



Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals

Secretariat provided by the United Nations Environment Programme



Second Meeting of Signatories to the Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of Migratory Birds of Prey in Africa and Eurasia Trondheim, Norway, 5-8 October 2015

Report of the CMS Secretariat

The report to the 2nd Meeting of Signatories of the Raptors MOU corresponds to Agenda item 11 of the MOS. It provides a summary of activities undertaken by the CMS Secretariat since COP11 that are of relevance to the Raptors MOU. Activities related to renewable energy, poisoning and illegal killing of birds are particularly relevant to the work of the MOU.

Strategic Plan for Migratory Species 2015-2023

1. At CMS COP11 Parties adopted Resolution 11.2 on the Strategic Plan for Migratory Species 2015-2023 (SPMS). Under this Resolution, Parties took a major step forward by adopting a strategic plan for 2015-2023 which is very closely aligned with the Aichi Targets. The plan will now allow much more coherence, cooperation and synergies with CBD and the overall initiatives taken in conjunction with the Aichi Targets. A companion guide on implementing the Strategic Plan and on indicators will now be developed by a working group during the intersessional period.

2. The Strategic Plan for Migratory Species focusses on the conservation of migratory animals (populations, species or lower taxonomic levels, as the context requires), rather than on the Convention itself. This approach shifted the focus from the institution to the issue, thereby broadening relevance and ownership among the CMS Family of instruments and beyond. This approach is also consistent with COP decisions regarding the CMS “Future Shape” process, which identified the need for a coordinated and coherent approach to migratory species conservation among CMS and its daughter agreements.

3. Resolution 11.2 urges the CMS Family of instruments to integrate the goals and targets of the Strategic Plan within relevant policy and planning instruments, and also to take action to raise awareness of the Plan. Furthermore, it encourages the decision-making bodies of CMS instruments, to identify existing or develop new sub-targets for the species and issues relevant to those instruments and organizations that support the achievement of the targets in the Strategic Plan for Migratory Species, and to inform the CMS Secretariat of such sub-targets.

4. A call for nominations for the regional members of the Strategic Plan Implementation Working Group (SPIWG) was made by the Secretariat in December 2014. The first meeting of the SPIWG is scheduled to take place in Bonn in October 2015 back-to-back with the 44th meeting of the Standing Committee. Resources to cover at least part of the consultants’ work that is expected to support the SPIWG have been secured through a generous contribution from the Government of Germany.

Synergies and common services among CMS Family instruments

5. Resolution 11.3 on Enhancing Synergies and Common Services among CMS Family Instruments was adopted at COP11. Through this Resolution, Parties adopted a process to see further synergies and common services in the CMS Family. The Resolution calls for an independent analysis to be developed for the next steps on common services to be considered by the CMS Standing Committee and AEWA MOP.

6. The Institute for European Studies at the University of Brussels has been contracted to undertake the independent analysis of synergies in the CMS Family. The outcome of this analysis will be presented at the 44th meeting of the Standing Committee (see document: UNEP/CMS/StC44/Doc 15.1). Meanwhile, the current common service pilot in CMS and AEWA for communications activities will continue and provide further lessons on sharing future common services.

Restructuring of the Scientific Council

7. Under Resolution 11.4 on Restructuring of the Scientific Council, the CMS Conference of the Parties decided on a major reorganization of the operation of the Scientific Council, the scientific and technical advisory body of the Convention. While the basic structure of the Council, defined by the text of the Convention, will not change, for each intersessional period between two consecutive COPs, a representative selection of the membership of the Scientific Council (Sessional Committee of the Scientific Council), should be identified, composed of 9 COP-appointed Councillors, and 15 Party-appointed Councillors selected regionally, given the task of delivering the COP mandate to the Council for that period.

8. The Resolution also defines criteria for the selection of the membership of the Sessional Committee and transitional measures for the appointment of the Committee for the triennium 2015-2017. Main efforts have been towards the development of Terms of Reference for the Scientific Council and the establishment of the Sessional Committee. These make the object of a dedicated document (UNEP/CMS/StC44/14) that will be discussed at the Standing Committee.

9. A Scientific Council workshop on connectivity is scheduled to take place in Venice from 28-30 September 2015, convened in cooperation with the Veneto Po Delta Regional Park and UNESCO.

Process to review implementation

10. Through Resolution 11.7 on Enhancing the Effectiveness of the Convention through a Process to Review Implementation, Parties took a decision to develop terms of reference for a review mechanism for the Convention. Terms of reference will be presented to the CMS Standing Committee 44 to consider the next steps on setting up a working group and presenting options for a review mechanism at COP12. In accordance with the Resolution the Secretariat drafted the terms of reference for the working group to be considered for adoption by the Standing Committee at its 44th meeting.

