



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

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**Saker Falcon Task Force**  
**Stakeholders' Action Planning Workshop**  
**Yas Island Rotana Hotel, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates**  
**9-11 September 2013**

**1. Opening of the Workshop**

1. Lyle Glowka, the Executive Coordinator of the CMS Office - Abu Dhabi opened the Workshop welcoming participants (see Annex I) and reminding them that the 10<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties to CMS had established the Saker Falcon Task Force (STF) to help implement CMS Resolution 10.28 and to develop a Global Action Plan for the species. The Coordinating Unit of the Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of Migratory Birds of Prey in Africa and Eurasia (Raptors MoU) based in Abu Dhabi had led the organization of the Task Force and the current meeting.
2. The Workshop was intended to make progress on the elaboration of the Saker Falcon Global Action Plan (SakerGAP) and had brought together representatives from CMS Parties and non-Parties, MoU Signatories, Range States of the species and other stakeholders.
3. Mr Glowka expressed his thanks to the Environment Agency - Abu Dhabi (EAD) for its generous support of the CMS Office. He mentioned in particular the Managing Director, H.E. Mohammed Ahmed Al Bowardi; the Secretary General of EAD, H.E. Razan Khalifa Al Mubarak; and Ms Shaikha Al Dhaheri, the Executive Director of Terrestrial and Marine Biodiversity Sector.
4. There followed a short film illustrating the work of the Mohamed Bin Zayed Species Conservation Fund, explaining its work and philosophy and including interviews with conservationists working on projects supported by the Fund. Mr Glowka remarked on the considerable overlap between species benefitting from these projects and those listed on the CMS Appendices.
5. In his welcoming address, H.E. Mohammed Ahmed Al Bowardi explained that the Saker Falcon was more than just a bird; it was a national emblem and an intrinsic part of Arabian culture. Ensuring the species' survival would require a collective response, and the United Arab Emirates had shown its commitment over the years by allocating large amounts of funds to conservation projects.
6. The current Workshop needed to address a number of difficult issues and face daunting challenges; the task was far from easy. Threats included electrocution, habitat loss, reduced availability of prey and illegal trapping.
7. In conclusion, His Excellency thanked participants for their engagement and for their contribution to the noble cause of Saker Falcon conservation.



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8. Mr Glowka explained that Saudi Arabia had been a Party to CMS since 1991 and had taken a leading interest in many issues such as developing the draft Agreement for the Houbara Bustard. The Saudi Wildlife Authority had provided support to the Saker Falcon Task Force. The Secretary General of the Saudi Wildlife Authority, His Royal Highness Prince Bandar Bin Saud Bin Mohammed Bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, was unable to be present in person but had sent a video message.
9. H.R.H. Prince Bandar shared his thoughts which he said came from the heart of a passionate Arabian falconer. The relationship between humans and this species had a long history, associated with love and honour, with the Saker Falcon seen as a noble warrior. He commended Range States and stakeholders for all the work that they had already done but urged them to do more. A practical Action Plan was required to ensure the survival of the species; one that we could not afford to lose. He expressed his thanks to the United Arab Emirates, the team at the CMS Office - Abu Dhabi and the Saker Falcon Task Force.
10. Mr Glowka asked the Saudi delegation to convey the meeting's thanks to H.R.H. Prince Bandar.
11. Mr Glowka explained that CITES and CMS had many species in common on their Annexes and Appendices, but the Conventions adopted different approaches reflecting their different mandates, one dealing with international trade and the other with conservation. The two Conventions had a long history of collaborating on the practical implementation of international conservation policy. One example was the Saiga Antelope, and another was the Saker Falcon. Mr Glowka was pleased to note the presence Tom de Meulenaer from the CITES Secretariat at the Workshop; Secretary-General John Scanlon was unable to participate in person, but he too had sent a video message.
12. Mr Scanlon said that CITES had been aware of the conservation status of the Saker Falcon for many years and the species was listed on Annex II meaning that trade while legal was strictly monitored. The taking of birds had to be both legal and sustainable and all international trade was to be reported to CITES.
13. There were concerns about the sustainability of trade at current levels and doubts about some claims relating to falcons being bred in captivity. Efforts on the part of countries such as the United Arab Emirates to develop new verification schemes and passports were commendable.
14. Mr Scanlon described the threats to the species across its vast range which encompassed parts of Europe, Africa and Asia. Trade was only one of the issues, and here CITES would play its full part and stood ready to collaborate with CMS, CBD and others in developing a holistic Action Plan that took account of the different circumstances of the Range States and the different nature of the various populations of the species, some of which were migratory and others sedentary.
15. Bradnee Chambers, the new Executive Secretary of CMS, was also unable to attend the Workshop, but his good wishes to the delegates were contained in a video message. He stressed the importance of conserving a species that was of great cultural significance and called upon the participants of the workshop to work together in a spirit of constructive cooperation to find solutions acceptable to all.
16. Mr Glowka told the Workshop that the CMS Office - Abu Dhabi was the largest outposted presence of the Convention with responsibility not only for the Raptors MoU but also for Dugongs. He welcomed his colleagues, Donna Kwan and Jillian Grayson, as well as CMS Scientific Council Chair, Fernando Spina, to the meeting.
17. Mr Glowka introduced Colin Galbraith, a previous Chair of the CMS Scientific Council, now COP-Appointed Councillor for Climate Change and the Chair of the Saker Falcon Task Force, who would preside over the rest of the Workshop.

## **2. Adoption of the Agenda**

18. The Chair referred participants to the draft Agenda which had been circulated and invited comments. There being none, the Chair declared the Agenda adopted as presented. The Agenda is reproduced as Annex II to this report.

## **3. Introduction**

### **3.1 Saker Falcon Task Force**

19. Mr Galbraith made a presentation describing the background and activities to date of the Saker Falcon Task Force (STF). A proposal had been submitted to the CMS COP in Rome in 2008 to list the Saker Falcon on Appendix I; no consensus was found then, but the species (with the exception of the Mongolian population) was added to Appendix I at COP10 in Bergen in 2011. The STF had been established by a Resolution adopted at COP10, with one of its most important assignments being to bring together as wide a range of stakeholders as possible to develop a workable Global Action Plan.

20. The STF had held its first meeting in March 2012 and had made a good start. A number of key issues had been identified: population statistics, surveys and monitoring, conservation action, sustainable use, research and engagement. An STF Work Plan covering 2012–2014 had been agreed and was now being implemented.

21. The species had a large range covering many countries on three continents; it was therefore a migratory species whose circumstances invited intervention by CMS, the key global conservation treaty dealing with the conservation of the species.

22. The STF's main objective was to elaborate a holistic Global Action Plan (the SakerGAP), taking account of geography, seasons and a wide range of issues. A first draft had been prepared by András Kovács, and the Workshop provided all participants a real opportunity to make a contribution and influence the final product. It was important that the SakerGAP was both based on sound science, met general acceptance among stakeholders and formed the basis for concrete actions to ensure healthy and self-sustaining wild populations of Saker Falcons.

23. The STF had established a number of Working Groups to deal with the Objectives set out in its WorkPlan. Importantly, activities did not have to be delayed while awaiting the adoption of the Action Plan and the Working Groups had been charged with monitoring progress.

24. Explaining the process, Mr Galbraith said that the Workshop would undertake an initial review of the draft SakerGAP; a revised version would be prepared by András Kovács and circulated to the STF for clearance before it was released for wider review. The STF would have the opportunity of signing off the final draft including any changes resulting from the wider consultation before the SakerGAP was sent to the CMS Scientific Council in mid-2014 and to the CMS COP later that year for adoption.

25. Mr Galbraith also thanked those that had provided resources to the STF and for the Workshop. These included Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, ENRTP Strategic Cooperation Agreement (SCA) between the European Commission (DG Environment) and UNEP, CMS Parties and CITES. The European Commission was taking a keen interest in the STF as it too was concerned with Saker Falcon conservation. Although the Commission was not represented at the Workshop, a number of EU Member States were. Mr Galbraith noted that the European Commission had written to the Coordinating Unit of the Raptor MoU in advance of the workshop to stress its support for the work of the STF, noting also that the Saker Falcon was listed on Annex 1 of the EC Birds Directive and reaffirming its support for listing the species on Appendix I of CMS. The Commission highlighted the importance of developing an internationally coordinated response and of establishing specific and

feasible conservation targets and measurable objectives for the recovery of the species. The Commission also noted also that adaptive management was a central concept of the CBD ecosystem approach and hence CMS efforts in relation to the Saker Falcon represented best practice in enhancing international cooperation among the Parties and in promoting synergies among the relevant environmental agreements.

### **3.2 CMS Raptors MoU**

26. Nick P. Williams of the Coordinating Unit presented background information on the Raptors MoU, with particular attention to the Saker Falcon, a spectacular species, many individuals of which were currently migrating across the Arabian Peninsula.

27. The Raptors MoU had been concluded under the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS), an international treaty which had been signed in 1979 and entered into force in 1983. Administered by UNEP, it was one of six MEAs in the Biodiversity Liaison Group (BLG), the others being CBD, CITES, the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources, the Ramsar Convention and the World Heritage Convention.

28. CMS had 119 Parties and was a framework convention that gave rise to three types of instrument – legally-binding Agreements, less formal MoUs and Action Plans. The headquarters of CMS were in Bonn, and there were staff out-posted in Washington D.C., Bangkok and Abu Dhabi.

29. The idea of a Raptor MoU had first arisen in 2002. It took six years for the MoU to “incubate and hatch”. The text of the instrument was relatively short at six pages, excluding the annexes which listed the 76 species covered (dividing them into three categories, depending on their conservation status) and identified a number of key sites. The Saker Falcon, along with the Egyptian Vulture and Sooty Falcon, was a species identified as being in need of particular attention. The CMS COP in 2011 had established the STF and the Coordinating Unit of the Raptors MoU had been charged with developing and supporting it. Mr Williams thanked all the members for their enthusiastic and creative participation.

30. Mr Williams highlighted the need for national and regional strategies to protect raptor species, an element of which could be Action Plans for particular species or species groups. These could be made part of National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) adopted to implement CBD. Legal protection had to be improved and threats to the birds mitigated. Foremost among these were electrocution, collisions with man-made structures and poisoning – both direct and indirect. In recent years almost 100 million vultures had died in India as a result of the use of pharmaceutical veterinary drugs and it had been estimated that 35,000 human lives had been lost as a result due to rabies, as feral dogs had replaced vultures as scavengers feeding on carcasses.

31. The MoU highlighted the need to raise public awareness. This was particularly important as the world’s population became more urban and lost its rural links and understanding of the natural world.

32. An International Single Species Action Plan (ISSAP) was in preparation for the Sooty Falcon. Little was known of the species’ migration or winter ecology but it had been established that it was in decline. A consultant had been appointed to lead the process and a Workshop was being planned. The Egyptian Vulture was also in decline and the Coordinating Unit was working with the Bulgarian BirdLife partner on fieldwork capacity building in north-east Africa.

