



CONVENTION ON MIGRATORY SPECIES

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MEETING TO ENDORSE THE PROPOSED
WESTERN/CENTRAL ASIAN SITE NETWORK
FOR SIBERIAN CRANES (AND OTHER
WATERBIRDS)
New Delhi, 13 June 2005

REPORT OF THE MEETING TO ENDORSE THE PROPOSED WESTERN/CENTRAL ASIAN SITE NETWORK FOR SIBERIAN CRANES (AND OTHER WATERBIRDS)

Agenda item 1: Welcoming remarks

1. Mr. Douglas Hykle, Senior Advisor to the Convention on Migratory Species, CMS welcomed participants to the meeting, and provided the historical context for the day's discussions. Mr. Crawford Prentice, representing the International Crane Foundation (ICF), explained the various issues that would be covered on which consensus would be sought. The final list of participants appears at Annex 1.

Agenda item 2: Election of Chairman

2. Mr. R.P.S. Katwal, Additional Director - Wildlife, Indian Ministry of Environment and Forests, was elected by acclamation to chair the meeting. He then delivered his opening remarks on behalf of the Host Government, mentioning the serious water shortage at Keoladeo National Park which was formerly the home of overwintering Siberian Cranes.

3. Mr. Hykle paid tribute to the work of Mr. Dave Ferguson, who was about to retire after a distinguished career in the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, which had benefited nature conservation in both India and Pakistan. The text of the tribute appears in Annex 2.

Agenda item 3: Adoption of the agenda and meeting schedule

4. The provisional agenda (document CMS/SC/WCASN-SC/1/Rev.4) was adopted without amendment (Annex 3). The final list of documents for the meeting appears at Annex 4.



Agenda item 4: Introduction to the concept for a Western/Central Asian Site Network for Siberian Cranes and other waterbirds)

5. Referring to the background paper, document CMS/SC/WCASN-SC/4/Rev.1, Mr. Prentice described the process that had led to the development of the proposed site network, and drew attention to the values of site networks and the outcomes expected from the meeting.

Agenda item 5: Overview of North East Asia Crane Site Network activity

6. Mr. Simba Chan, BirdLife International, introduced the activities of the North East Asia Crane Site Network, which had been operating for several years, with a view to sharing experience that might be useful for the development of a comparable network for Siberian Cranes and (other waterbirds) in the Western/Central Asian Flyway.

Agenda item 6: Site selection and nomination requirements for the WCASN-SC

7. Ms. Elena Ilyashenko, Siberian Crane Flyway Coordinator, introduced the criteria for site selection and the 14-point list of information required for nominations, which had been drafted by a working group. The site selection criteria benefited from an extensive discussion, with the following result. It was clarified that the second and third level criteria were better described as “qualifiers”, since their main purpose was to give an indication of the additional importance, for other cranes and waterbirds, of sites selected primarily for their relevance to Siberian Cranes (based on the four sub-categories of the “First Level Criterion”). It was further agreed to modify the “Third Level Qualifiers” so that they would conform to the Ramsar criteria for nomination of wetlands of international importance. Sub-qualifier 3.1, for other waterbird species, was amended to read: “A wetland should be considered internationally important if it regularly supports 20,000 or more migratory waterbirds.” A new sub-qualifier 3.2 was introduced as follows: “A wetland should be considered internationally important if it regularly supports 5,000 or more migratory waterbirds or 0.25% of a migratory waterbird population on a single count during a single migration period.” The other sub-qualifiers were unchanged, and were renumbered accordingly. The revised criteria for site selection are found in Annex 5.

8. It was noted that not all Ramsar sites would necessarily qualify for inclusion in the site network, and that not all network sites would necessarily satisfy all of the Ramsar criteria for listing under that convention. The issue of whether or not a network site might be regarded, and be legally certified, as a site of “international importance” was left for further discussion.

9. With regard to the information needed for nomination of sites, it was agreed to add, at the end of point 2, the phrase: “, including a detailed map”; to modify point 7 (in keeping with the previous discussion) to read: “Description of the site designation criteria/qualifiers according to the criteria/qualifiers for nomination of sites of importance for Siberian Cranes (first level criterion), other cranes (second level qualifier) or other waterbirds (third level qualifier)”. It was agreed to add, at the end of point 14, a note to the effect that: “The Secretariat will supply a generic template for a letter, which may be used for this purpose.” Finally, it was agreed to add a new point 15: “List of references of scientific sources”. The revised list of information required for site nominations appears in Annex 6.

