binding all actions and species together, species specific monitoring and conservation responsibilities had been delegated to different organisations for certain nationally Red-List species. Adaptive Single Species Action Plans for Golden Eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*) and for White-tailed Sea-eagle (*Haliaeetus albicilla*) have been in place and implemented since 1993 and 1994, respectively. No support or assistance was requested.
- **France** reported that it was actively contributing to the development of a European Union Regional Raptor Conservation Strategy. And that once this document has been finalised consideration would be given as to whether or not an additional National Strategy is needed. No support or assistance was requested.
- **Germany** reported that in 2007 it had developed a holistic 'National Strategy' for the protection of species and biodiversity, including birds of prey. Both *Falconiformes* and *Strigiformes* are benefitting from its implementation. In addition, implementation of the EU Birds Directive (2009/147/EC) via national legislation, including the obligation to create SPAs, provides a sufficient general legal and strategic framework for regional raptor protection. The German Länder operate at regional or local levels for raptor protection. Furthermore some German NGOs have developed regional strategies for certain rare and endangered raptor species, which have been successful in securing positive population responses in species such as Eagle Owl (*Bubo bubo*), Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus*) and White-tailed Sea-eagle (*Haliaeetus albicilla*). Some strategic issues remain, however, including the threat from illegal killing and trapping of birds of prey. This topic is being addressed via a co-funded project with a NGO (Committee Against Bird Slaughter) which began in August 2015. No support or assistance was requested.
- **Hungary** reported that it is actively involved in the development of a European Union Regional Raptor Conservation Strategy being prepared by the European Commission. When this document has been finalised, discussions will be held with the Hungarian Raptor Conservation Group to decide whether or not a National Strategy is needed. National species conservation plans developed by BirdLife Hungary already exist for the Imperial Eagle (*Aquila heliaca*), Saker Falcon (*Falco cherrug*), Red-footed Falcon (*Falco vespertinus*) and Barn Owl (*Tyto alba*). National Species Conservation Coordinators have been established for each of these four species plus the following eight species: White-tailed Eagle (*Haliaeetus albicilla*), Lesser Spotted Eagle (*Clanga pomarina*), Short-toed Eagle (*Circaetus gallicus*),

Black kite (*Milvus migrans*), Red Kite (*Milvus milvus*), Montagu's Harrier (*Circus pygargus*), Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus*) and Eagle Owl (*Bubo bubo*). A national forum already exists in the form of a Raptor Conservation Council to which all stakeholders (National Parks, NGOs, Zoos, Falconry Clubs, etc.) are members. No support or assistance was requested.

- **Madagascar** reported that an Action Plan for the conservation of two species of migratory birds of prey (Eleonora's Falcon (*Falco eleonora*) and Sooty Falcon (*Falco concolor*)) already exists. A National Raptor Conservation Strategy has not yet been developed. However, planning is well underway to establish a National Committee for the Conservation of Migratory Birds of Prey, including all stakeholders (e.g. Ministries of Environment, Agriculture and Livestock, NGOs, Universities, Civil Associations, etc.). An advance draft of the Rules of the Committee includes specific reference to the development of a National Raptor Conservation Strategy. Funds were requested to support at least two meetings of the National Committee, as well as for a consultant to lead in drafting a National Strategy.
- **Niger** reported that it not yet been able to develop a National Raptor Conservation Strategy due to a lack of financial means and the need for capacity building amongst personnel responsible for the conservation of birds of prey. Funds were requested to hire a consultant to draft the strategy and host a Government –led multi-stakeholder workshop to validate it.
- **Norway** reported that in 2014 it had commissioned a comprehensive national report on the status of birds of prey carried out by BirdLife Norway. The document contains sections relevant to a National Strategy as well as concrete conservation recommendations. Subject to available resources, their aim is to draft a National Raptor Conservation Strategy, following the guidelines, to be published in 2016. No support or assistance was requested.

9. National or Regional Raptor Conservation Strategies are fundamental to coordinated international implementation of the Action Plan to the Raptors MoU. These strategies should also include measurable targets and/or outcomes, which underpin the triennial national reporting process envisaged for the MoU. Several Signatories have requested copies of existing Strategies to assist with their own preparations and the Coordinating Unit stands ready to promptly circulate any Strategies it receives, in line with the obligation set out in Paragraph 16 of the Raptors MoU.

10. A number of countries have highlighted their need for financial and/or technical assistance to support the development of their National Raptor Conservation Strategies.

