



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

Distribution: General
UNEP/CMS/Raptors/MOS2/5

23 September 2015

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

REPORT OF THE COORDINATING UNIT

Prepared by the Coordinating Unit of the Raptors MoU

Introduction

1. The CMS Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of Migratory Birds of Prey in Africa and Eurasia (Raptors MoU) came into effect on 1 November 2008. An interim Coordinating Unit operated from August 2009 until the First Meeting of Signatories (MoS1), held in December 2012. The Coordinating Unit was formally established at MoS1 and is located at a satellite office of the CMS Secretariat in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates (UAE), together with the Secretariat to the CMS Dugong MoU.

2. From its establishment in 2009, CMS Office - Abu Dhabi has been funded through the generosity of Environment Agency - Abu Dhabi (EAD), on behalf of the Government of the UAE. CMS Office - Abu Dhabi currently comprises four professional officers and one general staff member. Overseen by an Executive Coordinator, and supported by a Finance and Administrative Assistant, the Coordinating Unit is staffed by one Programme Officer and one Associate Programme Officer. In addition, four separate consultants have been recruited as temporary Team Associates for varying periods during the intersessional interval between MoS1 and MoS2. An intern also provided support to the Coordinating Unit from July 2014 for six months.

Status of Signatures

3. Since MoS1, ten countries have signed the Raptors MoU, as follows: Tunisia (May 2013), Sweden (July 2013), Egypt (September 2013), Libya (November 2013), Czech Republic (November 2014), Switzerland (November 2014), Syrian Arab Republic (December 2014), Lebanon (December 2014), Iran (March 2015) and Spain (May 2015).

4. At 1 September 2015, the total number of Signatories to the Raptors MoU was 52 (comprising 51 countries and the European Union (EU)) from a coverage area that encompasses 131 Range States. In addition, three Co-operating Partners (BirdLife International, International Association for Falconry and Conservation of Birds of Prey and CMS Secretariat) have signed the MoU.

5. During the last three years, the Coordinating Unit has been pro-active in its efforts to engage with non-Signatory Range States to promote the Raptors MoU. A database of official contacts within all non-Signatory Range States has been maintained and regularly updated. Primarily this comprises the details of existing National Focal Points for CMS, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES).

6. The Programme Officer has written to all non-signatory Range States on four separate occasions since MoS1 to provide information about the benefits, entitlements and obligations associated with signing the Raptors MoU. The results of these efforts by the Coordinating Unit have

been encouraging. In addition to the ten countries that have already signed the Raptors MoU, active negotiations are underway with several other Range States that have expressed an interest in signing in the future.

7. The EU signed the Raptors MoU as a Regional Economic Integration Organisation (REIO) in November 2011. Currently, 16 of the 28 EU Member States have already signed the MoU as separate Range States of the agreement. The European Commission has advised that it is actively facilitating the development of a Regional Raptor Conservation Strategy covering all EU Member States, integrated with the National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) process, established under the Convention on Biological Diversity. This Regional Strategy will guide implementation of the Raptors MoU throughout the EU and we understand that the European Commission has written to all non-signatory EU Member States encouraging them to sign the MoU. This would ensure that all EU countries reap the appropriate international recognition for the activities that they will be committing to implement within the EU Regional Raptor Conservation Strategy to conserve migratory birds of prey.

National Contact Points

8. Paragraph 10 of the MoU text states that ...*'each Signatory will designate a National Contact Point for all matters relating to the implementation of the MoU; and communicate the name and address of that contact point to the Coordinating Unit once established'*.

9. In 2012, the Coordinating Unit produced 'Guidance for National Contact Points of the Raptors MoU' (UNEP/CMS/Raptors/MOS2/Inf.5) in consultation with the Signatories. The Guidance was developed to provide advice for existing and future National Contact Points (NCPs) of the Raptors MoU concerning their core functions and give information about the role of the Coordinating Unit.

10. In 2013, as part of ongoing capacity building activities, the CMS Secretariat published a 'Manual for the National Focal Points for CMS and its Instruments'¹. This Manual is available in four languages (English, French, Spanish and Russian) and has been published online and in hard copy. The online version is equipped with hyperlinks that cross-reference relevant passages on a topic, practical examples and useful tips and has checklists at the end of every chapter, making it a very user-friendly online tool.