33. The first Meeting of the Signatories to the Raptor MoU had taken place in December 2012, at which a Technical Advisory Group (TAG) had been established.

34. The Coordinating Unit was actively engaged in the promotion of the MoU, and these efforts had born fruit with the decision of Egypt to sign. Egypt was of great geographic importance lying between the Great Rift Valley and the breeding areas in Central Asia of many important species. Mr Williams invited Ms Fatma Abou Shouk, the Chief Executive Officer of the Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency to sign the MoU. The inclusion of Egypt brought the number of Signatories to the MoU to 45. In her speech, Ms Abou Shouk said it was a privilege to attend the meeting on behalf of her country and demonstrate its commitment to raptor conservation. She also mentioned the importance of the UNDP/GEF/BirdLife Migratory Soaring Birds Project to Egypt.

### **3.3. The Saker Falcon In Saudi Arabia: status and conservation from a Saudi perspective**

35. The Chair invited Mr. Mohammed Shobrak of Taif University, Saudi Arabia to give a presentation. Mr Shobrak explained the importance of the Saker Falcon to Saudi Arabia, the conservation status of the bird in the country and measures taken to afford it legal protection.

36. Falconry was mentioned in the Holy Koran, the practice had been part of Arab culture for over 2,500 years and was recognized as part of world heritage by UNESCO. Arab poets had composed verses praising the Saker Falcon, which was much liked by falconers because of its great hunting prowess and ability to adapt to the harsh desert environment. Falconry was practiced by all social classes and the requisite skills were passed from generation to generation. Traditionally the birds were released after the hunting season, and this was still the case for Barbary Falcons but not for Sakers.

37. Saudi Arabia was a Party to CBD, which was implemented in the country through a Royal Decree. The National Biodiversity Strategy had been adopted in 2008 and stakeholder workshops organized in 2012.

38. Saudi Arabia had also signed CITES after promulgation of a Royal Decree. The number of staff in the department implementing the Convention had risen from one to twenty-one, with some based at the head office and others at the main points of entry into the country. Saudi Arabia needed to build capacity, enhance international cooperation, introduce customs coding for animals and establish quarantine and rescue centres as well as improving public awareness.

39. With regard to CMS, Saudi Arabia had signed in 1990 and the Convention had entered into effect in the country in 1991. The Saudi Wildlife Authorities worked closely with the CMS Secretariat, BirdLife International and the IUCN to implement Resolution 10.28 and was actively engaged in the STF.

40. The main threats facing the Saker Falcon in the country were habitat loss and overgrazing; infrastructure development; unsustainable levels of trapping and trade; electrocution on medium voltage power lines; extreme weather; and genetic introgression in captive stocks because of inbreeding. The majority of breeding centres were obtaining their stock from the wild, and it was imperative to stop the illegal taking of chicks and eggs from nests.

41. Mr Shobrak concluded his remarks by stating that the success of the STF process would depend on the full engagement of all partners, adequate funding, finding credible solutions and building trust among the members. With proper awareness raising and patience, the SakerGAP would work.

### **3.4 The Saker Falcon in Trade: a Case Study**

42. Tom de Meulenaer presented the experiences of the CITES Secretariat dealing with the international trade in falcons, with particular reference to Sakers.

43. The purpose of CITES was to ensure that any international trade in wild fauna and flora was sustainable. The Convention had 178 Parties with another 6 in the process of acceding. It listed 35,000 species, mainly plants, on three Annexes. Appendix I which prohibited international trade contained six populations of falcons. The remaining falcons were on Appendix II which permitted trade but regulated it through certification and permits for import, export and re-export. This trade must relate to legal specimens and must not be detrimental to the species.

44. Exemptions were allowed where the management authority was satisfied that the specimen was captive-bred, but this led to one of the most common frauds perpetrated. Personally owned animals that frequently crossed frontiers could be issued with a passport. The animals needed to be clearly marked and the passports had to be renewed every three years.

45. With regard to the import and export of live Saker Falcons, permits indicated that trade peaked in 2006. The species was undergoing a decline in the wild and numbers of captive-bred animals had increased. The main countries of origin for captive-bred birds were Russia, Germany, Kazakhstan, Austria and the United Kingdom.

46. CITES was concerned that national management authorities were issuing permits too frequently and possibly against conservation advice. Illegal and unreported trade was also thought to be a problem, leading to a review of significant trade in 2003, in part instigated by information received from the United Arab Emirates. Some 47 Range States were consulted in 2004-5, resulting in some being identified as being of “urgent concern” and urged to suspend trade and control breeding centres more closely. Mongolia implemented the prescribed measures and was consequently allowed an annual export quota of 300 birds from 2009. Zero quotas were set for Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, the Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

47. To address illegal trade CITES established a Working Group in 2004 led by the United Arab Emirates. The International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime (ICWC) was established by CITES, Interpol, UNODC, the World Bank and the Customs Union in 2011 and regional Wildlife Enforcement Networks (WENs) were set up in the European Union and South and South-East Asia.

48. The SakerGAP would be a vital tool in addressing the multitude of threats facing the Saker Falcon and it was important to have all the main players on board, including CMS, CITES and CBD. CITES and CMS were already cooperating and had a joint work programme. The main activities for CITES were capacity building and providing tool kits to help enforce the Convention.

#### **4 Presentations from the STF Work Plan Objective Working Groups**

##### **4.1 Objective 4 Working Group – International Policy and Legislation**

49. András Kovács presented a summary of current international policies and legislation, pointing out that the Saker Falcon was listed under CMS, CITES, the Bern Convention and the EU Birds Directive and was covered by the CBD Strategic Plan 2011-2020. In many Range States the species enjoyed strict protection (where disturbance, taking and killing were prohibited) and in others it had at least some protection. The IUCN categorized the Saker Falcon as “globally endangered”. There being various legal frameworks under which the species was protected, there was scope for duplication, omissions and contradictions, and one role that the STF could play was by building linkages between the different instruments and between the various levels of governance. One way of achieving this was enhancing the cooperative implementation of MEAs where their interests coincided. Using such opportunities opened the possibility of improving global enforcement of MEAs, reducing illegal activities and promoting legal, sustainable use.



## 4.2 Objective 6 Working Group – Knowledge Gaps

50. Leon Bennun presented the report on behalf of the Knowledge Gaps Working Group. It was recognized that there was a great deal still to be learned about the Saker Falcon. Its range was vast and covered a great many countries, its favoured habitat was often in remote and inhospitable places and there was no long-standing history of monitoring to fall back on. The listing on Appendix I of CMS committed Party Range States to conserving and restoring the birds' habitats.

51. There was a lack of knowledge on the species' distribution, numbers, population trends, ecological needs and which populations migrated and where they spent the winter. Questions arising from field research included the extent of the impact on the species of trapping and how this affected gender ratios and age structures; what the migration routes were; what the survival rates were and how these were linked to the availability of food and habitat. Power lines, climate change and the loss of lowland grasslands were all thought to be contributing the species' decline as was genetic degradation of wild populations through hybridization.

52. In terms of management and policy, there were questions over the costs and benefits of retaining grassland habitats in the face of other pressures; how effective protected areas were, and how best to maximize the conservation benefits they brought. Consideration should be given to how best to implement restoration schemes: in which countries would they be most appropriate and what methodology should be used (artificial nests were one option). The question of harvesting wild populations had to be addressed, and a role found for falconers in establishing legal supply chains. The vast geographic areas involved posed challenges to policing.

53. Comments from the floor included the need to quantify the threat posed by poisoning and the need to verify figures regarding the numbers taken from the wild, which some participants felt were rather exaggerated. It was agreed that data needed to be checked vigorously and impartially.

## 4.3 Objective 7 Working Group – Sustainable Use

54. Colin Galbraith presented the report on behalf of this large Working Group which had met by teleconference.

55. The Saker Falcon posed the classic conservation dilemma of a species, the use of which was entrenched in culture. However, there were parts of the species' range where such use was not so entrenched. It was clear from the discussion at COP9 that a holistic approach was necessary, and COP10 had established the STF to realize this aim. The cooperation between CMS and CITES, with the former dealing with conservation and the latter with trade, was helping in the discussion on sustainable use.

56. Key questions that the Working Group was addressing arising from a modeling contract issued on behalf of the STF were ascertaining what governance structures were needed, identifying the main players to implement the SakerGAP once it was in place and how it would be funded. The Saker Falcon was already subject to a number of international instruments, all with reporting requirements, so methods would need to cater for these obligations and for estimating populations and monitoring take from the wild.

57. With regard to techniques employed in the field, the question of where and when birds could be taken had to be answered. Generally, practical policies for regulating sustainable use were necessary, not just theories. Consideration had to be given to how flexible and adaptable the system could be.

58. Mr Galbraith stressed that all the options were still open, so stakeholders were still able to influence the outcomes, but he noted that decisions should be based on sound scientific information.

59. Mr Sulayem asked about the future of the STF. Mr Galbraith agreed that it would be helpful to have a clear indication of whether Parties wanted the STF to continue and how its role would change when the time came to implement the SakerGAP.

#### **4.4 Objective 8 Working Group – Fieldwork**

60. Fernando Spina, Chair of the CMS Scientific Council reported on behalf of the Fieldwork Working Group. He said that there were many gaps to fill, but also large quantities of data were being collected worldwide by different organizations, and it would be helpful if they could use standard procedures. However, it seemed that large areas of the Saker's range were not being covered by fieldwork, and these might be vital for the species' survival, so information about them could be important for modeling for sustainable use.

61. China and the Russian Federation had been identified as countries critical for fieldwork; Hungary and Kazakhstan were high priority.

62. A questionnaire had been circulated and the methodologies used in different countries compared. There were some common elements: visiting known nesting sites, checking on nest occupancy and brood sizes. There were, however, different regulations governing interaction with birds and methodologies for tagging and identifying individuals.

63. It was an established fact that the population of Saker Falcon was not a single coherent entity but was very fragmented. More accurate mapping was needed to ascertain the full range of the species, but given the areas involved monitoring the entire population would be unfeasible, so representative sampling would have to be carried out. Help should be provided to those countries where no monitoring was being done.

64. EURING could provide records of live and dead recoveries and Wetlands International had a network of people to carry out counts. It was noted that one priority was to build up a databank of DNA samples.

65. Comments from the floor included the fact that initiatives undertaken in Qatar had not been mentioned. Mr Spina said that the report was based on questionnaires returned and some were still outstanding. Any further data received could be included and countries that had not returned their forms, especially passage and wintering Range States were encouraged to do so.

66. Nick Fox said that International Wildlife Consultants had standardized its fieldwork protocols accommodating different languages. He concurred that estimating population sizes and trends would have to be done by sampling.

#### **4.5 Ecological and Socio-Economic Modelling – Results of a recent Study**

67. Robert Kenward gave the report on modeling acknowledging the contribution of Mr Monif al Rashidi.

68. In order to develop demographic models across the Saker Falcon's entire range, it was necessary to use the best available evidence of population dynamics and to identify the main parameters, for which the highest quality data would be required. To maximize transparency data was presented using Excel spreadsheets, with which most people were familiar.

