



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

Distribution: General
UNEP/CMS/Raptors/TAG1/3

17 January 2014

First Meeting of the Technical Advisory Group | Edinburgh, Scotland, United Kingdom, 20-23 January 2014

Priority tasks for consideration by the Interim Technical Advisory Group

Prepared by the Coordinating Unit of the Raptors MoU

Background

1. At the 1st Meeting of Signatories (MoS1) to the Raptors MoU, held in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates in December 2012, the Coordinating Unit (CU) proposed that Signatories consider establishing a Technical Advisory Group (TAG). There is no mention of a TAG in the MoU Text but the CU recommended that a specialist group be created to enhance the provision of sound scientific information and advice upon which Signatories could base their future decisions. MoS1 unanimously endorsed the proposal.
2. Terms of Reference (ToR) for TAG were adopted at MoS1 (see UNEP/CMS/Raptors/TAG1/3/Annex I) which outline the: (a) purpose and main tasks; (b) size and composition; (c) nomination and appointment of members; (d) officers; and, (e) the *modus operandi* of the TAG. There was general agreement at MoS1 that the TAG should be operated simply and economically whilst maintain its ability to be effective. To avoid delaying establishment of a TAG until MoS2, Signatories also approved a temporary mechanism whereby a Selection Panel be established to identify an Interim TAG to operate until MoS2.
3. Following MoS1, nominations for members to serve on the TAG were sought from Signatories and Co-operating Partners. Twenty four nominations were received by the deadline of 28 February 2013. The Selection Panel met and considered the nominations (see Paragraph 9 of the ToR). Subsequently, in July 2013, the CU invited 16 members to join the interim TAG – 10 Regional Representatives (comprising 2 for Asia, 3 for Africa, 3 for Europe and 2 for the Middle East and North Africa), 5 Experts and 1 representative of BirdLife International (IUCN delegated Red List Authority for birds). Signatories agreed at MoS1 that TAG members would serve in their capacity as specialist individuals, rather than as representatives of the individual Governments or organizations with which they may also be affiliated.
4. This document is based on the Annex to the TAG Terms of Reference adopted at MoS1, which contains '*Priorities for the Interim TAG until the 2nd Meeting of Signatories*'. The Annex identifies six separate activities but there is an error in the numbering used. For clarity, therefore, the CU has reproduced and renumbered the tasks below. Additional issues and potential tasks that have emerged since MoS1 are also included below.
5. The aim of this document is to act as the comprehensive list of potential work for the Interim TAG to consider, including outlining the proposed approach to be adopted to introduce each one at the First Meeting of TAG, scheduled to take place in late January 2014.

Tasks

6. The purpose of the TAG is to serve and assist the Signatories in the effective implementation of the Raptors MoU, including the associated Action Plan. MoS1 identified a range of priority tasks and activities for the TAG until MoS2. These Activities relate to: (1) improvement of legal protection; (2) protecting and/or managing important sites and flyways; (3) renewable energy, power grids and persecution, (4) raising awareness of problems faced by birds of prey (e.g. poisoning) and measure needed to conserve them; (5) monitoring bird of prey populations, carrying out conservation research and taking appropriate remedial measures; (6) supporting measures such as reporting; and (7) emerging issues and horizon scanning.

7. TAG Members are invited to review the following tasks and activities, and to work together to develop appropriate ways to complete them:

Activity 1 – MoU: Improvement of Protection

- (1) Review the content of Annex 1 (species) and Table 3 (sites) of the MoU, and in particular:
 - a) review existing and possible candidate Annex 1 species in the light of changes to their status;
 - b) review the current status of Annex 1 species placed in Category 2;
 - c) review the current status of Annex 1 species currently listed in Category 3, but which could be candidates for Category 2 on basis of declining global population trends;
 - d) following consultations with the Signatories, make recommendations as to the updating of Table 3 of the Action Plan listing internationally important sites for raptors;
 - e) review the geographic coverage of Annex 2 of the MoU;
 - f) review the definition of the term 'migratory' as used by the MoU and make recommendations; and,
 - g) develop a simple form and guidance that may be used by Signatories submitting information related to the possible change of species status in the context of the MoU and its Action Plan.

