

**FOURTH MEETING OF SIGNATORIES TO THE MEMORANDUM OF
UNDERSTANDING ON THE CONSERVATION OF MIGRATORY BIRDS OF PREY
IN AFRICA AND EURASIA**

(Victoria Falls, 30 November- 2 December 2026)

UNEP/CMS/RAPTORS/MOS4/Doc.14.4

**PROPOSED APPROACH TO REVIEWING AND UPDATING TABLE 3 OF ANNEX 3 TO THE
RAPTORS MOU**

(Prepared by the Coordinating Unit of the Raptors MOU)

Summary:

This document outlines a proposed approach to improving and updating Table 3 ("List of Sites") of the Action Plan of the Raptors MOU. It presents information compiled by the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) on: (i) sites and qualifying populations that may warrant consideration for inclusion in Table 3; and (ii) changes to the codes, names, boundaries or status of sites already included in the List.

Annex A identifies potential new sites and new qualifying populations at sites already included in Table 3. Signatories are invited to review this information, together with the findings of the Site Network Report, and to consider proposing amendments during the intersessional period between MOS4 and MOS5. Annex B identifies administrative and other changes affecting sites already included in Table 3 and is presented for review by Signatories with a view to keeping the list current.

The document also invites Signatories to consider whether the TAG should develop guidance on the treatment of sites that no longer meet the criteria for international importance for migratory birds of prey.

Background

1. Table 3 (“List of Sites”) of Annex 3 to the Raptors MOU comprises sites of international importance for migratory birds of prey listed in Annex 1¹ to the MOU, across the entire geographical area of the MOU, irrespective of whether the relevant Range State is a Signatory. The current List² includes Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas (IBAs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs) designated under the European Community Bird Directive, and other sites recognised by Signatories as meeting equivalent criteria equivalent to IBA criteria. Although sites falling within these categories may overlap spatially, each category is listed separately in Table 3 to provide clarity and facilitate future updates.
2. Several provisions of the Action Plan, contained in Annex 3 to the Raptors MOU, relate to site conservation. The identification and conservation of internationally important sites contribute to the aim of the MOU: to maintain migratory birds of prey in a favourable conservation status throughout their range in the African-Eurasian region and to reverse their decline where appropriate.
3. The List of Sites has been progressively improved since its adoption in 2008, most significantly at MOS3, following a comprehensive consultation process with Signatories undertaken before and after MOS2. Nevertheless, gaps remains and there are opportunities for further improvement. Many Signatories have reviewed and updated the entries for their country in Table 3, while others have indicated their intention to review their national components of the List of Sites.
4. The TAG has compiled relevant information in the two tables contained in Annexes A and B to the present document. Sections (a) and (b) below explain the information presented in the respective annexes and how it could support Signatories in reviewing and improving Table 3 during the intersessional period between MOS4 and MOS5.
5. Section (a) below addresses sites already reported as meeting global thresholds of international importance for species listed in Annex 1 to the MOU, including potential new sites and new qualifying populations at sites already included in Table 3. The information is presented on a country-by-country basis in Annex A. Signatories may wish to review this information following MOS4 and consider proposing corresponding amendments to Table 3.
6. The Site Network Report ([UNEP/CMS/Raptors/MOS4/Doc.12.3](http://www.unep.org/cms/raptors/mos4/doc12.3)) takes a complementary, species-by-species approach. It focuses on the highest-priority Annex 1 species, those classified as Category 1 in Table 1 of Annex 3 to the Raptors MOU, and identifies parts of their ranges where Signatories and other stakeholders could target survey effort to help address gaps in Table 3.
7. Section (b) below addresses sites already included in Table 3 that may require review because their codes, names, boundaries or other information appear to have changed since the List was compiled in its current form³. The changes identified by the TAG are presented in Annex B.
8. The Conservation Status Assessment Report ([UNEP/CMS/Raptors/MOS4/Doc.12.4](http://www.unep.org/cms/raptors/mos4/doc12.4)) provides further information relevant to Table 3, including an assessment of gaps in site

¹As listed in Annex 1 of the Raptors MoU (<http://www.cms.int/raptors/en/page/agreement-text>)

² https://raptors.cms.int/sites/default/files/basic_page_documents/Annex%203%20Table%203%20List%20of%20Sites_EN.pdf

³ Signatories may be aware of other changes to site codes, site names or other information that should be reflected in Table 3 in addition.

coverage and the overall level of protection afforded to the Table 3 site network.

Towards a more comprehensive Table 3

a) Improving Table 3: sites already identified as internationally important

9. In implementing action 13 of its Work Plan, the TAG compiled information on sites reported to support internationally important numbers of Annex 1 species across the geographic area of the MOU but not currently included in Table 3. Annex A to this document also identifies new qualifying populations at sites already included in Table 3.
10. Annex A draws on the following sources:
 - the IBA⁴ and KBA⁵ databases, where Annex 1 species are recorded as meeting global criteria of international importance and either the site or the relevant qualifying population is not currently included in Table 3;
 - selected sites identified in the Global Action Plan for the Conservation of the Steppe Eagle (*Aquila nipalensis*) (2026-2035)⁶, where internationally important numbers of steppe eagle have been confirmed through the Action Plan questionnaire, eBird data or IBA/KBA data; and
 - additional sites identified by experts as meeting global criteria of international importance for Annex 1 species.
11. Signatories are invited to review Annex A and consider whether they wish to propose any of the identified sites or qualifying populations for inclusion in Table 3, during the intersessional period between MOS4 and MOS5. In undertaking this review, Signatories are encouraged to draw on additional national information and consult relevant national stakeholders when considering improvements to the List of Sites.
12. The current Table 3 covers all Range States of the Raptors MOU geographic extent. For non-Signatory Range States, TAG proposes to implement the changes in Table 3 post-MOS4. Any country signing the Raptors MOU has the opportunity to review their country's component of Table 3 and to propose amendments to it.
13. Improving Table 3 is an ongoing process. During intersessional period between MOS4 and MOS5, the TAG could also identify potential updates to the SPA component of Table 3 for consideration by Signatories. In compiling Annex A, the TAG focused on new sites and qualifying populations already reported as to meeting global criteria of international importance for Annex 1 species across the geographic area of the MOU. Future work could also consider sites or qualifying populations meeting regional criteria of international importance.
14. Annex A covers sites already identified and documented as supporting internationally important numbers of Annex 1 species which could therefore be considered for inclusion in Table 3. There may also be other sites for which available information indicates potential international importance, but where additional survey work is required to determine whether they meet the relevant criteria.