11. A list of National Contact Points designated by Signatories of the Raptors MoU is available as an Information Document (UNEP/CMS/Raptors/MOS2/Inf.6). It includes the details provided by 34 (of 52) Signatories. Signatories not included in the list are urged to formally designate a NCP and to submit details of the nominated individual(s) at their earliest convenience. A National Contact Point Designation Form that can be used as a template is available as an Annex to this document. In the meantime, for Signatory States where a NCP has yet to be formally designated, the Coordinating Unit will continue to communicate with those individuals whose details are held in its database of official contacts.

12. If Signatories change their NCPs, contact details of the replacement person should be communicated to the Coordinating Unit without delay so as to ensure use of the most appropriate communication channels. The list of NCPs is kept up-to-date by the Coordinating Unit, and will be published on the Raptors MoU webpage² footer under 'National Contact Points', once this facility is established.

¹ <http://www.cms.int/en/publication/manual-national-focal-points-cms-instruments>

² <http://www.cms.int/raptors>

Communications

13. Since MoS1, the Coordinating Unit has communicated regularly with Signatories, Cooperating Partners, non-signatory Range States, stakeholders and other interested parties, primarily via email. The CU has been circulating documents and other information at an average rate of once every month during the last three years. These figures do not include the many thousands of bilateral communications with Signatories and others, relating to the Raptors MoU and its implementation.

14. In 2014, the CMS Family website received a major overhaul in terms of its structure and design and as a result the Raptors MoU webpages have been renewed as well. The Coordinating Unit actively contributed to the redesign process by playing a leading role in the CMS Family Website Working Group established by the CMS Secretariat.

15. The Coordinating Unit routinely collaborates with the CMS Family Joint Communications Team in relation to press releases, web stories and social media postings. Recently, new internal protocols were developed by the CMS Secretariat to improve communication working practices for all instruments within the CMS Family.

16. A major communications achievement for the Coordinating Unit during this reporting period was the development (in consultation with all key stakeholders), editing and publication of the 'Saker Falcon *Falco cherrug* Global Action Plan (SakerGAP), including a management and monitoring system, to conserve the species' (UNEP/CMS/Raptors/MOS2/8/Annex 2) in August 2014. CMS Resolution 11.18 (UNEP/CMS/Raptors/MOS2/8/Annex 1), including the SakerGAP, was adopted at the Eleventh Conference of Parties (COP11) in November 2014 following a three-year negotiation process. The SakerGAP has now been translated into both Arabic and Russian.

17. Summary Fact Sheets have been published for the Raptors MoU (UNEP/CMS/Raptors/MOS2/Inf.7 and UNEP/CMS/Raptors/MOS2/Inf.8) and for the SakerGAP (UNEP/CMS/Raptors/MOS2/Inf.9).

Meetings organized

18. Since MoS1, the Coordinating Unit has organized the following international meetings (listed in chronological order):

- **Virtual meeting of the Saker Falcon Task Force** – online teleconference with 18 representatives from 14 countries, hosted from Abu Dhabi, UAE (February 2013);
- **Saker Falcon Task Force** – Stakeholders' Action Planning Workshop, held in Abu Dhabi, UAE (September 2013) – support received from EAD, on behalf of the Government of the UAE;
- **Second Meeting of the Saker Falcon Task Force**, held in Abu Dhabi, UAE (September 2013);
- **First Meeting of the Technical Advisory Group to the Raptors MoU**, held in Edinburgh, Scotland, UK (January 2014) – support received from the United Kingdom and the Scottish Government;
- **Second Meeting of the Technical Advisory Group to the Raptors MoU**, held in Abu Dhabi, UAE (March 2015);
- **Egyptian Vulture Flyway Action Planning Workshop**, held in Sofia, Bulgaria (July 2015) – planning and logistics in-country were led by the Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds (BSPB), Birdlife Bulgaria;
- **Second Meeting of Signatories (MoS2) to the Raptors MoU**, scheduled to held in Trondheim, Norway (October 2015) – support received from the Norwegian Environment Agency, the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety (BMUB) and the Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs.

19. In addition, the Coordinating Unit has hosted frequent (sometimes several per week) online teleconferences, normally via GoToMeeting or Skype, with representatives of Signatories, TAG, Cooperating Partners, project partners, consultants and other stakeholders.