Action requested

The Meeting is invited to:

- (a) Identify ways and means in which to better promote effective strategic planning by Signatories, as envisaged within the Raptors MoU.
- (b) Consider establishing bilateral or multi-lateral partnerships to share technical expertise in strategic planning to support those Signatories that have requested assistance.
- (c) Establish a new deadline for developing and submitting their National or Regional Raptor Conservation Strategies, or equivalent documents.
- (d) Re-task the Technical Advisory Group to ensure that the future National Reporting requirements are directly interlinked with the strategic planning process.

Annex

Replies received from Signatories on development of National or Regional Raptor Conservation Strategies

1. Finland

Have you already begun preparing your National or Regional Raptor Conservation Strategy in the context of the Raptors MoU? If the answer is 'yes', what stage has the process reached? If 'no', what are the main challenges causing the delay? “No, Finland has no national raptor conservation strategy binding all the actions and species together. However, we have given species specific monitoring and conservation responsibilities to different organizations for certain nationally red-listed species. We have single species action plans for golden eagle and for white-tailed sea eagle dating back to 1993 and 1994. These action plans have been implemented adaptively since then.” “Of the category 1 species only *Falco vespertinus* (0-1 pairs), *Circus macrourus* (1-8 pairs) and *Aquila clanga* (1 pair) nest in Finland. They are all extremely rare and partly vagrant here. However, they are protected by the Nature Conservation Act.”

Do you require any specific support or assistance to develop your Strategy? If yes, please specify your needs. “No.”

Are you planning to finalise and submit your National or Regional Strategy to the Coordinating Unit in advance of MoS2 in October 2015? “No.”

2. France [translated from French]

Have you already begun preparing your National or Regional Raptor Conservation Strategy in the context of the Raptors MoU? If the answer is 'yes', what stage has the process reached? If 'no', what are the main challenges causing the delay? “No, the decision taken was to draft the French strategy on the basis of the EU strategy or even decline the national strategy or plan. This European strategy, whose first version was circulated in 2013, is not finalized yet.”

Do you require any specific support or assistance to develop your Strategy? If yes, please specify your needs. “No.”

Are you planning to finalise and submit your National or Regional Strategy to the Coordinating Unit in advance of MoS2 in October 2015? “No (see previous answers).”

3. Germany

Have you already begun preparing your National or Regional Raptor Conservation Strategy in the context of the Raptors MoU? If the answer is 'yes', what stage has the process reached? If 'no', what are the main challenges causing the delay? “Yes: we are aware of this duty of the Raptors MoU of Art. 12 and its wording “if appropriate” and Germany has already a “National Strategy” for species and biodiversity protection for raptors and for other species:

- This National Strategy was decided by the Bundestag/German Parliament 7.11.2007 and covers the species protection issues from a synoptic and holistic point of view.
- Falconiformes and Struiformes are profiting from this “National Strategy”.
- Furthermore the EU-Birds Directive (2009/147/EC) and its implementation in national legislation - including the obligation to create SPAs for the most appropriate areas - gives in general a sufficient legal frame and strategy for the regional raptor protection needs.
- A particular need to divide or to extract the raptors from this multi -species approach or to create a largely overlapping concept on a national level appears not useful, and in case of

special need the German Länder are working on regional or local levels for raptor protection and create specific instruments.

- Furthermore some German NGOs created appropriate regional strategies or activities to secure a positive development of once very endangered and rare raptor species.
- Due to these joint efforts raptor species, which were very rare and threatened less than 40/50 years ago like e.g. *Bubo bubo*, *Falco peregrinus*, *Halileetus allbicilla*, show since recent past a positive population development.
- However, we assessed whether beyond the existing obligations (in particular of the MoU action plan) there might be some strategical issues left, concerning specifically or primarily raptors, which merit a further engagement of Germany;
- And one issue indeed appeared in our view meriting more attention in Germany: the illegal killing or catching of raptors.
- Therefore we are co-financing a project of an NGO (Committee against Bird slaughter) to monitor and analyse the project in the different regions of Germany respective, with the aim to develop measures based on the results, how the situation could be improved."

Do you require any specific support or assistance to develop your Strategy? If yes, please specify your needs. "No, we consider this issue as sufficiently settled."

Are you planning to finalise and submit your National or Regional Strategy to the Coordinating Unit in advance of MoS2 in October 2015? "Given that the said German project was started 1.8.2015 a report for MoS2 is too early – however, for MoS3 such a report appears possible."