69. In the discussion, comments were made on the apparent lower rates of breeding in Europe compared with Central Asia. The Saker Falcon was a fecund species with broods of five not being unusual, and satellite tagging undertaken in Europe suggested that survival rates were higher for



birds once they had reached nine months. The impact on populations was worst when adult birds were taken, as they could be compared with the “capital” while juveniles were the “interest”. Data from Hungary indicated that the proportion of the population that was non-breeding was higher than Central Asia.

70. On socio-economics, Monif al Rashidi, Mohammed Shobrak and Mohammad Bin Al Khathlan had contacted falconers in Saudi Arabia and their findings were that of the birds kept 52 per cent had been taken from the wild and 8 per cent were hybrids. On average birds were kept for four years and then sold, and a high percentage had been micro-chipped by falcon hospitals. It had been found that having ready access to wild birds reduced the numbers of hybrids. In moulting sheds, as many as 75 per cent of the birds were hybrids but these installations were used mainly by people that kept large numbers of falcons.

71. Trappers themselves and falcon hospitals would be the best source of information regarding the level of trapping. Genetics while not necessarily being helpful in identifying which population a bird came from, could contribute to a system of tamper-proof animal passports (a feather could be deposited when the passport was issued so that the DNA could be checked, if needed).

72. Mr Ghanim Alboloushi said that the large network of clubs and societies in Qatar could be used to obtain information. Ms Shaikha Al Dhaheri queried a suggestion made that trappers could be rewarded for their cooperation; Mr Kenward replied that “rewards” did not necessarily have to be financial, and “citizen science” could be extremely effective, especially where well organized associations existed such as Qatar, where the next IAF Festival would be held, and Saudi Arabia.

## 5 Identification of expectations and issues

73. The Chair conducted a *tour de table* asking participants for their expectations for the results from the Workshop.

74. Nick Fox said that electrocution was an emerging issue. Most of the focus regarding legislation was on trade, but utility companies should be required to take mitigating measures. Trade, regardless of whether it was legal or illegal was driven by supply and demand. When buyers in one country were prepared to pay the right price, suppliers in the country of origin would provide the merchandise. Females were in greater demand than males and demand could be met by captive-bred birds. He also expressed doubts about the effectiveness of the CITES permit scheme, saying he had rarely come across certificates. Janusz Sielicki urged that falconers be brought on board. They were well organized and easy to contact as their associations’ details were available on the web. Margit Müller said that laws were in place but not often properly enforced; public attitudes had to be changed. Some falconers in any case preferred captive-bred birds.

75. Mr Ghanim Alboloushi stressed the importance of sustainable use and recognizing the cultural significance of falconry in Arabian society, while devising policies to prevent the species’ extinction in the wild. Mr Sulayem said after careful review of the effects of taking eggs and chicks from nests, it was clear that there had been a negative impact on Saker populations. Gamal Madani said raising awareness and improving legislation were priorities. Integration of conservation work directed at the Saker into NBSAPs was also important. Asgedom Kahsay Gebretensae said attention should be paid to wintering areas. Mohamed Shobrak stressed that the Action Plan would gain momentum if activities that would bear fruit quickly were undertaken and the STF should seek some “quick wins”. Mátyás Prommer said that help should be sought through EU agri-environmental schemes for the protection of landscape and habitats; this would lead to the need to engage local communities. Dimitar Gradinarov raised the issue of conflicts with pigeon fanciers and the direct poisoning of raptors. Jelena Kralj said that finding a balance between allowing long-standing customs to continue where falconry was widely practised and not encouraging the taking of specimens where it was currently not happening was crucial. This would mean identifying different recommendations for

different countries. Umeed Khalid advocated devising population modeling methods to calculate the Saker numbers in breeding states. Suresh Ramani Kumar said that India had a small wintering population which had fallen dramatically from historic levels. The changes in habitat that were contributing to the decline should be addressed. Andrew Dixon recommended that an assessment be made of the factors causing the Saker Falcon's decline, with particular emphasis on the Russian Federation and Kazakhstan. The causes of mortality should be examined to ascertain whether they were having an impact on Saker populations; the losses to power lines and trade might not be detrimental to the species, for example. Mohammad Sulayem wanted to counter any impression that progress was not being made; the Working Groups had made a good start. He thought that a review mechanism should be incorporated into the SakerGAP, suggesting three to four years, as a ten-year interval was too long. He also said that consideration should be given to reviewing the Appendix I listing of the Saker Falcon on CMS.

76. In summarizing the Chair said that the main issues appeared to be: for utility companies to take action to prevent electrocution; to acquire a better understanding trade dynamics; the potential role of captive breeding; the effectiveness of trade quotas; to change mindsets and this would require adopting a range of educational techniques; improving habitat management; engaging local communities; promoting sustainable use; and examining legislation – ensuring that appropriate laws were on the statute book, that were understood, respected and enforced. It would be a powerful message to CMS and beyond, if the STF was solidly behind the draft SakerGAP.

## **6. Introduction to the workshop**

77. The Chair introduced Boris Barov of BirdLife Europe whose current work was to maximize the biodiversity benefits of cooperating with cement companies and who was to act as facilitator of the Workshop. Mr Barov said his main task was to help the participants contribute actively to the process and the format should enable stakeholders to obtain insights into the views of other participants.

## **7. STF Guiding Principles and Workshop Methodology**

78. Mr Barov set out the four pillars that would contribute to the successful recovery of the Saker Falcon: information, conservation, sustainable use and adaptive management. Setting priorities, identifying goals, deploying resources effectively and thorough planning were also key elements. Clear targets to help track progress, capacity building, coordination and seeking synergies with other conservation programmes (for instance, in Kazakhstan Saiga conservation efforts were taking place in habitats used by Saker Falcons) would also contribute.

79. Mr Barov then explained how the Workshop would be conducted. It would rely on those attending to participate actively, with an open mind and being sensitive to the viewpoints of others. The aim was to analyse and solve problems, by understanding and without criticizing other stakeholders; in this way “win-win” solutions could be found. There would be plenary sessions and a number of break-out groups arranged according to geographic regions: the eastern breeding range; the western breeding range; passage countries and the wintering range; these would operate using “brainstorming” and other participatory techniques, and would be led by group facilitators. Each group should also appoint a rapporteur to report findings back to the plenary.

## **8. Review of available biological information, including national data**

80. András Kovács requested that any further information to be included in the next draft of the SakerGAP be sent to him. The current draft had been based largely on the European International Action Plan (Nagy and Demeter, 2006), with updates, corrections and additions to take account of the range outside Europe. Distinctions had been made between international, regional and local data.

81. Biological information fell into a number of categories: physical description; taxonomy, distribution, size of breeding population, population trends, habitat preferences and prey.

82. Males and females were similar in colour and size, although females were 15 per cent larger. Saker Falcons preferred dry habitats which resulted in them being the favoured species for falconry in desert regions. More females were used in falconry and more females tended to fall victim to electrocution due to their larger size.

83. Mr Kovács said that the Saker was a polytypic species, with two sub-species recognized: *Falco cherrug cherrug* and *Falco cherrug milvipes*. Andrew Dixon however disagreed saying it was polymorphic not polytypic, as there was no geographical distinction between the two supposed subspecies. The matter was also complicated by hybridization. Robert Kenward agreed with Mr Dixon, saying there were different gene frequencies in different areas, but the variation was not sufficient to distinguish two sub-species. He also said that the effect on populations of more females being trapped was not significant; modeling was based on the rarer gender.

84. Ms Müller commented on hybrids. Those that escaped (which did not happen often) did not survive long in the wild, not because of the harsh climate but because they were not attuned to fend for themselves. Mr Dixon added that in hybrids, it was the females that experienced fertility problems. There were however a few confirmed cases of wild Saker Falcons breeding with hybrids in Hungary and Slovakia.

85. A map showing the distribution of the Saker Falcon distinguishing between resident, breeding and non-breeding populations and another depicting the ranges of the two supposed sub-species were projected on screen, leading to a number of comments and requests for clarifications (the breeding range in China was, it was suggested, incorrectly presented and there appeared to be an area in central Turkey with a resident population).

86. With regard to the current size and trends for the breeding population, there was little certainty with no reliable figures for historic or present population levels. Estimates for 1990 fell within a range of 17,400 to 28,800. In 2010 estimates were between 6,400 and 15,400, indicating a possible 47 per cent decline between these two time periods.

87. A map of central and eastern Europe showing latest available population estimates for the five sub-populations (Hungary, Bulgaria, southern Ukraine, Turkey and the Russian Federation) was shown. The Hungarian population was the core population in Europe and had undergone a significant increase. Serbia on the other hand had seen a sharp decline, while Bulgaria had seen a small decline and no current evidence of breeding. There were 300 pairs in Ukraine and 20 in European Russia and a miniscule population in Georgia. The figures available for Turkey showed great uncertainties. In Asia, there were a few thousand pairs in the Chinese breeding grounds, and in Russia, and in other countries, there were a few hundred whilst in India possibly just ten pairs. Across the whole range, there were significant gaps in data. Mr Sulayem thought that the estimates for the populations in Europe and Asia had been calculated differently, but Mr Kovács said that the same methodology had been used. Mr Sulayem also questioned the boundaries shown for the different populations. Ghanim Alboloushi asked how the birds were counted in the wild; this might be easy in small countries with small populations. In countries such as Mongolia, counts were based on sampling. Mr Dixon said that the figures for Asian countries were essentially based on guesswork, and he suggested that it would be more accurate to say that the population trend in China was unknown rather than declining moderately.

88. Mohammed Shobrak said that with the possibility of releasing captive-bred birds into the wild, it would be helpful to have an idea of the number of Sakers being held in captivity. Slobodan Puzovic gave some information on the population in Serbia, estimated now to be between 25 and 40

breeding pairs; it had been 50 pairs at the end of the last century. Complex factors were in play but persecution by pigeon fanciers was one of them.

89. Mr Kovács noted that the assessment of the Saker Falcon's conservation status was based on incomplete data. He also asked for further information on the species' distribution outside of the breeding season. European and Asia breeding adults tended to be sedentary while juveniles were nomadic or migratory.

90. With regard to habitat, Umeed Khalid asked whether the birds' preferences varied through the seasons. Mr Puzovic stated that in Serbia 95 per cent of the bird's population were found on arable and agricultural land, mostly outside protected areas. Mátyás Prommer said that in Europe the birds were seldom found in mountains or extended forests; they mainly frequented plateaus and open grassland plains.

91. The birds' hunting strategies varied in accordance with the target prey. Sakers mainly fed on rodents, small birds and some game birds. Mr Prommer added that insects could also make up part of their diet, particularly in the wintering areas in Africa.

92. Sakers did not build their own nests but used those of other species. They preferred nests located on ledges. Most Sakers reached sexual maturity at 21 months (the beginning of the third calendar year) and clutches were typically made up of three to five eggs.