Agenda item 7: Procedures for nominating, reviewing and approving network sites

10. Mr. Prentice outlined the proposed procedure by which sites were to be nominated by Governments using a standard nomination form, and thereafter reviewed by a screening group and ultimately approved by a committee of the Range States. After lengthy discussion, it was agreed that the vetting of nominations would be conducted by a “Site Network Review Working Group” with the following composition:

- One representative of a breeding ground Range State (Russian Federation) – Alexander Sorokin;
- Two representatives of staging Range States, on a rotational basis from one meeting of the CMS Siberian Crane MoU to another (until Sixth Meeting: Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan) – Elchin Sultanov and Yevgeniya Lanovenko, respectively;
- Two representatives of wintering area Range States (Islamic Republic of Iran and India) – Sadegh Sadeghi Zadegan and R.P.S Katwal, respectively;
BirdLife International – Simba Chan;
Wetlands International – Taej Mundkur; and
International Crane Foundation (Siberian Crane Flyway Coordinator) – Elena Ilyashenko.

11. It was agreed that the Working Group would be tasked with reviewing site nomination forms submitted by Range State governments; assessing from a technical standpoint the adequacy of information provided to determine if the nominated site meets the criteria; requesting additional information if necessary; and making a recommendation to a new WCASN Committee. The working group would select its own chair and would conduct its business by e-mail correspondence.

12. It was agreed to draft detailed Terms of Reference (ToR) encapsulating all of the above-mentioned points for adoption by the meeting of the WCASN Committee on the occasion of the Sixth Siberian Crane MoU meeting. In the meantime, the working group could operate on an interim basis.

13. It was confirmed that the WCASN Committee would comprise: Afghanistan (following signature of the Siberian Crane MoU), Azerbaijan, India, Islamic Republic of Iran, Kazakhstan, Pakistan, Russian Federation, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. While Mongolia had been provisionally included in the list at its request, the Meeting noted that Mongolia was geographically distant from all of the other members and it was already a participant in the North East Asia Crane Site Network. As there was an overlap of actual/proposed sites, it was agreed that the CMS Secretariat would take up the matter with Mongolia, with a view to encouraging that country to confine its membership to the NEACSN.

Agenda item 8: Develop a preliminary list of two priority sites for each country

14. Ms. Ilyashenko introduced a preliminary list of sites for the proposed network, based on suggestions from the Range States (document CMS/SC/WCASN-SC/5). Altogether 21 sites had been suggested, including eight under the UNEP/GEF Siberian Crane Wetland Project (SCWP), two wintering sites and two breeding sites. Pakistan had yet to propose any sites, and it was hoped that this omission would be rectified in due course. Range States were encouraged to develop formal nomination proposals for these sites once the nomination template had been finalised and circulated, in consultation with the Working Group. Mr. Hykle reminded the Meeting that one of the

functions of the site network was to provide a mechanism to involve more actively those countries that were not participating in the SCWP. The preliminary list appears as Annex 7.

15. After the close of the meeting, Ms. Ilyashenko gave an informative presentation that outlined the key features of each of the suggested sites.

Agenda item 9: Activities to be undertaken under the Western/Central Asian Site Network for Siberian Cranes (and other waterbirds)

16. Ms. Ilyashenko outlined the kinds of joint activities which could be expected to be conducted within the framework of the site network, including: training workshops; staff exchange programmes; education and public awareness; site monitoring, including maintenance of the regional Siberian Crane database; information exchange; and fund raising. The Meeting agreed that these activities were best integrated in the existing Conservation Plans under the CMS Siberian Crane MoU, rather than creating a new action plan. If appropriate, they might be specially identified as site network activities.

Agenda item 10: Conclusions of the Meeting

17. Mr. Hykle, in his capacity as meeting facilitator, summarised the main points of consensus. He also recalled that it had been foreseen by the Fifth Meeting of Siberian Crane Range States that the elements of the final proposal for the site network, agreed in New Delhi, would be packaged into a single document that would be attached as an addendum to the existing Conservation Plans for the Western and Central populations.

Agenda item 11: Closure of the Meeting

18. Noting that all of the objectives of the meeting had been achieved, the chairman closed the meeting at the appointed time of 1600.



Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals



MEETING TO ENDORSE THE PROPOSED WESTERN/CENTRAL ASIAN SITE NETWORK FOR SIBERIAN CRANES (AND OTHER WATERBIRDS)

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MEETING TO ENDORSE THE PROPOSED WESTERN/CENTRAL ASIAN SITE NETWORK FOR SIBERIAN CRANES (AND OTHER WATERBIRDS)

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A TRIBUTE TO DAVE FERGUSON

on the occasion of the
Meeting to Endorse the Proposed Western/Central Asian Site Network for Siberian Cranes
(and other waterbirds)

New Delhi, India, 13 June 2005

Over three decades of work with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, Dave Ferguson has made many significant contributions to the study and conservation of wildlife in India and Pakistan, perhaps more than any other non-national.

The Governments of India and Pakistan each established funds to repay a financial obligation to the US Government. These funds, well known by those familiar with them as “PL-480 funds”, are devoted to the support of programs for the conservation of wildlife approved jointly by the United States and the respective government.

Dave was the administrator of those funds from the US side. Through collaboration with colleagues in the Governments of India and Pakistan, and with researchers and conservationists working independently or with non-profit organizations, Dave was able to help steer a large amount of rupees to the benefit of nature conservation.

Various projects of The Wildlife Institute of India, a number of award-winning films including “Birds of the Indian Monsoon” and the “The Land of the Tiger”, can also be credited to support mobilized by Dave Ferguson.

To those who know him, Dave is much more than a highly dedicated government official. He has a passionate love for wildlife, a deep commitment to conservation, and a warm and personal interest in colleagues who share those values.

Dave’s contributions to Siberian Cranes perhaps best exemplify those values. From the early 1970s, when it became apparent that the population of Siberian Cranes that wintered in India was in decline, Dave mobilized support for a wide range of activities. They include field studies of the wild cranes at Keoladeo National Park, migration studies of Eurasian Cranes that share the migration corridor with Siberian Cranes, workshops for planning and exchange of information, grass roots conservation education with the crane hunters in Pakistan, and experimental release programs of captive-reared Siberian Cranes.

He was also instrumental in supporting the production and distribution of the Robert Bateman poster on the Siberian Crane in 12 different languages. Dave also became a regular participant and a valued mentor at international meetings to develop Conservation Plans to help the Siberian Cranes.

Although efforts to save the population of the Central Flyway have yet to achieve success, the international momentum created through this work, the scientific information secured, and the Memorandum of Understanding among the Range States organized by the Convention on Migratory Species, create a solid foundation upon which plans can be built for restoring the population.

As Dave leaves his official responsibilities, we are all hopeful that he will continue his active involvement in the world of conservation. The Meeting participants, so many of whom have benefited from Dave Ferguson’s work, express their deep respect and heartfelt appreciation, and very best wishes for a happy and healthy retirement.



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AGENDA

1. Welcoming remarks
2. Election of Chairman
Tribute to Dave Ferguson
3. Adoption of the agenda and meeting schedule
4. Introduction to the concept for a Western/Central Asian Site Network for Siberian Cranes (and other waterbirds) (WCASN-SC)
5. Overview of North East Asia Crane Site Network activity
6. Site selection and nomination requirements for WCASN-SC
7. Procedures for nominating, reviewing and approving network sites
8. Develop a preliminary list of 2 priority sites for each country
9. Activities to be undertaken under the Western/Central Asian Site Network for Siberian Cranes (and other waterbirds)
10. Conclusions of the Meeting
11. Closure of the Meeting