Vicky Jones (BirdLife International) will introduce this section with a short presentation on the '2012 Update of the scientific data underpinning the UNEP/CMS Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of Migratory Birds of Prey in Africa and Eurasia (Raptors MoU)'.

- (2) Consider and make recommendations on the issue of raptor taxonomy and nomenclature in relation to species listings within the MoU, having regard to CMS Resolution 10.13 and the desirability of harmonised approaches across MEAs.

Borja Heredia (CMS Secretariat) will introduce this issue with reference to the CMS Ad Hoc Meeting on Harmonization of Bird Taxonomy that took place in Formia, Italy, on 8 October 2013.

Activity 2 – Threats: Protect and/or Manage Important Sites and Flyways

- (1) Assess and review threats to Annex 1 species and make recommendations on appropriate measures to alleviate these problems.
- (2) Consider the need for guidance on species re-introduction measures specific to raptors, as well as any opportunities for international co-operation related to possible re-introduction programmes.

- (3) Assess knowledge of key breeding areas, stop-over, refuelling, bottleneck and non-breeding sites along raptor flyways and make recommendations on gaps in current information, how these might be filled, and appropriate approaches for the conservation and management of these critical areas.

Vicky Jones (BirdLife International) will continue with the presentation on the '2012 Update of the scientific data underpinning the CMS Raptors MoU', including existing knowledge of key sites along the main flyways.

Activity 3 – Threats: Renewable Energy, Power Grids and Persecution

- (1) Building on existing information concerning the negative impacts on raptors arising from collision and electrocution from power-lines (CMS Resolution 10.11): a) review and exchange information with Signatories as to good mitigation practices; and b) provide practical recommendations as to the best means of engaging with the power generation and distribution sectors to address these impacts.
- (2) Review guidance related to the mitigation of negative impacts of other energy generation sectors (e.g. wind and solar); and, a) provide a guide to available guidance, and b) make recommendations as to the need for any supplementary guidance.
- (3) Provide recommendations on approaches to tackling the issue of illegal persecution including, but not restricted to:
 - a. the value of technologies such as x-ray monitoring and electronic tracking methods as means of assessing the extent and location of persecution hotspots;
 - b. possible approaches to conflict resolution – where conflicts with other interests may be an ultimate driver for illegal killing; and,
 - c. possible approaches to addressing persecution where illegal killing may be a long-standing practice with cultural elements.

Borja Heredia (CMS Secretariat) will introduce this issue from the perspective of CMS and other initiatives relating to power grids, renewable energy and illegal persecution.

Activity 4 – Poisoning: Raise Awareness of Problems Faced by Birds of Prey and Measures Needed to Conserve Them

- (1) Contribute technical expertise on raptors and their poisoning to the work of the CMS Working Group on Poisoning (CMS Resolution 10.26).
- (2) Make recommendations on priorities for raising awareness of raptor conservation needs with: a) the public; and, b) those sectors whose activities impact on birds of prey; and how the MoU might best influence these.

Borja Heredia (CMS Secretariat) will give an update from the CMS Minimising Poisoning Working Group that was established following the 10th CMS Conference of Parties in 2011.

Activity 5 – Guidance: Monitor Bird of Prey Populations, Carry Out Conservation Research and Take Appropriate Remedial Measures

- (1) Make recommendations as to the need for common standards for methods, drawing from a review of national experiences and good practices to:
 - a. estimate the size of raptor populations;
 - b. undertake monitoring of populations and migratory patterns; and,

- c. assess the threats, current conservation actions (including existing protective designations at sites), condition of habitats, and thus consequent need for further management and protection measures at important sites.
- (2) Make recommendations as to appropriate mechanisms for the sharing of data on raptors for the better implementation of the MoU's objectives.

David Stroud (Joint Nature Conservation Committee, UK) will give a presentation on an overview of the main processes by which the UK monitors raptors, including some lessons learned.

Des Thompson (Scottish Natural Heritage) will provide insights from Scotland and then introduce Stephen Murphy (Natural England) who will give a presentation on the UK approach to monitoring of Hen Harrier populations.

Activity 6 – Reporting: Supporting Measures

- (1) Advise the MoS and CU on issues of the integration of national reporting with the MoU's strategic planning process so as to provide assessments of national implementation.