93. With regard to survival and productivity, the estimated time span for a generation (the average age of the breeding cohort) was 6.4 years. Survival rates at 0-9 months were 50 per cent, rising to 65 per cent at 10-21 months and 80 per cent at 12 months after fledging.

94. More information was required with respect to the species' distribution, population size and trends and ecological questions such as migration routes and wintering grounds.

95. Threats had been scored with regard to their importance with factors likely to cause very rapid declines (greater than 30 per cent over 10 years) categorized as critical and rapid declines (20-30 per cent over a similar period) as high. Lack of concrete data meant that the level of threat was speculative in many cases. Some threats were global, others regional or local, and some were specific to particular parts of the range (breeding sites, passage sites or wintering grounds).

96. In Range States with fewer than 50 pairs, electrocution, unsustainable trapping and trade, conversion of grasslands into arable land, decreasing numbers of grazing stock, overgrazing, pesticides, infrastructure development, collisions with man-made structures and extreme weather were identified as important threats. In Range States with more than 50 known breeding pairs, tree felling, illegal shooting, illegal taking of eggs or chicks, collapsing nests, disturbance, climate change and desertification and urbanization headed the list of threats.

## **9. Evaluation of existing conservation actions at national and international levels, including an assessment of their success**

97. The Facilitator introduced the next item reviewing existing actions. He was aware of a number of projects under the EC LIFE funding stream in Europe and others in the eastern part of the range, where the population was greatest. It was important to see what actions were being undertaken, by whom and in what locations, how successful these activities were proving to be and what factors contributed to their success or failure.

## 9.1 Introduction: summary of existing conservation actions

98. András Kovács said that the purpose of conservation actions was to increase survival rates of all age groups, increase 'resources' (nests, mates, food and habitat) and to increase knowledge and public awareness. Projects were divided between *in situ* activities including fieldwork (of which there were 17 in the overview) and *ex situ* activities including policy development and work in falcon hospitals (of which there were 24). As a summary three conservation actions were highlighted as highly effective throughout the range of the Saker Falcon: modification of existing medium-voltage powerlines or establishing bird friendly powerlines to decrease the impact of electrocution on Saker Falcon populations; provision of artificial nest boxes and reinforce natural nests and satellite or VHF tracking to study habitat use, dispersion and migration pattern.

99. Mohammad Sulayem pointed out that reintroduction and releases schemes from Saudi Arabia and the UAE had not been mentioned in the overview. Mr Kovács said that the summary table included reference only to projects which had proved to be successful throughout the entire range of the Saker falcon. Boris Barov asked whether the results of the Saudi and Emirati work had been published. Mr Sulayem said that the projects had proven to be successful and there would be a presentation later.

## 9.2 Presentation: Saker conservation initiatives led by International Wildlife Consultants

100. Andrew Dixon of International Wildlife Consultants started his presentation by explaining the types of work in which his organization was involved. These could be described as research (examining what should be done) and conservation management (implementation).

101. Mr Dixon had undertaken research on the Tibetan plateau of China, where the mountains and lakes provided ideal Saker habitat. The region covered an area about the same as Kazakhstan and was extremely remote. There were some historical records of sightings, most of them in the more accessible east.

102. A survey undertaken in 2007 had resulted in seven nests being found in an area of 735 square kilometres of Madoi county in Golog prefecture in Qinghai province (by way of comparison, the prefecture was nearly one and half times the size of Hungary, the province eight times larger and the entire plateau twenty-seven times larger). The nests actually found provided a minimum definite number of birds, which extrapolated over the whole area would produce an estimated population of 792 pairs, excluding non-breeding falcons.

103. Satellite tracking undertaken in Mongolia had found that 50 per cent of the adult birds were migratory, raising the question of where they spent the winter. Indications were that the wintering grounds for the migratory birds were in the Tibetan plateau and that there was also a sedentary population. Being in the shadow of the Himalayas there was little snow cover. Despite the harshness of the cold environment of the high altitude alpine grasslands, it seemed that the Sakers found sufficient prey also on winter and their principal food item seems to be the plateau pika *Ochotona curzoniae*, which are active throughout the year. The Sakers perched on power lines in clusters with densities determined by the availability of food. There was an inverse relationship between the number of birds and the human footprint in the area, i.e. the quantity of human settlements, roads and infrastructure.

104. The main threats were changes to the climate and land use, with erosion resulting from overgrazing. Socio-economic development also played a part with the incursion of the trans-Tibetan railway further increasing the human footprint. Eradication schemes aimed at small mammals leading to prey depletion and secondary poisoning, electrocution and trapping were also significant.

105. Over five years testing artificial nests in Mongolia it became clear that some bird of prey species preferred closed boxes while others preferred open ones; a compromise design was achieved that was suitable for all species. There seemed to be no significant difference in the productivity of artificial and natural nests. A new breeding population had been created in central Mongolia using 5,000 artificial nests, with the number of breeding pairs rising from 200 in 2011 to 380 in 2012 and 568 in 2013. Productivity had also risen from 486 fledglings to 1,900 during the same period.

106. The considerable effort in Mongolia where the population was relatively stable was justified on a number of grounds. Neighbouring countries such as the Russian Federation and Kazakhstan also used to have large populations but these had collapsed, so a strong population in Mongolia served as a buffer. Monitoring of heavy metal contamination could be undertaken and a well-managed population could form the basis for establishing sustainable quotas for harvesting.

107. In early 2013, Mongolia had unilaterally announced a five-year moratorium on trade.

108. Power lines and the associated stations were taking a toll in Mongolia. Two hundred and thirty five carcasses had been found along a 15-km section on 149 survey days, meaning that potentially thousands of birds were falling victim to electrocution. It was, however, unclear whether mitigation measures against electrocution would have the desired effect of increasing the overall population; the birds might just starve to death instead.

109. A Bulgarian captive breeding project had undertaken pilot releases of satellite-tagged birds. One bird has moved around the Black Sea and survived for a year. Re-introduction and restocking programmes however can raise political issues and highlight the importance of the natal philopatry of the species.

110. In response to questions from the floor, it was explained that the nesting birds seemed to avoid interspecific conflict by maintaining a suitable distance from each other. Trappers did not seem interested in taking chicks or eggs from the artificial nests; the nests themselves were often stolen because of the metal they contained. Artificial nests were unlikely to be as effective in the Russian federation or Kazakhstan where there was plenty of space for the smaller number of birds. In Mongolia there was a large non-breeding population of potential breeders that benefitted from the artificial nests.

### **9.3 Presentation: Sheikh Zayed Falcon Release Programme**

111. Margit Müller said that traditionally falcons were released at the end of the winter hunting season but this practice ceased and the birds remained in Arabia throughout the year. In 2002, the law changed to make it illegal to trap and keep wild Saker Falcons in the United Arab Emirates after the country joined CITES, but the rules were not applied retrospectively to birds already in captivity.

112. Since 1995, over 1,500 falcons (Sakers and Peregrines) had been released in Gilgit and Chitral in Pakistan and in Kazakhstan. Seventy one saker falcons were satellite tagged. The release scheme used injured birds provided by falcon hospitals after treatment, birds donated by falconers or birds that had been confiscated by the authorities. The birds tended to be young and 95 per cent were female. Captive-bred birds were not released nor were hybrids. Before release the falcons were subjected to a thorough medical examination to ensure that the birds were in good health. They were also given fitness training and contact with humans kept to a minimum to acclimatize them to the wild. They were all micro-chipped and ringed. Before being returned to the wild, the birds were taken to the release site for three weeks and just before release medically checked again; if there were any doubts about their health or condition, they were not released and returned to the clinic for assessment and would be considered for release the following year.



113. Some larger, stronger birds (normally females) were selected to be fitted with transmitters. Originally 35 gram backpacks were used, but these were relatively heavy and had been replaced by 12 gram battery-powered sets. Sakers seemed to cope with the transmitters better than Peregrines.

114. Released birds fitted with PTTs were monitored. Some units were still transmitting but the bird did not appear to be moving. Survival rates seemed to be higher in Kazakhstan (46 per cent) than in Pakistan (25 per cent). The fate of birds whose transmitters failed suddenly were unknown, but it was suspected that in some cases they had been trapped. Sakers were found to disperse faster than Peregrines with the record distance being 250 kilometres covered in 10 days. In Pakistan the birds all tended to fly in one direction but in Kazakhstan they took different routes following the main migration flyways and prevailing winds. Other records included one female which survived five years and three months in the wild, Peregrines covering 3,000 kilometres to reach Siberia and one Peregrine released in Kazakhstan in May 2009 being spotted in Gujarat in January 2010, suggesting that it had followed a natural migration path. Another Peregrine covered a total 14,000 kilometres in 2012.

#### **9.4 Discussion on conservation actions with contributions from the floor**

115. Boris Barov asked the participants to assess the effectiveness of conservation actions in their own country by considering:

- What conservation actions were taken, when and by whom?
- Have they been implemented successfully?
- What was the result?
- What was the reason of success or failure?
- Is the need for same/similar action still present?
- Do present circumstances require other type of actions?

116. The three presenters of items 9.1, 9.2 and 9.3 then took a series of questions from the floor in a general exchange on conservation actions.

117. Umeed Khalid commented that the zero quotas set under CITES now meant that all trade was illegal and unregulated and he wondered whether this was a retrograde step. He felt that the impact of electrocution was greater than the export of birds from Mongolia. Tom de Meulanaer reiterated that CITES Parties thought that most Range States were issuing too many permits and therefore a zero quota had been imposed on all except Mongolia, which had mitigating measures in force. Boris Barov asked whether the measures were flexible and effective, and whether the zero quotas led to an improvement in the species' conservation status.

118. Robert Kenward said that it was clear from the experience of Abu Dhabi and Saudi Arabia that falconers used falcon hospitals, since the birds cost thousands of dollars each and were a considerable investment; the hospitals were therefore a useful source of information. Surveys had however shown that while falconers were prepared to pay large sums for their birds, they were unwilling to pay a levy towards conservation efforts. In the USA in the 1970s and 1980s electrocution was a problem and falconers had been part of the solution. It was likely that other raptor species would also be affected by power lines in Mongolia, so addressing the issue would bring wide benefits. Labour costs in the country were relatively low, so the cost of retro-fitting overhead cables would be affordable (Mr Dixon estimated US\$300 to replace each pole head, or to fit insulators costing much less, although these were less effective). There were two approaches to securing action: through legislation and requiring the utility companies to replace equipment at their own cost, or provide them with money to do it. Mr Dixon said improving the design of poles should be encouraged so that fewer of them were needed. Placing additional wooden poles higher than the metal ones bearing the cables had been tried, but these had been stolen, but installing wooden perches above the pole head had proved effective in Russia.

119. It was also noted that other fora were dealing with electrocution, including the Bern Convention under the Council of Europe. The STF should seek to coordinate its activities with the Bern Convention. Mr Williams reminded the meeting that the CMS COP had adopted guidelines relating to power lines and these had also been endorsed by the Signatories to the MoU.