4. Hungary

Have you already begun preparing your National or Regional Raptor Conservation Strategy in the context of the Raptors MoU? If the answer is 'yes', what stage has the process reached? If 'no', what are the main challenges causing the delay? "An EU Raptor Conservation Strategy is being prepared by the European Commission, in collaboration with the Member States, including Hungary." "I can only add to that an action plan for the Red-footed Falcon has also been endorsed by the minister for environment." "I can say that for the moment, we are not planning a national implementation plan for the EU conservation strategy. When the EU strategy is adopted, we will discuss with the Hungarian raptor conservation group if there is a need to produce such a plan, in light of the EU strategy." "There are already existing species conservation plans for the Imperial Eagle, Saker Falcon, Red-footed Falcon and Barn Owl (see: <http://www.mme.hu/kiemelt-fajok-vedelme> - in Hungarian only, unfortunately) and some other non-raptor species. Those were developed by Birdlife Hungary, involving colleagues from national parks and other organisations. In addition, those species plus White-tailed Eagle, Lesser Spotted Eagle, Short-toed Eagle, Black and Red Kites, Montagu's Harrier, Peregrine Falcon and Eagle Owl have volunteer species coordinators (under the auspice of Birdlife Hungary), who coordinate the country-wide conservation of the species. That work involve experts from national parks, as well as other civil organisations and volunteers. In addition, we have a forum - Raptor Conservation Council - to which all the stakeholders (national parks, NGOs, zoos, falconry, etc.) involved in raptor conservation is member. It would take only one step to put all the species conservation plans on paper. I guess, it will happen at some point".

Do you require any specific support or assistance to develop your Strategy? If yes, please specify your needs. "We are not aware that any specific support is needed to this process, but, as stated above, the lead authority is the EU Commission".

Are you planning to finalise and submit your National or Regional Strategy to the Coordinating Unit in advance of MoS2 in October 2015? "The EU Commission can reply to the question as to when the Strategy is planned to be finalised".

5. Niger [translated from French]

Have you already begun preparing your National or Regional Raptor Conservation Strategy in the context of the Raptors MoU? If the answer is 'yes', what stage has the process reached? If 'no', what are the main challenges causing the delay? “No, the main challenges are the lack of financial means and reinforcement on capacity building of officers who are responsible for the conservation of these species”.

Do you require any specific support or assistance to develop your Strategy? If yes, please specify your needs. “Yes. We need the appropriate means to hire a consultant to draft the strategy and this will be validated by all the stakeholders during a validation workshop organized by the Department of Wildlife, Hunting and Protected Areas, Water and Forest General Directorate of the Nigerian Ministry of Environment and Urban Health and Sustainable Development.”

Are you planning to finalise and submit your National or Regional Strategy to the Coordinating Unit in advance of MoS2 in October 2015? “No insofar as we haven't written it yet.”

6. Norway

Have you already begun preparing your National or Regional Raptor Conservation Strategy in the context of the Raptors MoU? If the answer is 'yes', what stage has the process reached? If 'no', what are the main challenges causing the delay?

“As we see it, our national oversight report of the status of raptors is very comprehensive, and includes i.a. sections of relevance to the national strategy, as well as concrete recommendations (cf NOF-BirdLife Norway – Report 1-2014). The main challenge causing delay is simply manpower and time to do the drafting of a strategy along the lines of the guidelines.”

Do you require any specific support or assistance to develop your Strategy? If yes, please specify your needs. “See above.”

Are you planning to finalise and submit your National or Regional Strategy to the Coordinating Unit in advance of MoS2 in October 2015? “MoS2 will be too early for us. However, we aim to have a draft prepared within a year of date.”

7. Madagascar

Have you already begun preparing your National or Regional Raptor Conservation Strategy in the context of the Raptors MoU? If the answer is 'yes', what stage has the process reached? If 'no', what are the main challenges causing the delay? “In Madagascar, we have an action plan for the conservation migratory birds of prey (Sooty Falcon and Eleonora's Falcon), but we don't have yet national strategy in context of Raptors MoU. We are going to establish national committee for migratory birds of prey conservation, including all stakeholders relating/working on such birds conservation (e.g. Ministry in charge of environment, Ministry of agriculture, Ministry of livestock, NGOs, University, Civil association, ...etc...).” “The committee should be adopted as regulation, signed by the Ministry of Environment and aims to share responsibility with these stakeholders. We have an advanced draft for this text and hope to be shown on the next MoS2. We defined on this text the rules of the committee specially to develop our national strategy.”

Do you require any specific support or assistance to develop your Strategy? If yes, please specify your needs. “Yes please, we need to have at least two meeting of the committee for this year and we need also funding for the consultant who establishes the Strategy.”

Are you planning to finalise and submit your National or Regional Strategy to the Coordinating Unit in advance of MoS2 in October 2015? “As so far, the CU will support us, we will be able to finalize our national strategy.”