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LIST OF DOCUMENTS

Symbol	Agenda Item(s)	Title of Document
CMS/SC/WCASN-SC/1/Rev.4	3.0	Draft Provisional Agenda
CMS/SC/WCASN-SC/2/Rev.3	3.0	Draft Provisional Annotated Agenda and Meeting Schedule
CMS/SC/WCASN-SC/3/Rev.1	3.0	List of Documents
CMS/SC/WCASN-SC/4/Rev.1	5.0- 9.0	The Proposed Western/Central Asian Site Network for Siberian Cranes (and other waterbirds): Background Paper
CMS/SC/WCASN-SC/5 (In-session)	8.0	Draft Preliminary List of Priority Sites for the Proposed Western/Central Asian Site Network for Siberian Cranes (and other waterbirds)
CMS/SC/WCASN-SC/Inf.1		Fact Sheet
CMS/SC/WCASN-SC/Inf.2		Pre-registration Form
CMS/SC/WCASN-SC/Inf.3	5.0	Extract from the "Report of the Fifth Meeting of Siberian Crane Range States" (Moscow, Russian Federation, 26-29 April 2004)
CMS/SC/WCASN-SC/Inf.4	5.0	Conservation Plan for the Western Population of Siberian Cranes
CMS/SC/WCASN-SC/Inf.5	5.0	Conservation Plan for the Central Population of Siberian Cranes
CMS/SC/WCASN-SC/Inf.6	5.0	Proposed Central Asian Flyway Action Plan to Conserve Migratory Waterbirds and their Habitats
CMS/SC/WCASN-SC/Inf.7	5.0	Proposals to Initially Support Implementation of the Central Asian Flyway Action Plan to Conserve Migratory Waterbirds and their Habitats: Options for Consideration
CMS/SC/WCASN-SC/Inf.8		Memorandum of Understanding concerning Conservation Measures for the Siberian Crane
CMS/SC/WCASN-SC/Inf.9 (In-session)		Provisional List of Participants



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CRITERIA AND QUALIFIERS FOR SITE SELECTION

WESTERN/CENTRAL ASIAN SITE NETWORK FOR SIBERIAN CRANE AND OTHER WATERBIRDS (WCASN-SC)

For site selection, attention will be focused on sites of importance for the conservation, recovery and re-introduction of the Siberian Crane, including sites that are also important for other migratory cranes and waterbirds.

Criterion 1 and its four temporal sub-criteria are designed to ensure that governments will select sites based on their current and past importance for Siberian Cranes.

The **Qualifiers** give an indication of the additional importance for other cranes and waterbirds of sites that have been selected primarily for their importance for Siberian Cranes. They are also important to promote, in due course, the integration of the WCASN-SC into the proposed larger waterbird site network for the Central Asia Flyway.

A. CRITERION 1: Site's Importance for Siberian Cranes

This criterion is based on the site's importance for the Siberian Crane. This is the key species targeted under the CMS Memorandum of Understanding on the Siberian Crane.

There are four supporting temporal sub-criteria listed under Criterion 1. Under the temporal sub-criteria a site's protection status can vary during the year based on which time of the year the area is used by Siberian Cranes (i.e., seasonal protection regimes). This is especially important for Central Asian wetlands that have unstable and variable water conditions.

Criterion 1 for the Siberian Crane: The site currently holds or historically held Siberian Cranes and meets the Ramsar 1% Criteria for the Siberian Crane.

Temporal Sub-criteria for the Siberian Crane: A site must meet one of the following temporal sub-criteria (listed in order of importance):

- **Sub-criterion 1.1:** Siberian Crane(s) were recorded at the site at least five times during the last 10 years. This should not include records within the same season or repeated sightings of the same individual birds.

- **Sub-criterion 1.2:** The site has held one or more Siberian Cranes during the last 50 years, but there are less than five records during the 10 last years.
- **Sub-criterion 1.3:** The site is historical habitat of the Siberian Crane, but there are less than five records during the last 50 years.
- **Sub-criterion 1.4:** There are no records of Siberian Crane at a site, but it is considered to contain appropriate habitat for the species (wide expanses of shallow water containing appropriate food resources, and with low levels of disturbance) and it is suitable for release and reintroduction projects (e.g., safety of the site is secured, a management regime is in place, etc.).

Sites that are covered by **temporal sub-criteria 1.1 and 1.2** should be included in the WCASN-SC on a **priority basis** to ensure that the sites currently used by the species are being conserved.

For sites covered by **temporal sub-criteria 1.3 and 1.4**, preference should be given to sites that indicate the additional importance under the **Qualifiers for other crane and waterbird species**, listed below.

B. *QUALIFIER 1: Site's importance for other crane species*

Qualifier 1 concerns a site's importance for other crane species. The site is important for other crane species when it is known to support a total of 25 or more migratory cranes (which can be of more than one species) at any stage of their life cycle (e.g., breeding, migration stop-over (staging), non-breeding birds (wintering), etc.).

