



CMS



**CONVENTION ON
MIGRATORY
SPECIES**

Distr.
GENERAL

CMS/SC/WCASN-SC/Inf.3
12 June 2005

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

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

New Delhi, 12 June 2005

Agenda Item 5.0

**EXTRACT FROM THE “REPORT OF THE FIFTH MEETING OF SIBERIAN CRANE
RANGE STATES” (MOSCOW, RUSSIAN FEDERATION, 26-29 APRIL 2004)**



EXTRACT FROM THE “REPORT OF THE FIFTH MEETING OF SIBERIAN CRANE RANGE STATES” (MOSCOW, RUSSIAN FEDERATION, 26-29 APRIL 2004)

(d) CONSIDERATIONS PERTAINING TO THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

Programme: Development of flyway network for West and Central Populations

Central Asia Flyway Project including Site Network for Migratory Birds

Taej Mundkur and Alexander Solokha, Wetlands International, shared information about the Central Asia Flyway (CAF) Project. This would include a site network for migratory birds. Mr. Mundkur made a presentation (prepared by Simba Chan) on the NEACSN and its Site Certification Programme. Funding for the CAF project was available through to April 2004 and additional funding would be sought after that time.

Western/Central Asia Site Network for Siberian Cranes

Claire Mirande presented the context for the WCASN-SC idea and summarized the informal discussions preceding this meeting. The UNEP/GEF SCWP had a stated goal to develop flyway site networks with certification for sites, harmonized with other certification schemes. Several informal meetings with Wetlands International and CMS had thus been held to explore options for establishing a site network for cranes and other migratory waterbirds in Central Asia.

Under the Siberian Crane MoU, the Range States were involved in developing and implementing flyway level conservation plans. Discussions had focused on exploring the best mechanisms to link these initiatives, identifying frameworks for cooperation, and applying lessons learnt.

She explained that a draft action plan for the Central Asia Flyway was being developed by CMS and would be discussed at an upcoming meeting hosted by the Indian Government in early 2005. Three legal and institutional options were being proposed to support the action plan's implementation: (a) Expansion of the African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement (AEWA) to include CAF countries; (b) Development of a stand alone Agreement under CMS; or (c) retaining the action plan as a separate cooperative conservation initiative. The draft action plan would likely include a reference to the development of a site network within the region.

A site network for Siberian Cranes and other waterbirds linked to the existing Siberian Crane MoU could be a precursor to a larger network, linking to different activities such as the NEACSN, UNEP/GEF SCWP, CAF, and AEWA. It was very important to use the experiences and successes of NEACSN as a model, including criteria developed for site selection as well as procedures that encouraged Governments to ratify nominated sites.

As a result of these informal meetings it was proposed that the WCASN-SC would initially be established for CMS MoU Range States, which should target one or two sites in each country. It was considered that Russia should be entitled to nominate up to 3-4 sites since it hosted both breeding and migration areas. It was agreed that priority should be given to nominating wetlands with: a) special importance for Siberian Cranes; b) existing status as protected areas; c) established infrastructure; and d) global significance for biodiversity (i.e., Ramsar Sites, World Heritage Sites).

Ms. Mirande proposed two options under the CMS for establishing an effective mechanism to extend the CMS Siberian Crane MoU to other species of cranes and important waterbirds:

Option 1: *Introduce the concept of a site network as an addition to the next version of the CMS MoU Conservation Plans.* This could be accomplished without necessarily having to modify the MoU itself, perhaps by extending the habitat-related provisions of the relevant Conservation Plans in a new annex.

Option 2: *Expand the MoU to include other species, in addition to Siberian Cranes.* The option to revise the MoU to directly cover other species was not considered feasible at this time since it would entail more complex negotiations, leading ultimately to the MoU being re-opened for signature by the Governments concerned. The CMS did not have the capacity to undertake these negotiations at present.

Within the framework of UNEP/GEF SCWP, a Western Flyway Coordination Group (WFCG) was to have been created. To avoid duplication of the WFCG and CMS Siberian Crane MoU activities, the following guidelines were proposed: a) The name of the group should reflect the change in scope (e.g., Central Asia Flyway Coordination Group, or CAFCG); b) The group should be composed of CMS MoU Government representatives and scientific experts from the western and central flyways, to avoid duplication with CMS functions; c) This group should serve as an advisory body to the CMS/ICF Siberian Crane Flyway Coordinator SCFC between MoU meetings; and d) The scope of the group should be expanded to include all Central Asian Range States and Mongolia, not just the Western Flyway as proposed under the UNEP/GEF SCWP.

After discussion and voting by show of hands, the participants agreed in principle to establish a site network for the Siberian Crane MoU, which would have additional benefits for other cranes and waterbirds. The Meeting also agreed to set up an inter-sessional Working Group for the purpose of: a) developing the criteria to be used to designate sites; b) making recommendations on procedures to nominate and approve sites; c) proposing the scope of activities to be conducted under the network (i.e., training, capacity-building, exchange programmes, education and public awareness, site monitoring, information exchange); and d) identifying other projects and processes, with which the network should interact and exchange information, thereby taking advantage of synergies and not duplicating the work.

It was agreed that the Working Group should include the following experts: K.S. Gopisundar (India), Eldar Rustamov (Turkmenistan), Sadegh Sadeghi Zadegan (Iran), Valentin Ilyashenko (Russia), Tatiana Bragina (Kazakhstan) and Taej Mundkur (Wetland International), and convened and co-ordinated by the CMS Secretariat and Elena Ilyashenko, the SCFC. The group would conduct its activities primarily via e-mail. The participants further agreed that the CMS Secretariat should explore opportunities that might arise by the end of 2004 or early 2005 for the MoU Signatory States to formally adopt the above-mentioned site network proposal as an addendum to the Western/Central Conservation Plans, such as through a special MoU session organized in the margins of the inter-governmental CAF flyway meeting (expected to be hosted by the Government of India around February 2005).