⁴ <https://datazone.birdlife.org/search>

⁵ <https://www.keybiodiversityareas.org/en/sites>

⁶ <https://raptors.cms.int/steppe-eagle-global-action-plan>

15. The Site Network Report (UNEP/CMS/Raptors/MOS4/Doc.12.3) focuses on Category 1 species listed in Table 1 of Annex 3, as these threatened and Near-Threatened migratory raptor species are priority for addressing gaps in the site network. From species perspective, the report considers how the Table 3 sites may function as a network and identifies parts of species' ranges that could be prioritised for surveys and the identification of additional sites.
16. Citizen-science data can contribute to identification of candidate sites for inclusion in Table 3. The Site Network Report draws on the eBird data available for certain species, and other citizen-science sources may also contribute to future assessments. Table S3 of that Site Network Report presents the results of a review of recent literature indicating the presence of Category 1 species, potentially in internationally important numbers, in areas not currently covered by the List of Sites. Signatories and other stakeholders may wish to undertake surveys in these areas to determine whether they qualify for inclusion in Table 3.

b) Keeping the information in Table 3 up to date

17. It is important that Signatories and other stakeholders can readily to identify the sites are included in Table 3 for each Range State and that the information in the List is kept up to date.
18. Since Table 3 was expanded pursuant to the mandate given by MOS1 (Abu Dhabi, December 2012) to provide a more representative selection of sites for migratory raptors, a number of sites included in the List of Sites have undergone changes to their boundaries, codes or names. The List of Sites adopted at MOS3 was compiled using IBA and SPA datasets available in 2014 and 2015. Since then, some sites have been delisted, divided into multiple sites, merged with neighbouring sites, expanded or assigned new codes. Consequently, an original site code may no longer be valid, may correspond to several separate sites or may have been superseded by the code assigned to a larger merged site.
19. Annex B to the present document sets out updates identified by the TAG to reflect some of these changes. The TAG recommends that Signatories review Annex B and determine whether the suggested or any additional amendments to Table 3 are required to keep the entries relating to their country current⁷.
20. In accordance with the applicable Rules of Procedure, the information and proposed updates compiled by the TAG were circulated to Signatories following the eleventh meeting of the TAG (TAG11), and within the applicable deadline of 15 September 2026.
21. At MOS2 (Trondheim, October 2015), a number of Signatories indicated that they require additional time to consider amendments to the List of Sites proposed by the TAG. In light of this experience, Signatories are invited to review the information presented in Annexes A and B and determine whether they wish to submit proposals for consideration at MOS4 or undertake further national review during the intersessional period between MOS4 and MOS5.
22. Where Signatories agree with the updates suggested by the TAG in Annex B, MOS4 may wish to request the Coordinating Unit to incorporate the corresponding

⁷ Where there is an IBA/ KBA component to a country's information on Table 3 Signatories may wish to consult with the BirdLife International Partner for their country (<https://www.birdlife.org/regions-and-partners/>) on Table 3 update.

administrative changes into Table 3 following the Meeting.

23. More generally, Signatories are encouraged to review the sites listed for their country in advance of each Meeting of Signatories to ensure that the information in Table 3 remains current.
24. A further matter for consideration by Signatory concerns the treatment of sites included in Table 3 that no longer meet the criteria of international importance for raptors. Such sites could either be removed from Table 3 or retained on the basis of their potential restoration to a condition of international importance. The appropriate approach may depend on the circumstances of each site. Signatories may therefore wish to request the TAG to develop technical guidance on the treatment of such sites.

Related MOS4 documents

25. In addition to the present document, the Second Conservation Status Assessment Report (UNEP/CMS/Raptors/MOS4/Doc.12.4), prepared under action 21 of the TAG Workplan 2023-2026, contains information relevant to Table 3, including an assessment of gaps in the coverage of threatened and Near-Threatened species and the overall level of protection afforded to the Table 3 site network. The Site Network Report contributes also to the implementation of action 13 of the TAG Work Plan by identifying priorities for addressing gaps in the site network.

Action requested

26. Signatories are invited to:
 - a) review the potential additions to Table 3 identified in Annex A, together with the findings of the Site Network Report, and consider submitting corresponding amendments or undertaking surveys in the areas identified, with a view to proposing additional sites for inclusion in Table 3 at MOS5;
 - b) review the changes identified in Annex B and consider proposing any amendments necessary to keep the entries relating to their country up to date;
 - c) review of national entries in Table 3 in advance of each Meeting of Signatories; and
 - d) consider requesting the TAG to develop guidance on the treatment of sites included in Table 3 that no longer meet the criteria of international importance for migratory birds of prey.