Representation and promotion

20. Over the past three years, the Coordinating Unit has actively promoted the Raptors MoU at a significant number of international and local meetings and events, as follows (in chronological order):

- GEF/UNDP/BirdLife International Migratory Soaring Birds Project³ – Regional Steering Group meeting held in Amman, Jordan (February 2013);
- National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Planning Workshop held in Dubai, UAE (May 2013);
- CMS Preventing Poisoning Working Group meeting held in Tunis, Tunisia (May 2013);
- Council of Europe - Bern Convention 2nd Conference on Illegal killing, trapping and trade of birds held in Tunis, Tunisia (May 2013);
- BirdLife International World Congress 2013 held in Ottawa, Canada (June 2013);
- Technical mission to Nagaland, India (co-led by Wildlife Institute of India), to fit satellite tags to three Amur Falcons (November 2013);
- World Migratory Bird Day⁴ – celebratory one day event held in Batumi, Georgia (May 2012) – the Programme Officer was unable to attend in person but instead submitted an address and presentation that were delivered on his behalf by the organizers (Batumi Raptor Count⁵);
- Abu Dhabi International Hunting and Equestrian Exhibition (ADIHEX) held in Abu Dhabi, UAE (September 2013);
- 41st meeting of the CMS Standing Committee held in Bonn, Germany (November 2013);
- AEWA/CMS/Raptors MoU meeting to develop a Plan of Action to address illegal trapping of migratory birds in Egypt and Libya, held in Bonn, Germany (November 2013);
- Bi-lateral meeting with BSPB – BirdLife Bulgaria to plan development of a Flyway Action Plan for the Egyptian Vulture covering the Balkans and Central Asia, held in Sofia, Bulgaria (April 2014);
- Capacity Development for Flyway Conservation in the Mediterranean Workshop hosted by BirdLife Cyprus in Nicosia, Cyprus (June 2014);
- CMS Working Group on Flyways meeting held in Bonn, Germany (June 2014);
- 18th Meeting of the CMS Scientific Council, held in Bonn, Germany (July 2014);
- CMS 11th Conference of Parties, held in Quito, Ecuador (November 2014);
- International Festival of Falconry, held in Abu Dhabi, UAE (December 2014);
- Raptors' National Technical and Advisory Meeting, held in Qesham Island, Iran (March 2015);
- World Migratory Bird Day – a one-day seminar held in Dubai, UAE (May 2015);
- Workshop to Develop a Flyway Action Plan for the Conservation of the Balkan and Central Asian Populations of the Egyptian Vulture, held in Sofia, Bulgaria (July 2015);
- CMS Preventing Poisoning Working Group – Regional Workshop for Southern Africa held in Cape Town, South Africa (August 2015) – the Programme Officer was unable to attend, but contributed to the preparations for the workshop.

WorkPlan 2015-2016

21. Due to changes to the funding arrangements and reporting cycle for CMS Office - Abu Dhabi, introduced by EAD in 2014, the annual WorkPlan for the Coordinating Unit now runs from 1 January to 31 December (instead of the previous cycle which ran from 1 July to 30 June in the following year).

³ <http://www.migratorysoaringbirds.undp.birdlife.org/>

⁴ <http://www.worldmigratorybirdday.org/>

⁵ <http://www.batimiraptorcount.org/>

Accordingly, MoS2 will fall in the last quarter of the current 2015 WorkPlan. The key conservation initiatives on which the Coordinating Unit is either leading or actively engaged will be presented under Agenda Item 12 (UNEP/CMS/Raptors/MOS2/8).

22. Looking ahead, the Coordinating Unit's WorkPlan for triennium 2016 - 2018 will be shaped by the outcomes of deliberations by Signatories during MoS2. However, some core activities can already be identified which are either ongoing or will continue to demand attention, notably:

