

ELEVENTH MEETING OF THE TECHNICAL ADVISORY GROUP TO THE RAPTORS MOU

(Online, 25 August 2026)

UNEP/CMS/RAPTORS/TAG11/Report

MEETING REPORT

(Prepared by the Coordinating Unit of the Raptors MOU)

1. Welcome Note

The Chair opened the meeting by welcoming all participants and introduced Kateryna Shalimova, who recently joined the Raptors MOU as Programme Support Intern. He also welcomed the observers: Albert de Hoon, Senior Policy Officer at the Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management of The Netherlands; Nada Zalabia, who recently completed her internship with the Raptors MOU; and Teja Curk, Flyway Science Officer at BirdLife International.

2. Adoption of Agenda

The Chair opened the floor to proposals for amending the meeting agenda. Members agreed to consider Agenda Item 5.4 Sites e Document, before Agenda Item 5.3 Species Rationale Document, to ensure continuity with Agenda Items 5.1 Second Conservation Status Assessment Report (CSAR2), and 5.2 Site Network Analysis, both of which focus on site-related matters.

Under Agenda item 5.4 Sites Rationale Document, the Coordinating Unit (CU) would also present proposed amendments to the Italian sites. Under Agenda item 5.5 Expansion of the Geographical scope, Nada Zalabia would present the interim results of an assessment on this matter.

In addition, it was agreed that a discussion on changes in raptor taxonomy would be incorporated under Agenda Item 5.3 Species Rationale Document.

The Chair further noted that, under Any Other Business, Albert de Hoon would deliver a presentation on raptor-aircraft strike issues in airports.

3. Review of Actions from the 10th TAG meeting

The Chair gave the floor to the CU, who invited the TAG Work Plan leads and contributors to present the implementation status of their assigned activities.

Action 1: The Coordinating Unit would send a document summarising the responsibilities expected of MOS host countries to Darcy Ogada.

Action 2: Darcy Ogada would review this document internally and determine whether to engage with Kenya's government.

The CU explained that no further action was required on the two items above, as Zimbabwe has offered to host the Fourth Meeting of Signatories to the Raptors MOU (MOS4). The CU added that further details on MOS4 would be provided under Agenda Item 4. Updates on Hosting MOS4.

Action 3: Neil Deacon would draft a fact sheet on raptors poisoning due to red-billed quelea control in East Africa.

Neil Deacon explained that South Africa is currently testing a repellent as an alternative to the poison that is widely used across Africa. While no public information is currently available on the product being tested, it is understood to be a plant-based extract.

Mr. Deacon suggested focusing advocacy efforts on promoting mitigation measures rather than emphasizing the poisoning issue itself, as this approach may be easier for stakeholders to support and adopt. He also proposed studying the accumulation of toxic substances and their impacts on poultry, similar to research conducted on lead poisoning. Demonstrating potential links to human health could strengthen the case for promoting and advocating alternative solutions, as this may be more compelling to decision-makers than evidence focusing solely on impacts to raptors.

Mr. Deacon expressed his hope to finalize the fact sheet soon, and certainly before MOS4 and the conclusion of his membership on the TAG.

Action 4: The Coordinating Unit would add the development of TAG guidelines on poisoning and alternatives in the next Work Plan of the TAG.

The CU confirmed that the development of TAG guidelines on poisoning and alternatives was incorporated into the provisional 2026-2029 Work Plan of the TAG, which has submitted to the TAG for review.

Action 5: The Coordinating Unit would prepare a scoping document to assess the relevance of a possible expansion of the geographical scope of the Raptors MOU to South-East Asia and Australasia, including the species concerned and its alignment with the CMS definition of a migratory species.

The CU confirmed that a scoping document assessing the relevance of a potential expansion of the geographical scope of the Raptors MOU to South-East Asia and Australasia had been prepared by Nada Zalabia during her internship with the Raptors MOU from May to July 2026. The assessment was developed with methodological guidance from Stephen Garnett, COP-appointed Councillor for Birds. The CU further noted that Nada Zalabia would present the key findings of the assessment under Agenda Item 5.5 Expansion of the Geographical Scope.

Action 6: The Coordinating Unit would produce a fact sheet or guidance document about the satellite tagging of birds, to raise awareness and reduce suspicions from military bodies, with the support of the TAG.

The CU informed participants that the document [*Drone Use for Raptor Conservation and Monitoring Applications: Review and Best Practices*](#) has been completed and published on the Raptors MOU website. The CU expressed appreciation to Ohad Hatzofe for his leadership and valuable contribution to the development of the document.

Action 7: The Coordinating Unit and the Chair would review TAG meetings' attendance.

The CU presented a brief assessment of TAG members' attendance at TAG meetings and shared the results with participants. Overall, attendance was considered very good, particularly given that members serve in their personal capacity and contribute their time on a pro bono basis. The CU thanked TAG members for their continued commitment and active engagement. The Chair echoed these remarks and expressed appreciation for the members' ongoing dedication and participation.

The TAG took note of the report from the CU

4. Updates on hosting MOS4

The CU informed members that Zimbabwe has offered to host MOS4 from 30 November to 2 December 2026. The meeting website has been created and the logo, which references Victoria Falls, has been approved, and registration is now open in [English](#) and [French](#). The CU encouraged all members who are able to attend to register as soon as possible. The registration deadline for supported delegates and participants requiring a visa is 30 September 2026, while the deadline for non-supported participants is 20 October 2026.

The CU highlighted three main agenda items for which the TAG will play a significant role:

- Presentation of the TAG report, drafted by the TAG Chair in cooperation with the CU;
- TAG proposals of amendments to the MOU Text and its Annexes, developed with the contribution of BirdLife International;
- TAG membership renewal and the next TAG Work Plan.