Øystein Størkersen (Norwegian Environment Agency) will give a short presentation on how Norway went about producing their National Raptor Conservation Strategy.

Borja Heredia (CMS Secretariat) will introduce this issue with a short presentation on the CMS/AEWA Online Reporting System (ORS).

Activity 7 – Additional Tasks: Emerging Issues and Horizon Scanning

- (1) Prepare a written report of TAG's activities for each session of the MoS to be submitted to the CU at least 60 days in advance of the meeting.
- (2) Prepare a project funding priority list and recommend activities for implementation of the MoU that were to be undertaken in the intersessional period.

David Stroud (UK Joint Nature Conservation Committee) will give a presentation on the approach to Horizon Scanning adopted by Ramsar.

Working Practices: Options and Ideas

8. It is for the TAG to agree its own working practices. To assist TAG members, the bullet points below summarise experiences from the Scientific and Technical Review Panel of the Ramsar Convention and the Technical Committee of the Africa–Eurasian Waterbird Agreement (AEWA) in delivering technical and scientific outputs to their respective 'parent bodies'.

9. The TAG is invited to consider how the following examples of good practice might be adapted for the delivery of its own work.

- The TAG will work primarily through email, the online WorkSpace and other electronic media, including teleconferences. Ideally, and resources permitting, a face-to-face meeting should be arranged at the beginning and end of each reporting period (triennium).
- The primary purpose of a TAG meeting at the beginning of a triennium would be to plan the approach to the delivery of the tasks requested by the MoS. To this end, experience has shown the value of using a standard format proforma to outline the approach and timescale

for each task. A suggested format for a TAG Task Tracking Document (TTD) is given in the Annex II, although there may be additional elements of information that would be of value to record in the specific context of the TAG's work. The pro-forma is designed as a tool to assist planning and can be used flexibly, either covering single tasks or groups of tasks that are similar. In addition, a summary WorkPlan may be considered valuable in enabling effective management and oversight by the Chair of the TAG, supported by the Coordinating Unit.

- TAG outputs could potentially be aimed at one or more of various different audiences *e.g.* Government policy makers; protected area site managers; technical advisors to government; stakeholders [specify who/which]; those monitoring or recording raptors, *etc.* It is critical that the TAG itself understands at which specific audience(s) each task is aimed so as to ensure the highest possible uptake of the work concerned. This is a key element included in the planning pro-forma.
- In planning work for each task (above), there is merit in thinking about the potential for 'Skype' or other conference calls to allow discussion of a task at appropriate intervals. Such contacts can be particularly helpful in maintaining momentum of engagement and support between TAG members.
- For each task, there is value in nominating a TAG member with lead responsibility (under the leadership of the TAG Chair) to ensure co-ordination of work to deliver the outputs in a timely manner.
- TAG members will have different scientific, policy and geographical expertise and so not all are likely to be in a position to contribute to the delivery of all tasks. There may be merit in considering creating one or more TAG Working Groups responsible for the primary work to deliver a cluster of tasks that are conceptually or otherwise similar. However, the TAG as a whole remains responsible for all tasks and will be expected to agree the final products and reports for submission to the MoS.
- The TAG should identify any tasks which – in its opinion – are of a complexity and/or size that it would be unable to progress using its own resources. For such tasks, it may be necessary to contract out some or all of the work, but of course this will always be resource dependent. For such out-sourced tasks, the role of the TAG would be to act as a review group and to ensure that the required outputs are completed within agreed deadlines.
- Whilst the role of the TAG is to deliver the tasks requested of it by the MoS, its work is not limited to these tasks. It has a broader remit to bring other urgent issues to the attention of the MoS that are relevant to the effective implementation of the Raptors MoU and its Action Plan. To this end, it may be useful to periodically undertake a 'horizon scanning exercise' to identify other priority conservation issues for which scientific and technical advice could be valuable.
- There is also potential value in the TAG itself providing suggested priorities for future work to the MoS for discussion and endorsement.

Action requested:

The TAG is invited to review each of the above tasks, keeping in mind the suggested approaches presented above, and to develop an over-arching WorkPlan and a Task Tracking Document for each task to be undertaken before the 2nd Meeting of Signatories (MoS2), scheduled in late 2015.