Communication, Information and Outreach

11. Resolution 11.8 on Communication, information and outreach plan endorsed the CMS Communication, Information and Outreach Plan 2015-2017 and urged CMS Family

Instruments to assist actively in the implementation of the Plan and to provide both voluntary contributions and in-kind support, particularly for the priority activities identified in the Plan.

12. As a first step to developing a Communication Strategy for the entire CMS Family, a consultant has been engaged to develop strategically aligned Communications Strategies for CMS and AEWA. Workshops to support the development of the communication strategy and communication action plans around specific topics will be convened. Similarly, a project to development of common branding for the CMS Family will commence when resources become available.

13. A joint Communication, Information Management and Awareness-raising Unit was established in January 2014 to serve CMS and AEWA. The joint Unit oversaw this year's successful World Migratory Bird Day and has contributed to the design, editing and drafting of a number of in-house publications, including fact sheets and technical material. In 2015, a strong focus of the Unit is to support communication efforts around AEWA MOP6 scheduled to take place in November 2015.

14. The CMS Family website launched in March 2014 continues to be maintained with available in-house capacity and the joint Unit is also participating in the steering committee of several related information management related initiatives, for example the MEA Information and Knowledge Management Initiative and an EU-funded project to further enhance the Online Reporting System for MEAs.

World Migratory Bird Day

15. The joint CMS-AEWA Communication Unit, with support from the Raptors MOU Coordinating Unit, is developing a scoping paper for improving the long-term management of the World Migratory Bird Day campaign and how to support implementation of COP11 Resolution on obtaining official UN Status for WMBD through the UN General Assembly.

Concerted and Cooperative actions

16. The Saker Falcon is included in the list of species designated for Concerted and Cooperative Action during the 2015-2017 triennium included in Resolution 11.13 on Concerted and Cooperative Actions.

Flyways Programme of Work

17. Resolution 11.14 adopted a global Programme of Work on migratory birds and flyways with the overall purpose of identifying and promoting implementation of activities at the international and national levels that will effectively contribute to an improvement in the status of migratory birds and their habitats worldwide.

18. The Programme of Work includes numerous references to the Raptors MOU as an implementing partner for the actions proposed. For example, under "Species-specific Conservation Actions", there is an action promoting the development, adoption and implementation of an Action Plan for all African-Eurasian vultures (except Palm Nut Vulture), considered of high priority. Another action under "Conservation of Flyway/Ecological Networks and Critical Sites" requests the identification of internationally important sites for priority species/populations of migratory birds, also of high priority.

Preventing poisoning of migratory birds

19. Through Resolution 11.15, COP11 adopted comprehensive guidelines to prevent the poisoning of migratory birds. Poisoning is a significant global problem affecting a wide range of migratory bird species across almost all habitats and regions. Birds may be exposed to multiple sources of poisoning in their ranges causing lethal and sub-lethal effects, with birds of prey being among the most vulnerable to poisoning. The guidelines contain recommendations to cover five priority poisoning areas: insecticides; rodenticides; poison-bait; veterinary pharmaceuticals (diclophenac); lead ammunition and fishing weights.

20. A joint CMS, AEWA and Raptors MOU workshop on bird poisoning in the Southern African region took place the 24 August 2015 in Cape Town (South Africa), back to back with the AEWA pre-MOP6 meeting. Representatives from 10 countries attended and discussed an Implementation Plan for the CMS Guidelines in the region. This workshop has been made possible thanks to the financial contribution of the European Union through the ENRTP Strategic Cooperation Agreement with UNEP under the project "Effective Implementation of CMS, AEWA and other CMS Family instruments across various regions and languages through capacity building".

21. The CMS Secretariat is currently discussing with BirdLife International a potential arrangement to appoint a Coordinator for the Preventing Poisoning Working Group, and acknowledges the generous pledge of the Raptors MOU to allocate USD 10,000 for this coordinator's position.

Illegal killing, taking and trade of migratory birds

22. Illegal killing, taking and trade of migratory birds has been identified as one of the key factors that threaten the conservation status of migratory birds. Although a problem of global scale, there are specific regions and hotspots in the world where it is particularly acute and well documented, as is the case with the Mediterranean Region.

23. The Resolution calls on the CMS Family of instruments, including the Raptors MOU, to engage in immediate cooperation to address the illegal killing, taking and trade of migratory birds. In particular, it calls on the Secretariat to convene an Intergovernmental Task Force to Address the Illegal Killing, Taking and Trade of Migratory Birds in the Mediterranean in conjunction with the Secretariat of the Council of Europe (Bern Convention), involving the Mediterranean Parties, including the European Union, other interested parties, and other stakeholders such as BirdLife International and the Federation of Associations for Hunting and Conservation of the EU (FACE).

