



Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals

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MEASURES TO IMPROVE THE CONSERVATION STATUS OF APPENDIX I SPECIES

Prepared by the Secretariat

1. The present document summarizes the activities undertaken within the framework of Resolution 4.2 (Nairobi, June 1994) which recommended that concerted actions be carried out for particular species listed in Appendix I, namely: *Chloephaga rubidiceps*, *Oxyura leucocephala*, *Grus leucogeranus*, *Otis tarda*, *Chlamydotis undulata*, *Gazella dama*, *Oryx dammah*, and *Monachus monachus*. In addition, it outlines activities undertaken since the last meeting of the Scientific Council (Bonn, November 1995) in relation to marine turtles and the Slender-billed curlew, also listed in Appendix I.
2. One of the important outcomes of the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties was the decision to use USD 500,000 from the CMS Trust Fund in the 1995-97 triennium “to finance additional expenditure in support of the Convention in the form of block consultancies for particular tasks, including the development of agreements, particularly in developing countries and areas where the coverage was inadequate”. The Standing Committee, at its 13th meeting (Bonn, March 1995), provided guidelines on priorities for judicious use of these funds, including the organization of certain workshops. The Standing Committee also suggested that the advice of the Scientific Council should be sought. This was done at the Council’s sixth meeting (Bonn, November 1995), where Councillors provided more specific advice on the allocation of funds.
3. In the course of the 1995-1997 triennium, the Secretariat has facilitated the implementation of numerous activities geared specifically towards most of the Appendix I species listed above, as well as other migratory species not mentioned in this document. A summary of nine of these projects is provided in the paper attached hereto. Not surprisingly, these activities will have to continue into the future and be expanded if they are to have a longer-term beneficial result for the species concerned.
4. It is proposed that the Scientific Council review the progress made to date and make recommendations as to the continuation of certain lines of work and/or new species on which the Convention’s attention should be focussed.

Summary of CMS activities related to Appendix I species undertaken during the 1995-1997 triennium

A. Marine Turtles

Budget allocated at the sixth meeting of the Scientific Council: \$175,000

1. **Title:** *Western Indian Ocean Marine Turtle Training Workshop and Strategic Planning Session, South Africa, 12-18 November 1995*

Implementation: IUCN/MTSG and IUCN/EARO

Status: Workshop completed

Budget provided by CMS: \$25,000

Description and results: This was the first CMS-sponsored workshop aimed at addressing the needs identified in the 1995 *Global Strategy for the Conservation of Marine Turtles*. It was hosted by the Natal Parks Board at Sodwana Bay, coinciding with the sea-turtles' nesting season. Over 30 participants, mostly from countries in or bordering the western Indian Ocean, attended the workshop in which issues of regional concern for the conservation of sea turtles were discussed. Training needs were also addressed through a series of presentations, demonstrations and beach patrols.

The workshop concluded with the drafting of a regional strategy identifying research needs and management actions for the conservation of five species of sea turtles which occur in the region. In addition, the *Sodwana Declaration* recommended that Governments endorse the strategy, and undertake to support actions for the conservation of these far-ranging species in the spirit of CMS. An interim steering committee was established to follow up on the priority actions identified, among which were the appointment of a regional coordinator for marine turtle conservation, and the declaration of a "Year of the Sea Turtle for the Western Indian Ocean" in 1998 and finally the endorsement and funding of the strategy.

2. **Title:** *Global and Regional Conservation Actions for Marine Turtles*

Implementation: IUCN-MTSG

Status: Project currently being implemented

Budget provided by CMS: \$47,750

Description and results: The potential of CMS to promote the conservation of marine turtles is largely untapped, owing to a lack of awareness of the tools of the Convention as well as resource limitations which have prevented more active participation and encouragement by the Secretariat. The present project will make a first contribution towards the initiation of a range of projects in various parts of the world where, until now, few concerted conservation actions in favour of marine turtles have been undertaken.

This is a broad project with the main goal of facilitating implementation of conservation actions on the ground, for the benefit of marine turtle populations. In the longer-term, this may lead to the provision of support for the establishment of regional conservation networks and, eventually, to formalize co-operation within the framework of regional CMS Agreements.

The IUCN Marine Turtle Specialist Group (MTSG), in charge of implementing this project, has

a membership of 214 specialists from 56 countries. Its mandate is “to develop, support, and implement programmes which promote the restoration and survival of healthy marine turtle populations that fulfill their ecological roles”. As such, it is well-placed to assist in the development, organization, implementation and monitoring of projects under the auspices of CMS, intended to benefit the conservation of marine turtles on a regional and global level. In 1995, the IUCN MTSG published a *Global Strategy for the Conservation of Marine Turtles* which includes specific recommendations with regard to CMS.