- Operating the **Coordinating Unit** to provide efficient, effective and timely support to Signatories (and non-signatory Range States) to promote and assist the implementation of the Raptors MoU and associated Action Plan;
- Providing administrative support to the **Technical Advisory Group (TAG)**, including organizing two face-to-face meetings during the intersessional period between MoS2 and MoS3, subject to resources being available;
- Supporting Signatories in developing their **National or Regional Raptor Conservation and Management Strategies** in line with Activity 6 of the Action Plan of the Raptors MoU;
- Guiding the implementation of the **SakerGAP** (UNEP/CMS/Raptors/MOS2/8/Annex 2), including overseeing the development of the Saker Falcon Online Portal and promoting the other Flagship Projects. This core activity is dependent upon financial resources being found to commission a SakerGAP Coordinator;
- Overseeing finalization and publication of the **Flyway Action Plan for the Balkans and Central Asia Populations of the Egyptian Vulture** by the end of 2015 and, thereafter, promoting its implementation;
- Further developing the **International Single Species Action Plan (ISSAP) for the Sooty Falcon** (*Falco concolor*). In April 2015, a first draft of a Sooty Falcon ISSAP was circulated to members of the Sooty Falcon Working Group, previously established by the Coordinating Unit. Subject to the availability of resources, an Action Planning Workshop is scheduled to be held in Madagascar during the first quarter of 2015;
- Continue supporting and participating in the **Preventing Poisoning Working Group (PPWG)** being led by the CMS Secretariat, including contributing to recruiting and funding a Coordinator, to implement CMS Resolution 11.15 (UNEP/CMS/Raptors/MOS2/Inf.11);
- Collaborating with the Secretariats of CMS and the African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement (AEWA) on **Preventing the Illegal Killing, Taking and Trade in Migratory Birds (IKB)**, including contributing to a regional workshop tentatively planned for the first quarter of 2016, to implement CMS Resolution 11.16 (UNEP/CMS/Raptors/MOS2/Inf.12);
- Ensuring that threats to migratory birds of prey are mainstreamed and properly addressed within other **cross-cutting avian-related initiatives being led by the CMS Secretariat**, such as: CMS Resolution 11.14 - Programme of Work on Migratory Birds and Flyways (UNEP/CMS/Raptors/MOS2/Inf.10); CMS Resolution 11.25 – Advancing Ecological Networks to address the needs of migratory species (UNEP/CMS/Raptors/MOS2/Inf.13); CMS Resolution 11.27 - Renewable Energy and Migratory Species (including electrocution and collision caused by power grids) (UNEP/CMS/Raptors/MOS2/Inf.14); and, CMS Resolution 11.31 - Fighting Wildlife Crime and Offences within and beyond Borders (UNEP/CMS/Raptors/MOS2/Inf.15);

- Working with the CMS Secretariat to maintain, further develop and enhance the **Raptors MoU website** as a key source of information of relevance to Signatories, Cooperating Partners, Range States and other stakeholders;
- Finalise development of **Raptors MoU species tool within BirdLife International's online Data Zone** by the end of the first quarter of 2016;
- Collaborating with key partners to contribute to three separate **International Conservation Awareness Raising Campaigns**: World Wildlife Day⁶ (March); World Migratory Bird Day⁷ (May); and, International Vulture Awareness Day⁸ (September).

Action requested

The Meeting is invited to:

- (a) Note the contents of this report and to seek any clarifications, if required.
- (b) Urge Signatories not listed on UNEP/CMS/Raptors/MOS2/Inf.6, to nominate a National Contact Point and to supply details to the Coordinating Unit forthwith (in line with Paragraph 10 of the Raptors MoU) [by 31 December 2015?].
- (c) Encourage Signatories, Range States, partners and stakeholders to work collaboratively to mobilize resources, including by voluntary financial contributions, to enable implementation of the Saker Falcon Global Action Plan (SakerGAP) and other key initiatives highlighted in this report.
- (d) Alert the Coordinating Unit to any additional activities that may warrant inclusion in its WorkPlan for the coming triennium, including allocating sufficient resources to implement it.

⁶ <http://www.un.org/en/events/wildlifeday/>

⁷ <http://www.worldmigratorybirdday.org/>

⁸ <http://www.vultureday.org/>

Annex

National Contact Point Designation Form for the Raptors MoU

Recalling Paragraph 10 of the above Raptors MoU:

“Each Signatory will designate a contact point for all matters relating to the implementation of this Memorandum of Understanding; and communicate the name and address of that contact point to the Coordinating unit once established. Before the establishment of the Coordinating Unit such duties will be undertaken by an Interim Coordinating Unit designated by the Secretariat.”

I hereby designate the following person as National Contact Point for purposes of communicating with the Coordinating Unit and other Signatories:

Family name: **First name:**

Title/Function:

Department:

Organisation:

Full postal address:

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Tel.: **Mobile:**.....

Fax:

E-mail:

Date:

Signature:

Name:

(Minister responsible for nature conservation and/or biodiversity)



⁹ This document must bear a stamp or be printed on headed notepaper, in order to unambiguously indicate that it has been issued by the appropriate authority.