C. *QUALIFIER 2: Site's importance for other waterbird species*

Qualifier 2 concerns a site's importance for other waterbird species. It is composed of four sub-qualifiers:

- **Sub-qualifier 2.1:** A wetland should be considered internationally important if it regularly supports 20,000 or more migratory waterbirds during migration periods.
- **Sub-qualifier 2.2:** A wetland should be considered internationally important if it regularly supports 5,000 or more migratory waterbirds or 0.25% of a migratory waterbirds population on a single count during a single migration period.
- **Sub-qualifier 2.3:** A wetland should be considered internationally important if it regularly supports 1% of the individuals in a population of one species or subspecies of migratory waterbird.
- **Sub-qualifier 2.4:** A wetland should be considered internationally important if it supports migratory waterbird species at a critical stage in their life cycles, or provides refuge during adverse conditions.

The criteria and qualifiers are adapted from selected criteria to nominate Wetlands of International Importance under the Ramsar Convention. Guidance for applying the Ramsar criteria can be found in the Convention's document: Ramsar Convention Handbook #7 Designating Ramsar Sites.¹

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¹ Ramsar Convention Secretariat 2004. Ramsar handbooks for the wise use of wetlands. 2nd Edition. Ramsar Convention Secretariat, Gland, Switzerland. Can be downloaded free from www.ramsar.org.



Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals



MEETING TO ENDORSE THE PROPOSED WESTERN/CENTRAL ASIAN SITE NETWORK FOR SIBERIAN CRANES (AND OTHER WATERBIRDS)

New Delhi, 13 June 2005

CMS/SC/WCASN-SC/Report
Annex 6

LIST OF INFORMATION FOR SITE NOMINATIONS

WESTERN/CENTRAL ASIAN SITE NETWORK FOR SIBERIAN CRANE AND OTHER WATERBIRDS (WCASN-SC)

All sites that meet the above listed criteria for Siberian Crane may be considered for nomination without regard to whether:

- a. They are currently listed as national, provincial or local nature protection areas or international important areas (under Ramsar Convention, World Heritage Convention, etc.).
- b. Constant monitoring of birds is being undertaken at the site.

To nominate a site, the following information about the site is needed:

1. Name of the site.
2. Geographic co-ordinates and a description of its geographic location, including a detailed map.
3. Jurisdiction (administrative agency responsible for site).
4. Size of area (in hectares) and description of its boundaries.
5. Physiographic description with emphasis on wetland description.
6. Ecological description (fauna and flora).
7. Description of the site designation criteria/qualifiers according to the criteria/qualifiers for nomination of sites of importance for Siberian Cranes (first level criterion), other cranes (second level qualifier) or other waterbirds (third level qualifier).
8. Nature protection status of site (the lack of any current protection status/regime does not disqualify a site for consideration for inclusion in the Network).
9. Site usage (hunting, fishing, agriculture, water usage and management and so on) and its potential impact on sites.
10. Threats to the site and its biodiversity.
11. The presence of regular monitoring of the Siberian Crane, other cranes and other waterbird species. (Although the presence of constant monitoring is not a requirement for nominating a site for inclusion in the Network).
12. Contact details for the agencies/organisations responsible for the site (ownership and management).
13. Key stakeholders.
14. Evidence of support and approval of the agency/organizations to be involved in the network. **NB:** The Secretariat will supply a generic template for a letter, which may be used for this purpose.
15. List of references of scientific sources.

NB: These nomination requirements were developed according to the Ramsar Wetland Information Sheet, with the addition of a few specific requirements concerning the Siberian Crane.



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PRELIMINARY LIST OF PRIORITY SITES FOR THE PROPOSED WESTERN/CENTRAL ASIAN SITE NETWORK FOR SIBERIAN CRANES (AND OTHER WATERBIRDS)

Afghanistan

- Ab-i-Estada
- Dashte-Nawar

Azerbaijan

- Shirvan National Park
- Kyzyl-Aghach Nature Reserve

India

- Keoladeo National Park

Iran

- Fereydoon Kenar Damgah
- Bujagh National Park

Kazakhstan

- Naurzum Lake System
- Zharsor & Urkash Lakes
- Kulykol Lake
- Tontegir & Zhanshura Lakes
- Ural River Delta

Mongolia

- Khuiten-Kurkh
- Gun galuut and Ayagiin Lakes

Pakistan No site nominations received

Russian Federation

- Kunovat Wildlife Refuge
- Konda and Aymka Rivers Basin
- Belozersky Wildlife Refuge
- Agrakhansky Wildlife Refuge

Turkmenistan

- Kelif
- Dumaly

Uzbekistan

- Termez