A second strategy-training workshop was held within the framework of this project, in India, in January 1997. Representatives from nine northern Indian Ocean countries and other international colleagues met in Bhubaneswar to discuss conservation needs in the northern Indian Ocean countries and to draft a marine turtle conservation strategy and action plan for the region. A draft of the strategy is at present being circulated for comment.

Two other components of the IUCN/MTSG project, for which CMS funding is being provided, have not advanced as quickly as expected. These are a global review of CMS implementation with respect to marine turtles, including recommendations for further actions, and the development of a conservation techniques manual for sea turtle specialists around the world. Both are worthy initiatives that should be finalized in 1997.

B. Migratory Birds

Budget allocated at the sixth meeting of the Scientific Council: \$125,000

- 3. Title:** *Developing an Integrated Conservation Plan for the **Ruddy-headed Goose** (*Chloephaga rubidiceps*) of the Austral Region of Chile and Argentina.*

Implementation: CONAF and Wetlands International-Americas

Status: Contract signed. Summer field activities have been already conducted

Budget provided by CMS: \$15,400

Description and results: Four species of Austral Geese (*Chloephaga* spp.) live in the southern part of South America. Three of them live mainly in open areas and feed on tender grass. They nest in southern Patagonia and migrate around 2,500 km to the Pampas during the autumn. Two species compete with sheep for the available grass, and in the wintering areas they feed on wheat and other cereals when the plants are starting to sprout. But the mainland population of the other, Ruddy-headed goose (*Ch. rubidiceps*) is very rare, and is included in CMS Appendix I. For unknown reasons, the population has declined from being the most abundant species in the north of Tierra del Fuego, to an estimated population of around 300 birds today. The entire population winters in Argentina. A separate population numbering tens of thousands is resident on the Falkland (Malvinas) Islands.

The project includes the following activities: surveys and monitoring, both in breeding and wintering habitat, and an education and awareness campaign. A Memorandum of Understanding between Argentina and Chile is expected as a result of this project. Surveys have already been conducted in the breeding area and a report will be presented by CONAF during the meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

4. **Title:** *Second workshop of Siberian crane (Grus leucogeranus) Range States, Bharatpur, India, 5-7 November 1996.*

Implementation: CMS Secretariat

Status: Workshop concluded

Budget provided by CMS: \$10,000

Description and results: A Memorandum of Understanding concerning Conservation Measures for the Siberian Crane was concluded in 1993. The first meeting of Range States was convened in Moscow in May 1995, and a general strategy agreed upon. About 40-45 delegates from 8 of the 9 Range States concerned attended a follow-up workshop in India in November 1996. Progress reports on the implementation of conservation measures for the endangered western and central Asian populations were presented. A number of the Range States made considerable progress in 1996 despite limited resources. The activities undertaken in the Russian Federation and the successful monitoring of a crane fitted with a satellite transmitter in the Islamic Republic of Iran were particularly noteworthy. Technical presentations were made on crane releases, migration studies, and education programmes. Separate working groups developed a detailed work plan for 1997-99 for the western (Russia, Kazakstan, Azerbaijan, and Iran) and central (Russia, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Pakistan and India) flyways. Detailed plans were drawn up for each of the Range States and were presented in the form of a comprehensive Conservation Plan, which is at present being finalised.

5. **Title:** *Educational video on the conservation challenges of the Siberian Crane (Grus leucogeranus)*

Implementation: International Crane Foundation

Status: Project nearly completed

Budget provided by CMS: \$7,055

Description and results: A video intended to educate the general public and hunters, in particular, of the conservation needs and problems associated with the endangered Siberian crane throughout its range is in the final stages of production. A first draft, prepared by the International Crane Foundation, was screened in India in November 1996, and has been revised and has already been translated from the English original into Russian. The video is intended for wide distribution in all of the Range States concerned.

6. **Title:** *Preparation of programmes for global conservation of the Slender-billed Curlew (Numenius tenuirostris)*

Implementation: Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Science (IRSNB)

Status: Project proposal is ready and under review

Budget provided by CMS: \$25,000

Description and results: The Slender-billed curlew is probably the most endangered migratory bird in the Palaearctic region, and action is urgently needed to combat the threats to its habitat and its continued survival. Knowledge about the species' migratory routes and habits is limited, but it is known that non-systematic hunting, as well as the limited protection afforded to the sites where the birds overwinter, continues to threaten the species' survival. CMS is well-placed to co-ordinate conservation activities on an international scale as it already provides secretariat functions for a Memorandum of Understanding, which 15 of the 29 Range States have signed so far.

The MoU urges Parties and non-Party Range States to carry out legislative, conservation and management actions to save the Slender-billed curlew from extinction. It also includes an

overall Action Plan - based on a plan drawn up by BirdLife International - which lists broad actions for each Range State. This initiative concentrates on Europe, northwestern Asia and northern Africa. In part of the region, notably southeastern Europe and the Middle East, CMS is less well-represented, and the project will help to encourage more support from States not yet Party to the Convention.