24. The Raptors MOU Coordination Unit is part of the Consultative Group that has been established to guide the work of the Task Force. Letters have been sent to Mediterranean Parties and stakeholders requesting the nomination of focal points for the Task Force. Thanks to the support pledged by the European Union, it will be possible to appoint a Coordinator and organize a first meeting of members. The Coordinator will be based at the CMS Secretariat in Bonn and the first meeting of the Task Force is foreseen to take place in the first quarter of 2016, most likely in Egypt.

25. This initiative complements, with a specific focus on birds, the wider efforts undertaken by UNEP to address the problem of wildlife crime globally.

Action Plan for Migratory Landbirds in the African-Eurasian region

26. This Action Plan was adopted at COP11 through Resolution 11.17. It especially urges CMS Parties to address the issue of habitat loss and degradation of migratory landbird species through the development of policies that maintain, manage and restore natural and semi-natural habitats within the wider environment, including working with local communities, and in partnership with the poverty alleviation community and the agriculture and forestry sectors in Africa.

27. Thanks to the funds pledged by Switzerland, it will be possible to organize a meeting of the Landbirds Working Group in Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire) the 25-27 November 2015. The meeting will focus on the problem of land use change in West Africa and how this change is provoking degradation and fragmentation of the habitats of migratory birds. Synergies with other CMS Family instruments, including the Raptors MOU, will be explored during the meeting.

Taxonomy and Nomenclature

28. COP11 adopted the reference recommended by the Scientific Council as the CMS standard reference for bird taxonomy and nomenclature for non-Passerine species: Handbook of the Birds of the World/BirdLife International Illustrated Checklist of the Birds of the World, Volume 1: Non-passerines, by Josep del Hoyo, Nigel J. Collar, David A. Christie, Andrew Elliot and Lincoln D.C. Fishpool (2014).

Climate change and migratory species

29. For the first time the CMS COP adopted a comprehensive programme of work (POW) on climate change and migratory species. The POW includes provisions on the following topics: Adaptation measures in response to climate change; Vulnerability assessments; Monitoring and research; Mitigation, adaptation and land use planning; Knowledge exchange and capacity-building; Cooperation and implementation.

30. In particular, the POW requests Parties to consider expanding existing networks of protected areas to cover important stop-over locations and sites for potential colonization, and ensure the effective protection and appropriate management of sites to maintain or to increase the resilience of vulnerable populations to extreme stochastic events. Effective monitoring of the site network should be ensured in order to detect threats, and act on any deterioration in site quality, implementing specific actions to address important threats to sites. This may include increasing both the number and size of protected sites.

31. Preparatory work for the convening of a meeting of the Working Group on Climate Change established within the Scientific Council has been undertaken in consultation between the Secretariat and the COP-appointed Councillor for climate change. Discussions with a view to identifying possible collaboration have been initiated with potential partners such as the Bern Convention and the IUCN SSC Climate Change Task Force.

Renewable Energy and Migratory Species

32. Through Resolution 11.27 on Renewable Energy and Migratory Species, COP11 endorsed guidelines for the sustainable deployment of renewable energy technologies with respect to migratory species. The guidelines were developed under a joint initiative by the CMS and AEWAs Secretariats, the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) and

BirdLife International, and the COP took note of a review summarizing knowledge of actual and possible effects of renewable energy installations on migratory species undertaken under the same initiative.

33. The Resolution urges Parties to implement the guidelines as applicable, and urges Parties to implement, as appropriate, a series of priorities in their development of wind, solar, ocean energies, hydropower and geo-energy. The Resolution also instructs the Secretariat to convene a multi-stakeholder Task Force on Reconciling Selected Energy Sector Developments with Migratory Species Conservation (the Energy Task Force), and defines the terms of reference of such a Task Force.

34. The Energy Task Force is convened in line with the mandate provided by Resolution 11.27 to assist Parties or Signatories to CMS, AEW, EUROBATS, ASCOBANS, ACCOBAMS and the Raptors MOU to fulfil their obligations with regard to avoiding or mitigating possible negative impacts of energy sector developments on migratory species.

35. As initial steps towards the establishment of the Task Force, the Secretariat, in consultation with stakeholders, has worked towards the definition of elements of a Work Programme for the Task Force for the triennium 2015-2017, as well as activities for a Task Force Coordinator to facilitate the implementation of the Work Programme. Thanks to a generous voluntary contribution from the Government of Germany, resources have been secured for the coordination and basic functioning of the TF for the triennium 2015-2017. With a view to getting advice on prospective members of the TF, the Secretariat has established a small advisory group.

Proposals for Amendments to the Raptors MOU and/or its Annexes

36. The CMS Secretariat is supportive of the species proposed to be added to the Annexes. The proposals to add new vulture species are particularly relevant in view of the vulture crisis that has taken place in Asia and is currently ongoing in Africa.

Meeting's attendance

37. The CMS Secretariat participated in the meeting of the Technical Advisory Group that took place in Abu Dhabi in March 2015.