## **10. SakerGAP Strategy**

120. Boris Barov gave an explanation of how the Workshop process was to work and assigned the break-out groups their roles (see Annex III for detailed methodology). He explained that in the core of the action plan is a clear understanding of the threats to the Saker falcon, the resulting demographic effects and the relative importance of prioritisation of the threats and finally what is their individual and combined effect on the population. It was said that due to knowledge gaps it is often that some of these decisions would be taken by expert judgement but an iterative process of monitoring and adapting the actions would help to adjust the strategy. He also pointed out that being a stakeholder workshop, and not a scientific meeting, the results of this prioritisation would reflect the stakeholders' perception of the problems, which may not necessarily be scientifically accurate. However, this analysis would be supported with specific evidence from published sources in the course of development of the action plan. Also, the stakeholder perspectives and appreciation of the threats would allow greater degree of acceptance of the action plan.

121. The four break out groups would use the same methodology (Annex III) starting by defining what they consider to be the main threats to the Saker population in their region. The first step was to list the known direct threats and to prioritize them according to a scoring system. The participants were asked to take a precautionary approach: in case of insufficient evidence but strong case for any of the scope, severity or threat, to assume and attribute a higher score. The results of this prioritization are presented in Annex IV.

122. Once the direct threats were prioritised the groups had to analyse what caused the direct threats, and further on to analyse the cause-effect link leading towards the root causes of each direct threat in the form of a problem tree.

### **10.1 Regional Break-out Groups – Problem Analysis 1: Threat prioritization**

123. Boris Barov called upon each of the rapporteurs in turn to give an account of their Group's deliberations. The results are summarized in Annex IV.

124. Asia (Eastern breeding range): the threats identified were: electrocution arising from the poor design of pylons and bad infrastructure planning; the trapping of adult birds at unsustainable levels (especially of females) and harvesting eggs and chicks – this was driven by poverty in the countries of origin and high demand for the birds, and exacerbated by corruption and the involvement of organized criminals; secondary poisoning and the reduction of prey species, many of which were considered agricultural pests; habitat loss through conversion of grassland to arable and overgrazing; and poor waste management policies leading to plastic waste and litter killing chicks through entanglement in nests.

125. Middle-East (passage States): the main threats identified were: electrocution, poisoning, collisions, natural factors and unsustainable levels of trapping (with the emphasis on illegal trapping). The root causes were similar: electrocution resulted from poor design of pylons; collisions were becoming more significant; habitats was being lost through changing land use and conversion of grassland to arable; the laying of rodenticides lead to reduction of prey and seconding poisoning of Sakers; taking and harvesting were being conducted at unsustainable levels with a thriving illegal trade (ignorance of the law and poor enforcement of existing regulations were factors), and natural phenomena (adverse weather) was being made worse by climate change.

126. Africa (wintering areas): the scoring exercise had revealed that unsustainable trapping, electrocution and collision were all given 7 points and were therefore high (but not top) priority, with poisoning with 5 points one category lower.

127. The natural factors with the greatest impact were climate change, floods and invasive species. Electrocution resulted from the improper planning of power lines and poisoning resulted from attempts to control rodents and other pests.

128. Europe (western breeding range): the principal direct treats identified were illegal harvesting, illegal trapping, disturbance of nests, illegal killing, direct poisoning, collisions, electrocution, prey depletion and natural factors. Indirect threats included the loss of adult birds to poisoning and electrocution; increased chick mortality and loses to harvesting with a consequentially reduced chance of finding a mate. Poor or inappropriate land management and agricultural subsidies with adverse effects on the birds were also important.

## **10.2 Regional Break-out Groups – Problem Analysis 2: the Problem Tree Approach**

129. Boris Barov wanted to build on the momentum achieved while doing the exercise for the previous Agenda Item by trying to identify actions to be taken, reminding the Workshop participants of the four pillars – information, conservation, sustainable use and adaptive management.

130. The output from the break out groups was a compilation of the threats analysis in each of the four regions. These ‘regional’ problem trees were an intermediate result and helped the group clarify the priority issues in each region and to understand the cause-effect logic that revealed the root causes of the problems. Taking the findings of the four break-out Groups, Mr Barov had created a consolidated ‘Problem Tree’, which depicted the issues identified (see Annex V).

## **10.3 Reports from the Break-out Groups on Problem Analysis – Plenary Discussion**

131. Asian breeding grounds: The priority problems identified were electrocution on medium and low voltage powerlines, on one hand caused by old energy infrastructure that disregards risks to birds and on the other by growing energy demand and expansion of the grid network whereas the regulatory requirements for bird friendly design of the network are not existent or not applied. Another priority problem was the perceived high levels of illegal trapping and taking of sakers from the wild, which is particularly harmful when targeting breeding adults. This problem is exacerbated in all countries by lack or inefficient law enforcement, criminal networks and by rural poverty which result in limited control on the side of authorities.

132. European breeding grounds: Electrocution was also identified as high risk despite increasing positive efforts to transform the energy grids according bird safety standards as well as illegal taking of birds from the wild (also decreasing). Here habitat degradation and the associated reduction of prey abundance (indicated by lower breeding success rates) caused by land-use changes (e.g. grassland conversion and farmland intensification, forestry and urbanisation) play an important role. Poisoning still occurs (mostly secondary), but locally as persecution were also reported. Specifically to the region was the overall vulnerability of the Saker population due to its (still) very low numbers and fragmented distribution.

133. Middle East passage: Here the Saker is mostly found on passage with the most important threats thought to be electrocution (similar to above) and habitat degradation through increased pressure on grazing lands, caused by policies that encourage domestic food production. The unsustainable levels of bird trapping in the region is an issue of growing concern especially in countries with socio-economic hardships and security risks (e.g. Syria) as birds of prey are the subject of lucrative illegal trade within the region. Such trade has been documented in the past as significant

and later on as probably declining, as the focus has turned towards the Asian breeding range countries. The participants also identified risks of 'genetic pollution' and 'mixing' of birds in captivity and ensuing release programmes.

134. African wintering grounds: Here precise information was least available, the key problems were considered to be electrocution and collision – both the result of growing energy and infrastructure construction and also by analogy from other species of migratory birds of prey. There was evidence of illegal trapping (e.g. in Egypt and Libya).

## **11. Review of the threats analysis findings and discussion on the strategic approach**

135. Boris Barov presented an interactive model of the consolidated problem tree, where it was possible to filter the information according to different criteria (e.g. priority, by type of threat, by region of occurrence, by root cause) which led to an open discussion where participants had the opportunity of raising questions and making observations on the findings so far.

136. Mohammed Shobrak noted that the taking of chicks and eggs from nests should be mentioned and Mr Barov explained that it appears at lower priority than trapping of breeding adults. Andrew Dixon said that the approach was a good way of identifying what the main issues might be, but felt that the knowledge gaps were so great that the findings could be little more than 'best guesses'. Robert Kenward advocated the recruitment of local people to help with fieldwork and that would create local support. He added that transmitters using batteries were generally more reliable than those using solar energy.

137. Mr Barov posed the question of the appropriate strategic approach to be adopted in the SakerGAP, asking whether it should concentrate on the top global priorities or be broader and more inclusive. Mr Shobrak pointed out that an issue common to all Regions (e.g. electrocution) might need different solutions across the range. Generic actions (e.g. 'improving pylon design') might however be identified, as only the detail of what this would entail would differ. The Range States all had their own national legislation and in some cases deadlines for phasing out old designs were approaching. Sadegh Sadeghi Zadegan asked whether it was intended that the SakerGAP would contain general prescriptions or individual national chapters with actions ascribed to each Range State. Jelena Kralj said both approaches were necessary; it was important to identify the major global threats, but for some countries with a very small population there were very specific problems to focus on and these might not occur elsewhere. Robert Kenward reiterated that addressing threats and drivers of decline were not the only reasons for conservation action and more attention needed to be paid to positive measures such as the successful deployment of artificial nests in Mongolia.

## **12. Introduction to the Action Planning process**

138. Boris Barov explained the next stage of the process. Having identified the main threats, objectives and actions such as policy responses and direct conservation measures had to be formulated, a process which he illustrated using an Action Framework, with the threats, actions, results, recovery objectives and the effects on the species' population.

139. The Workshop again divided into four Break-out Groups; these had essentially the same composition as those formed for Agenda Item 10 with some exceptions. They were asked to make a realistic assessment of what needed to be done and what could be realistically achieved (see methodology in Annex III). It was, for instance, unlikely that Saker Falcon numbers would recover so quickly that the conservation status would improve within a few years.

140. The regional groups were each asked to concentrate their discussion on one threat – the key one for their region. The allocation was as follows: Asia – electrocution; Middle-East – unsustainable trapping; Europe – agriculture and habitat degradation; Africa – land use planning and infrastructure.

### 12.1 Actions for the Asia region

Problem to address: Electrocution

Objective: Make electricity poles bird-safe throughout the range of Saker Falcon

Result 1: New lines, ten years later, will only be constructed according to approved bird safety design

- Implement legal/policy provision where they exist or adopt where missing.
- Stimulate the development of appropriate legal/policy/quality standards for powerlines across the region.
- Put into action CMS obligations for electric power lines
- Promote recognition by donors of these safety standards so that they only fund lines meeting them
- Explain win-win situation to power companies in following bird friendly standards

Result 2: Existing lines: in five years risk assessment of power lines completed and another five years later, high risk lines are remediated with appropriate mitigation measures.

- Develop protocols for risk assessment of electrocution by lines for COP11
- Assessment of power lines for electrocution risk
- Assessment of preferred remedial action
- Remedial action by power line managers/owners
- Engage international power companies / donors to change dangerous lines

Result 3: Awareness and support among target groups raised and availability of information about the bird-power line risks made available.

- Develop multi-lingual documents of appropriate technical level and quality
- Focus on design engineers / power companies
- Facilitate access to solutions
- Will help in replacement / remediation of dangerous lines and construction of only new bird safe lines
- Monitoring actions needed to keep track of progress:
  - Concurrent assessment of scale of threat reduction
  - Assessment of impact of Saker population

### 12.2 Actions for the Middle East region

Objective: Ensure that trapping and other forms of taking of Sakers from the wild is only done legally and within sustainable limits

Result 1: Effective conservation measures taken for the species in the region:

#### 1) Ex-situ measures

- Promote and improve captive breeding techniques and release programmes (in line with best practice standards)
- Encourage that wild Sakers are only kept for limited time by falconers and are released through official release programmes
- Falcon hospitals, breeding centres and falconers to cooperate in establishing a genetic bank for the Saker

- All falcon hospitals to be linked in an organised network and improve information exchange (e.g. establish shared register for captive Sakers)
- 2) In-situ measures
- Improve legal protection of the species across the region and especially the implementation.
  - Designate important sites for the Saker and other migratory birds of prey as protected areas.
  - Establish rescue centres for recovered birds of prey
  - Raise awareness among local communities on issues of bird legal protection.
  - Develop National Species Action Plans for the Saker in the countries of the region, as well as a Regional plan for their cooperation and coordination

Result 2: Ensure the participation of key stakeholders in well operating conservation and sustainable use framework ensured

- 3) Awareness raising and involvement of trappers in conservation management
- Carry out wide information outreach and education activities about the Saker falcon
  - Balance of interbreeding [...? not clear]
  - Establish network of falcon hospitals, breeding centres, falconers and trappers and maintain regular communication (e.g. through appropriate channels, exhibitions, etc.)
- 4) Implemented regulatory mechanism to define levels of use that are safe for the population and is supported by accurate monitoring and feedback.
- Define (presumably using appropriate population model) biologically sustainable levels for trapping of Saker falcons
  - Ensure ongoing and 'real time' monitoring of the population status (size and trend), survival and breeding rates (presumably of the source population subject of sustainable use).
  - Implement water tight system of marking of captured individuals.
- 5) Monitoring and research measures
- Carry out supporting research activities that serve the need to refine the models and monitor the impact on the Saker populations
  - Develop scientifically robust monitoring protocols and indicators
  - Regularly publish applied research and results of monitoring to maintain transparency of the sustainable use scheme.