Under this project, IRSNB is expected to develop a comprehensive plan of research, monitoring and conservation measures for a certain number of key Range States, and for internationally co-ordinated activities. There are four main needs that are expected to be satisfied through this project: compiling accurate information on the distribution and migratory routes and habits of *Numenius tenuirostris*; updating existing legislation; developing a concept outline for a comprehensive plan of research, monitoring and conservation measures, which would include actions to be taken by each Range State; and implementing co-ordinated international actions under this plan. The Secretariat intends to organize a workshop in relation to this project in late 1997.

7. **Title:** *Meeting on the Houbara bustard (Chlamydotis undulata) in Muscat, Oman 13-14 January 1996*

Implementation: IUCN/SSC

Status: Completed

Budget provided by CMS: \$14,000

Description and results: This was the first meeting of the Houbara Bustard Working Group of the IUCN/SSC. Over 90 participants from 13 Range States attended the meeting, which was co-sponsored by CMS and the National Avian Research Centre (NARC) of Saudi Arabia. The main objective was to review the status of the Asian Houbara bustard. The meeting also facilitated the circulation, by the Government of Saudi Arabia, of an official draft of a CMS Agreement on the conservation and management of the Asian Houbara bustard. The draft, which was approved by the Saudi Arabian Council of Ministers, was sent to Range States through diplomatic channels. NARC was appointed the co-ordinator of the Asian Houbara Bustard Working Group, under the auspices of IUCN/SSC. A recommendation calling for the formation of a group of existing organizations interested in coordinating public awareness activities on the Houbara bustard was passed.

8. **Title:** *Memorandum of Understanding on the Middle-European population of the Great bustard (Otis tarda)*

Implementation: IUCN/ELC, Scientific Councillor for Hungary

Status: In progress

Budget provided by CMS: US\$1,000

A draft proposal of a Memorandum of Understanding on the Middle-European population of the Great bustard was prepared by Dr. Attila Bankovics, the Scientific Councillor for Hungary, and Dr. Hans Peter Kollar from Austria. Using this draft as a base, the IUCN/ELC is preparing a Memorandum of Understanding on this species, covering the following countries: Albania, Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Slovakia, Ukraine and Yugoslavia.

Dr. Bankovics and Dr. Collar are, at the time of writing of this report, working on an international action plan for the conservation of the species, which should be available during the seventh meeting of the Scientific Council.

Note: The Secretariat did not have the capacity to undertake any specific measures in respect of the **White-headed duck** (*Oxyura leucocephala*), however it is aware of conservation actions already being pursued by other organizations in relation to this species.

C. Sahelo-Saharan ungulates

Budget allocated at the Sixth meeting of the Scientific Council: \$50,000

- 9. Title:** *Development of an action plan for the conservation of Sahelo-Saharan ungulates (including Gazella dama and Oryx dammah)*

Implementation: Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Science (IRSNB)

Status: Contract signed

Budget provided by CMS: \$50,000

Description and results: Eight species of the family Bovidae are listed in Appendix I of CMS. Six of them have been observed in the Sahelo-Saharan region. Some of the species are assumed to be extinct in the wild mainly due to excessive hunting activities in the past few decades. A working group of the CMS Scientific Council, led by the representative of France, elaborated a draft Action Plan which was submitted to the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties. The Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Science applied for funds from the European Union to begin implementation of conservation actions identified in the project.

On the basis of the recommendations of the CMS Scientific Council, the Working group, together with the UNEP/CMS Secretariat, has developed the following activities for inclusion in the Plan: compilation of a comprehensive status report on the species throughout the migration range; updating and extending the existing draft Action Plan; organizing a workshop of experts from the Range States and specialized NGOs as well as representatives from related and co-operating IGOs; thereafter, revising the Action Plan in the light of the meeting's recommendations.

D. Marine Mammals

Mediterranean Monk Seal (*Monachus monachus*)

At the sixth meeting of the Scientific Council, a working group was constituted (comprising Councillors from Belgium, Portugal and Morocco) to act as a CMS focal point for this species and to formulate a course of action for possible CMS involvement. The working group proposed that a co-ordination unit be established, and that conservation and research actions be undertaken in Morocco, Madeira (Portugal), the Canary Islands (Spain) and Mauritania. The co-ordination unit would be charged with organizing and maintaining an up-to-date register of seals throughout the region concerned. It proposed that priority be given to *in situ* conservation actions, including implementation of the management plan for the National Park of Dakhla, habitat protection, and a study of the regional structure and dynamics of the populations. The Council requested the Secretariat and the focal point Councillors to undertake actions in favour of the species and recommended that CMS funds be allocated, where necessary. The Secretariat has not had any capacity to undertake activities in this regard, and has no information from any of the members of the working group.