### 12.3 Actions for the Europe region:

Problem to deal with: Reduced prey availability due to habitat degradation

Objective: Increase the breeding productivity of European sub-population of Sakers to equal that of the Asian birds.

Result 1: Sufficient area of preserve or re-created optimal habitat for the Sakers available throughout the species range: mosaic of non-intensive agricultural land, pastures and non-improved grasslands

Actions:

- Review the programmes of afforestation and ensure they avoid reforestation of Saker foraging habitats (originally formulated as Develop Saker-friendly afforestation models through avoidance of schemes in areas which were not otherwise cultivated (production: STF/CMS, Experts, NGOs; implementation: national governments and EU)
- Phase out subsidies for farm intensification and conversion to intensive arable, livestock and perennial crops (agricultural schemes (drafting proposal: STF/CMS, experts, NGOs; implementation: EU and national governments)



- Promote agri-environmental measures in favour of non-intensive (nature friendly) agricultural practices e.g. to manage appropriate level of grazing in order to prevent natural succession (drafting proposal: STF/CMS, experts, NGOs; implementation: national governments and EU)
- Increase the control of use of rodenticides and other biocides (national governments)
- Improve spatial planning practices to minimize habitat loss and fragmentation of extensive agricultural landscapes and grasslands (especially large-scale infrastructure development) (national, regional and local Government)
- Fill in knowledge gaps related to hunting habits and prey composition (experts)

Additional actions applicable to the non-breeding range:

- Counteract ongoing desertification due to anthropogenic factors (UNCCD/CMS/ national governments)
- Avoid chemicals harmful for Saker entering the food-chain through banning their use (CMS WG on bird poisoning, national authorities)

#### **12.4 Actions for the Africa region**

Problem to address: Risk of collision with man-made structures and habitat loss due to (mainly energy) infrastructure development.

Objective: Saker falcons are not affected negatively by infrastructures on their migration routes and wintering grounds

Result 1: Spatial planning and infrastructure design adapted to biodiversity needs.

Actions:

- Review of the planning policy and infrastructure development plans to identify shortcomings and risks for biodiversity (migratory birds in particular)
- Carry out improved EIA for all new infrastructure projects and programmes
- Develop (follow) specific guidelines for impact assessment with focus on migratory species (e.g. GEF/UNEP/BirdLife Migratory Soaring Birds project has developed such)
- Promote restoration of damaged SF habitats (presumably including mitigation measures on existing energy infrastructures) to compensate for past losses

Result 2: Energy infrastructure project properly avoid sensitive areas: sites and habitats used by migratory Saker falcons

Actions:

- Compile and publish a sensitivity map of the most sensitive areas (sites and habitats) for migratory birds of prey
- The availability of the sensitivity map communicated to the relevant national authorities and donors for integration into their policies (e.g. workshops, publications)
- Communication activities in support of the previous action (map) carried out

Result 3: Effective mitigation measures developed and implemented on existing infrastructures

Actions:

- Carry out targeted study on the mortality factors of Saker falcons (presumably also other spp.) and intensify monitoring efforts
- Promote the existing guidelines of power line mitigation and/or update them consequently to the findings of the study (see previous action)
- Encourage energy companies to carry out mitigation works on their infrastructures (e.g. through PPP projects and through legal obligation)

### 13. Elaborating the implementation and monitoring strategy for the SakerGAP

141. Boris Barov led the plenary in a discussion of implementation and monitoring of the SakerGAP. He commented that it would be difficult to please all actors as a Plan drafted by experts would not satisfy certain stakeholders. Striking the correct balance was the challenge to be met. So far the Workshop had addressed all of the “four pillars”, some in more detail than others, and the principal issues had been identified as: sustainable use, legislation, law enforcement and stakeholder involvement.

142. Margit Müller stressed the importance of maintaining momentum; action needed to follow from the Action Plan to turn it from a theoretical approach into a practical tool. Robert Kenward again said that some conservation action was undertaken without necessarily addressing a particular threat. The Chair added that the cultural significance of the bird was important, as this aspect might prove attractive to the media and might also provide some of the desired ‘quick wins’.

143. Mr Shiv Pal Singh commented that the adaptive strategy seemed to focus strongly on breeding areas and he suggested that more emphasis be placed on wintering areas, especially those places hosting high numbers of birds. Fernando Spina stressed the importance of ‘connectivity’ and the CMS emphasis on flyways – even the most important sites should be seen in the wider context. Knowledge gaps had to be addressed and the latest technologies used to fill them as quickly as possible. It was also important to involve as many partners as possible – laymen on the ground and the experts of the CMS Scientific Council. Mr [Omar Al Tuwain / Mr Badr Al Aradi, ?] pointed out that some of the information used did not come from official sources and he asked how reliable it was. Umeed Khalid said that there was little idea whether the population trend was upwards or downwards or whether it was stable; it would be necessary to establish a mechanism of assessing population levels and trends, preferably with standardized methods.

144. Mr Barov posed a set of new questions to stimulate the discussion: who was to implement the actions? Would it be governments or institutions? Or NGOs, and if so would they be local, national or international? What actions were for implementation in the short term, which for the medium term and which for the long term? Whose endorsement did the process require? How were the actions to be monitored and evaluated? And how frequently? How much would the actions cost and who would pay for them? What other fora for international cooperation could help raise the required funds and support implementation in other ways?

145. Robert Kenward suggested that the Working Group led by Colin Galbraith (O7WG on Sustainable Use) had prepared much of the ground and if instructed to do so by the parties could carry on its work. The issue of restoration might be looked at more closely. Mohammad Sulayem said that in some cases it was clear who was leading the work, but in other cases it was not and responsibility should be clearly assigned. Potentially there was a role for the Scientific Council to commission work too. Fernando Spina suggested one immediate task was to obtain questionnaire replies from all countries and identify which experts to approach in each Range State. Some tasks had been performed by other fora; for instance the IUCN had developed guidelines on reintroduction and restocking and these could be adopted as they were recognized worldwide.

146. The Chair reiterated what others had said about momentum. It was important to make progress and advertise the fact that action was being taken. This would provide tangible results, increase the STF’s credibility and help create a ‘virtuous circle’.

147. Mr Barov, taking the question of involving falcon hospitals, sought guidance from the floor on the potential extent of the task and how long it might take to achieve. Margit Müller said that the task was easily definable as there as only a limited number of clinics, so contacting them all could be achieved quickly. The clinics were however more likely to respond if requests had official status, so the adoption of the SakerGAP would help.

148. Tom de Meulenaer said that the CITES Secretariat always tried to ensure that the national implementing authorities had all the means that they required at their disposal. The CITES Secretariat made tools and other resources available. National enforcement authorities needed to know what was legal and what was not. CITES also had an established network of contacts that could assist.

149. Another *tour de table* was conducted, where the regional groups identified key actions and issues to be addressed.

150. The African group suggested updating existing guidelines on spatial planning and mapping key habitats so that consideration of this information could be integrated into the planning process. Mohammed Shobrak said that many MEAs would already be working on such issues and Leon Bennun thought that even within the CMS Family many of the elements were probably already in place and the task was to draw all the strands together.

151. The Europe Group identified afforestation schemes which needed to be implemented in a Saker-friendly way, and subsidies that encouraged activities that were harmful to conservation interests should be replaced by more beneficial ones (e.g. schemes promoting optimal levels of grazing).

152. Slobodan Puzovic said that in Serbia there was a range of bodies and individuals who might be involved in implementation – various Ministries, NGOs, scientific institutions and individuals with appropriate expertise. One obstacle might be the unwillingness of some to share their data with others. Cross-border and cross-sectoral issues would have to be addressed. There was some discussion on whether some elements fitted better in national actions plans (national Implementation Committees) rather than in a Global Action Plan.

153. The Asian Group identified the lack of knowledge as the main impediment and that it was assumed that electrocution and prey depletion were the main threats. The SakerGAP would need a review system. The example of the review system used by the US Fish and Wildlife Service was cited; it held meetings twice a year to review duck hunting and set quotas. This frequency seemed to be manageable and appropriate. It was pointed out though that the USFWS had had years in which to build up its processes, so the SakerGAP had a great deal of catching up to do. The SakerGAP should also include a simple description of research needs, but again it was pointed out that many of the issues were not unique to Saker Falcons, so other bodies might well be undertaking relevant studies.

154. Mr Barov concluded by stressing that it was important to prioritize and work on the urgent issues and be clear which issues could wait. Also the entities responsible for implementation should be identified. The STF might consider establishing a sub-group to address knowledge gaps and liaise with other bodies that might want to collaborate.

#### **14. Indicative Budget**

155. The Workshop did not discuss the indicative budget which was instead left for the second meeting of the Saker Falcon Task Force to consider.

#### **15. Identification of collaborative actions**

156. Jelena Kralj set out a series of actions aimed at addressing knowledge gaps related to connectivity and cause of mortality and which would be given the collective name 'The 100 Saker Challenge'. It would entail tagging 100 birds with satellite transmitters from across the range and setting cameras near the nests of tagged adults. Breeding birds could be tagged during the breeding season (starting in February 2014), juveniles could be tagged while still at the nesting sites and others could be fitted during migration (autumn) or on the African wintering grounds in November and December. The information gathered from the spatial sampling could be used in international efforts to discover as yet unknown breeding areas and thereby improve knowledge about the population. A second initiative was for one million Saker-friendly electricity poles to be erected or modified, which would both involve utility companies and provide the opportunity for public awareness raising.

## 16. Closing remarks and next steps

157. The representative of Egypt presented the emblem of the Ministry to His Excellency Mohammed Al Bowardi and to Lyle Glowka. In his closing remarks, Mr Glowka said that a great deal had been achieved over the three days and he personally had learned much. Such workshops were examples of the value of CMS to convene diverse Range States and interests together to address common problems and to find acceptable solutions. He hoped that the positive message would resonate with governments and that those countries not yet Party to CMS or signatory to the Raptors MoU would act to rectify this. He also thanked the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the European Union concerning ENRTP Strategic Cooperation Agreement (SCA) between the European Commission (DG Environment) and UNEP, CITES and CMS Parties, whose support had made the Workshop possible.

158. The Chair gave a presentation of his concluding thoughts following an intense three days of very constructive discussions for which he thanked the Facilitator and all the participants. He felt that the three required actions arising from CMS Resolution 10.28 had all been addressed with progress made towards a Global Action Plan, and better management and monitoring of the species. The SakerGAP would be a key document with a focus on action; it would be concise, realistic and would need to be kept under review. What was needed were the resources to implement it and for momentum to be built with 'quick wins'. The species' population, the population trends and levels of harvesting were priorities for monitoring. One of the main threats identified was the electrocution of birds; with this problem occurring across the range. He highlighted the need to address this issue through engaging with the utility companies. The issue of electrocution was a question to raise at the next CMS COP, as it affected many species. Collision with infrastructure installations was another issue which seemed to be emerging in parts of the range. Habitat loss and climate change were both growing problems.

159. Management actions would focus on ensuring the sustainable use of the species (e.g. monitoring taking) and would require linkages between breeding, migration and wintering ranges, and stressing the benefits to local people and communities. A legal system was the best approach and the question of trade raised a series of issues. Guidelines should be drawn up to describe best practice for monitoring the breeding areas; other conservation actions aimed at enhancing the population, engaging local communities, building the role of falcon hospitals in accreditation systems to facilitate the monitoring of trade, for biological modeling to manage taking, and for the release of birds.

160. It was clear that stakeholders already engaged in the process valued the Saker falcon. Awareness had to be raised among other groups related to the main threats, such as development and power companies. Stakeholders in other Range States not currently involved should be targeted for information along with other CMS Parties.

161. There was a very positive spirit in the Workshop which should ease the work ahead. The STF would further develop the SakerGAP and work on the associated governance and funding issues. The year 2014 would be pivotal, culminating in the CMS COP, after which attention would turn to

implementation. There was a role for the STF in guiding the process up to the COP and potentially an amended role in the implementation phase. In the short term, a revised draft of the SakerGAP would be prepared together with a summary report of the Workshop.

## **17. Closure**

162. The Chair thanked all those that had contributed to the organization and successful conduct of the Workshop and declared the meeting closed.

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## Agenda

1. Opening of the Workshop
2. Adoption of the Agenda
3. Introduction
  - 3.1. Saker Falcon Task Force (STF)
  - 3.2. CMS Raptors MoU
  - 3.3. Saker Falcon in Saudi Arabia: Status and conservation from Saudi perspective
  - 3.4. The Saker Falcon in Trade: A Case Study
4. Presentations from the STF Work Plan Objective Working Groups
  - 4.1. Objective 4 Working Group – International Policy and Legislation
  - 4.2. Objective 6 Working Group – Knowledge Gaps
  - 4.3. Objective 7 Working Group – Sustainable Use
  - 4.4. Objective 8 Working Group – Fieldwork
  - 4.5. Ecological and Socio-Economic Modelling – Results of recent study
5. Expectations for the Workshop and key issues
6. STF Guiding Principles and Workshop Methodology
7. Review of available biological information, including national data
8. Review of existing conservation actions at national and international levels
  - 8.1. Introduction summarising existing conservation actions
  - 8.2. Presentation: Saker conservation initiatives
  - 8.3. Presentation: Sheikh Zayed Falcon Release Programme
  - 8.4. Discussion on conservation actions with contributions front the floor
9. Introduction to the Problem Analysis process
  - 9.1. Regional Break-out Groups – Problem Analysis 1: Threat Table
  - 9.2. Regional Break-out Groups – Problem Analysis 2: The Problem Tree approach
  - 9.3. Reports from Break-out Groups on Problema Analysis – Plenary discussion
10. Strategic direction for the SakerGAP
  - 10.1. Review of Problem Analysis – Plenary discussion
11. Introduction to Action Planning
  - 11.1. Regional Break-out Groups – Framework for Action 1: (1) Definition of results to be achieved by the SakerGAP; and, (2) Development of short, medium and long term Objectives
  - 11.2. Regional Break-out Groups – Framework for Action 2: Development of SMART Targets (aka recovery criteria) for each Objective and the principal actions needed to achieve the results.
  - 11.3. Reports from the Break-out Groups on Framework for Actions – Plenary discussion
12. Elaborating the Implementation and Monitoring Strategy
13. Indicative budgeting
14. Identification of Collaborative Actions (Projects)
15. Review of the results, actions and implementation strategy
16. Closing Remarks and Next Steps
17. Closure

## Methodology of the break-out group sessions

### 1. Overview

The methodology presented in this Annex covers the work carried out during the workshop agenda items 9, 10 and 11 by break-out groups (see figure 1).

The participants were split in four regional groups as follows:

- Group Europe: representing the western part of the breeding range, facilitated by Fernando Spina
- Group Asia: including the Eastern part of the breeding range (Siberia, Central Asia, Mongolia, China), facilitated by Nick Williams
- Group Middle East: representing the countries on the migratory routes (South Asia, Middle East), facilitated by Colin Galbraith
- Group Africa: representing the non-breeding range states (North Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa), facilitated by Thomas De Meulenaer

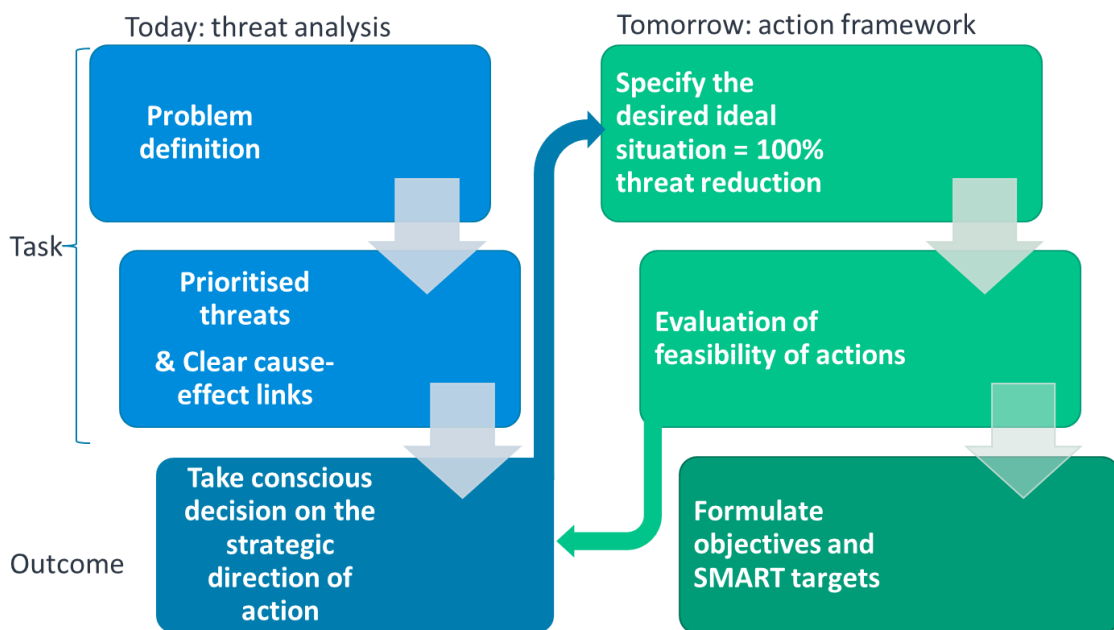


Figure 1 Schematic presentation of the working process for the break-out groups

### 2. Threats analysis

Identification of, and strategies for dealing with, the threats that are contributing to the status of the species as threatened or are likely to recur in the foreseeable future, should be central to the future action plan. The plan must also outline the characteristics of a species that make it vulnerable to, and that would allow it to recover from, environmental, demographic, and human-caused threats. Conservation actions should specifically reduce or remove the threats identified for the species, and monitoring schemes should be in place to follow the success in reducing them.

To collect information about threats to the species and its habitats from different stakeholder groups is of fundamental importance to further development of a realistic and effective plan.



**Definitions:**

**Threats** – Any human activity or process that has caused, is causing or may cause the destruction, degradation and/or impairment of biodiversity and natural processes. There is often a fine line between a naturally occurring event such as a fire set by lightning and a human-caused threat such as a fire set by a match or even increased intensity of fires due to forest management practices. In general, we would regard the latter two as threats whereas the former is a natural factor. In systems that depend on human actions to maintain biodiversity (such as extensive farm areas and grazing) the removal or alteration of these management activities may also constitute a threat. Includes both *direct threats* and *underlying causes*. Synonymous with *pressures*.

**Direct Threats** – Factors that immediately cause stress to the target biodiversity by physically causing their destruction or degrading their integrity. The direct threats have immediate impact on certain number of individuals within the affected population but their effect at population level become explicit through demographic mechanisms such as mortality, survival rate, fecundity and breeding success, etc.

**Indirect threats (or underlying causes)** – A condition or environment, usually social, economic, political, institutional, or cultural in nature, that enables or otherwise contributes to the occurrence and/or persistence of a direct threat. There is typically a chain of underlying causes behind any given direct threat. In a situation analysis, underlying causes can be subdivided into *indirect threats* (factors with a negative effect) and *opportunities* (factors with a positive effect). Synonymous with *drivers*.

**a. Scoring of the direct threats**

Each break out group received sheets of paper with short definitions of all direct threats listed in Draft 1 of the global Saker Falcon action plan. They had to do two tasks:

- 1) Select those threats that are applicable to their region and take out the rest.
- 2) Score the applicable direct threats according to the following system:

<p>i. <u>Scope of the threat</u> <i>Percentage of the population/range/habitat affected by the threat</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Entire (&gt;90%) 3</li> <li>• Most (50-90%) 2</li> <li>• Some (10-50%) 1</li> <li>• Few/little (&lt;10%) 0</li> </ul>	<p>ii. <u>Severity of threat</u> <i>What is the effect on the affected population?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rapid deterioration 3</li> <li>• Moderate deterioration 2</li> <li>• Slow deterioration 1</li> <li>• No deterioration 0</li> </ul>
<p>iii. <u>Timing of threat</u> <i>When is the threat likely to occur?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Happening now 3</li> <li>• Likely in short term (&lt;4 y.) 2</li> <li>• Likely in long term (&gt;4 y.) 1</li> <li>• Past and no longer applies 0</li> </ul>	<p>iv. <u>Impact of the threat</u> <i>Sum of scope + severity + timing</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• But, if score = 0 for either scope, severity or timing, then impact = 0</li> <li>• Precautionary approach: in case of insufficient information, assume the worst</li> </ul>
<p>v. <u>Overall ranking of threats</u> <i>The threats are ranked in descending order of their overall impact score:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 8-9 = top priority = A</li> <li>• 6-7 = high priority = B</li> <li>• 3-5 = medium priority = C</li> <li>• 0-3 = low priority = D</li> </ul>	

**b. Cause-effect analysis of the direct and indirect threats and their root causes (Problem tree)**

The regional groups were asked to develop a problem tree for the most important direct threat in their region. They would start with a draft problem tree, as included in the draft action plan. Each group would deal with the biogeographic sub population and stage of the life cycle relevant to their region.

**Tasks:**

- 1) Each group to analyse the branch of the problem tree that is most relevant to their region (i.e. using the prioritised list of direct threats they had just developed).
- 2) Construct and analyse a problem tree for cause-effect links from direct threats – indirect threats and root causes.
- 3) Note down any country by country variations but keep focused on the core issues according to threat priority
- 4) Using the prioritisation of threats identify which course of actions to take in addressing the threats e.g. which threats can be most easily/efficiently addressed and which not?
- 5) Evaluate alternatives and feasibility of approaches and take a conscious decision by the group decision on what would be the strategic course of action (conservation strategy) to be followed by the action plan according to the group.
- 6) Present a summary of their discussion and their result to the plenary.

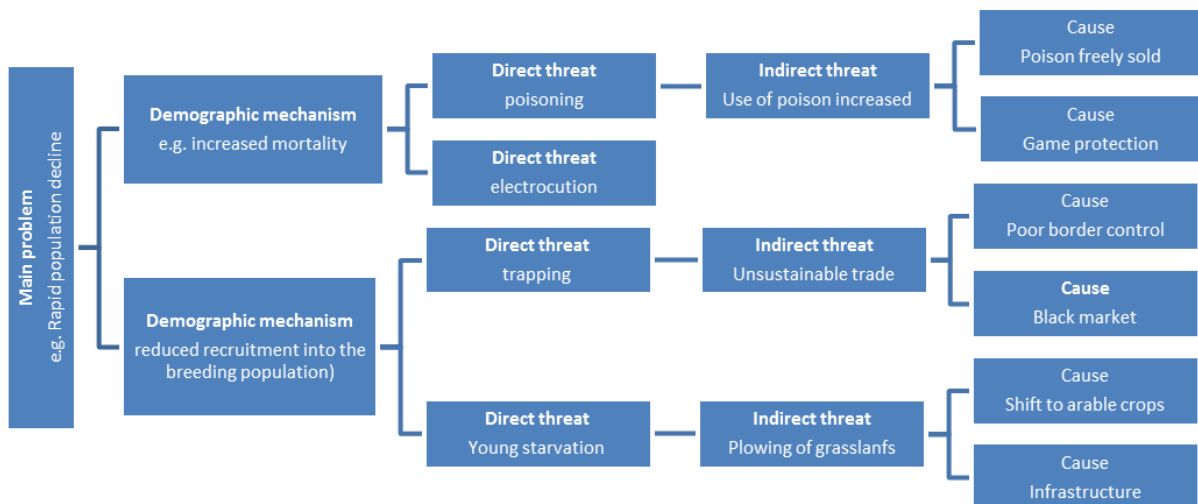


Figure 2 Schematic presentation of a Problem tree

### 3. Development the Framework for Action (agenda item 12)

The break-out groups established for the previous exercise were now asked to work on the Framework for Action which includes the following tasks:

#### Tasks:

- 1) Develop of the Objectives of the action plan
- 2) Definition of the results
- 3) Assessment of alternative courses of action possible and selection of the most appropriate one to follow

The groups were asked to spend 3 blocks of approx. 30 minutes to discuss consecutively:

- What is the ideal set of objectives (short, medium and long) and describe the perfect situation vis-à-vis each key threat (i.e. to formulate statement of 100% reduction of the threat)?
- Why is an ideal situation not achievable? What are the stumbling blocks, traps and problems?
- What can be realistically achieved within the framework of the global action plan?

As an output from these discussions, the groups had to convert the Problem Tree into an Objective tree each one containing the objectives, results and actions. Each group will have elaborated different alternative courses of action and would have come to a conscious decision on a selected one and explain why.

#### Definitions:

**Objectives** - Objectives of the plan should be set as targets for population recovery, expressed in quantitative terms (population numbers, population trend) that the SSAP will achieve both within and after its life time. They should be expressed as measurable numerical population parameters (eg number of breeding pairs, number of individuals, population growth rate, etc). Objectives should be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Timebound). If appropriate, a breakdown of the objectives as specific sub-population targets may be allocated by country.

**Results** - Results are the underlying conditions that need to be achieved in order to accomplish each objective. They are the direct consequences of successfully implemented actions. The results correspond to each important threat identified in the threat analysis and can be defined as statement of 100% reduction of the threat. Results can also be planned for addressing important organisational and research issues.

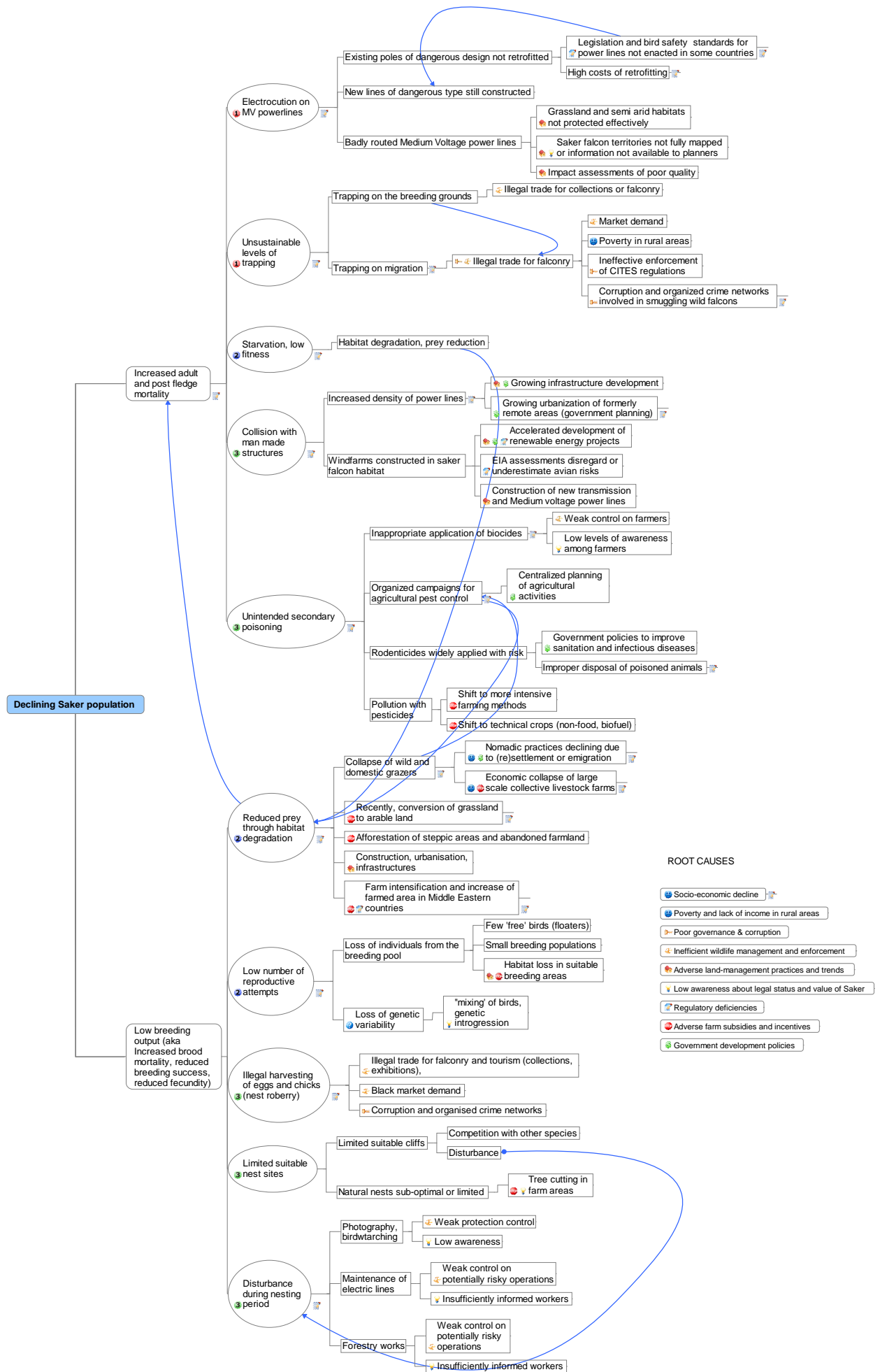
**Actions** – their implementation leads to the achievement of the results. The actions should address: the most important threats, gaps in knowledge and organisational issues ensuring successful implementation of the action plan.

**Threat prioritisation**  
(break-out groups exercise, agenda item 10.1)  
Prioritisation of direct threats

Threat definition:	Scope	Severity	Time	Overall impact	Rank
<b>Europe</b>					
Electrocution on MV powerlines	2	2	3	7	B
Decreased prey availability	2	2	3	7	B
Illegal/unsustainable trapping of adults	1	2	3	6	B
Poisoning (secondary)	2	1	3	6	B
Illegal harvesting of eggs/chicks (nest robbery)	1	1	3	5	C
Disturbance during nesting period	1	1	3	5	C
Increased vulnerability to natural factors (stochastic)	1	1	3	5	C
Illegal killing (persecution)	0	1	3	0	-
Poisoning (persecution)	0	1	3	0	-
Collision with man-made structures	0	1	3	0	-
<b>Asia</b>					
Trapping of adults esp. breeding birds	3	3	3	9	A
Trapping of non-breeding birds	3	3	3	9	A
Electrocution on MV powerlines (declining population)	2	3	3	8	A
Decreased prey availability	2	2	3	7	B
Electrocution on MV powerlines (healthy population)	2	1	3	6	B
Harvest of eggs/chicks	1	2	3	6	B
Collision with man-made structures (windfarms)	1	1	3	5	C
Poisoning (secondary)	1	1	3	5	C
<b>Middle East</b>					
Unsustainable levels of trapping (illegal)	2	1	2	5	C
Electrocution on MV powerlines	1	1*	2	4	C
Poisoning (secondary)	1	1	2	4	C
Collision with man-made structures	1	0	2	0	-
Increased vulnerability to natural factors (stochastic)	1	0	2	0	-
<b>Africa</b>					
Unsustainable levels of trapping (illegal)	2	2	3	7	B
Electrocution on MV powerlines	2	2	7	7	B
Collision with man-made structures	2	2	3	7	B
Poisoning (secondary)	1	1	3	5	C

\* the score corrected from 0 by BB as electrocution is lethal to the "affected part of the population"

# Annex V - Consolidated Problem Tree



- ROOT CAUSES**
- Socio-economic decline
  - Poverty and lack of income in rural areas
  - Poor governance & corruption
  - Inefficient wildlife management and enforcement
  - Adverse land-management practices and trends
  - Low awareness about legal status and value of Saker
  - Regulatory deficiencies
  - Adverse farm subsidies and incentives
  - Government development policies