Regarding TAG membership, the CU noted that the terms of several members will conclude at MOS4. A call for nominations was therefore opened, and the selection panel met to review applications and select eight members from the twelve nominations received. Nominators have been informed of the outcome, while the selected candidates will be formally notified by the CU following MOS4.

The CU also outlined the key deadlines leading up to MOS4. Proposed TAG amendments to the MOU Text and Annexes must be submitted to the CU on 1 September. To facilitate the preparation of the official meeting documents, the CU kindly requested that TAG members provide any final comments by 27 August 2026. This will allow the CU to incorporate comments and prepare the formal MOS4 documents by 1 September 2026, which will then be translated into French before their distribution to Signatories on 15 September 2026. Signatories will then have two weeks to review the proposals and submit comments to the TAG, with the consultation period concluding on 1 October 2026.

The Chair thanked the CU for securing Zimbabwe's support to host MOS4 and expressed his appreciation and enthusiasm for the upcoming meeting.

5. Agenda items for MOS4

5.1. Second Conservation Status Assessment Report

Vicky Jones thanked participants for their comments on the Second Conservation Status Assessment Report (CSAR2) and presented an overview of the report. Ms. Jones explained that its purpose is to assess whether a favourable conservation status is being achieved and maintained for the Raptors MOU Annex 1 species across their range. The report provides a periodic summary of the conservation status of Annex 1 species, key threats, important sites, and knowledge gaps. The first such report was produced by the TAG and presented at MOS3. She noted that the format may evolve over time to better reflect the information most relevant to Signatories.

She further explained that the report contributes to two actions of the TAG 2023-2026 Work Plan: Action 15. *Assess the protection status of the sites listed in the Action Plan's Table 3 and their effectiveness in conserving migratory raptors*, and Action 21. *Monitor the conservation status of migratory raptors listed in Annex 1*.

The presentation is included as Annex 2 to this report for ease of reference and further detail.

Ms. Jones concluded by inviting TAG members to:

1. Add any (regional) conservation status assessments conducted since CSAR1 that may have been overlooked;
2. Review and supplement the avian influenza case study, including additional evidence of HPAI in raptors (with a specific request for Mátyás Prommer to review this section);
3. Provide additional publications on the impacts of war zones on raptors;
4. Identify any international species action plans missing from Section 14.

The TAG endorsed the overall content of the draft CSAR2 pending any further comments. Mátyás Prommer agreed to review the document and add relevant information.

5.2. Site Network Analysis

Ms. Jones welcomed comments on the Site Network Analysis and presented an overview of the work undertaken. She explained that, for MOS3, a pilot Site Network Analysis was conducted to identify information gaps relating to key breeding areas, stopover sites, refuelling areas, bottlenecks, and other important congregational and non-breeding sites along raptor flyways. MOS3 subsequently recommended extending the analysis to cover all Raptors MOU species, subject to the availability of resources.

Ms. Jones further explained that the Site Network Analysis contributes to Action 13. of the TAG 2023-2026 Work Plan, *Identify information gaps concerning key breeding areas, stopovers, refuelling sites, bottlenecks, and other congregational and non-breeding sites along raptor flyways*.

She added that, during the [TAG9 meeting](#), it was agreed that, due to funding constraints, a modular approach would be adopted. As an initial step, the original pilot analysis methodology developed for MOS3 would be extended to Category 1 species listed in Table 1 of Annex 3, instead of all species listed under the MOU. Furthermore, Ms Jones noted that the gap analysis included, beyond the BLI mandate from the contract with the CU, the use of eBird data to explore the usefulness of citizen science data in such an endeavour.

The presentation is included as Annex 3 to this report for ease of reference and further detail.

In concluding her presentation, Ms. Jones invited TAG members to undertake the following actions by the end of September:

- Review the Site Network Analysis report and provide comments or suggested revisions.
- Identify any information gaps or important sites for Category 1 species that may have been overlooked in the Site Network Analysis report.
- Suggest additional relevant literature identifying sites of potential international importance for Category 1 species for consideration and inclusion in Table 3 of Annex 3.

Mr. Deacon stated that Zimbabwe should be encouraged to proactively identify and propose sites, rather than having sites imposed upon it. The CU clarified that this concern relates to the Sites Rationale Document, and that Signatories have the opportunity to submit proposed amendments up to 150 days before a MOS.

Regarding the Site Network Analysis, the CU explained that its purpose is to provide information for Signatories to consider when identifying additional sites they may wish to propose. The analysis is intended to encourage countries to review available survey data and other sources of information, rather than prescribe specific actions. It assesses how well existing sites cover Category 1 species and highlights species or areas that may require further attention. By contrast, the Sites Rationale Document contains proposed amendments to the list of sites in Table 3 of Annex 3 for consideration by Signatories ahead of MOS5.

Ralph Buij applauded the amount of work done and noted that the current analysis suffers from a lack of data in vast regions that have few human observers on the ground. This observer scarcity particularly affects range-restricted species in less visited areas, such as Beaudouin's snake eagle (*Circaetus beaudouini*), which tends to congregate during the wet season in parts of West and Central Africa when local bird observations are extremely limited. A similar seasonal data vacuum affects other African raptor species, e.g. vultures in the Sudans. He cautioned that eBird and other opportunistic citizen-science datasets may therefore contain significant geographical and seasonal gaps that distort the true importance of these flyways. In this regard, he emphasized that telemetry data provide an unbiased, year-round source of records that can bridge these seasonal observer gaps; although these are increasingly available for many Eurasian migrants wintering in Africa, comparable telemetry data for African migratory raptors remain limited. To mitigate the inherent reporting biases, he highlighted the Global Raptor Impact Network (GRIN) as a vital source of higher-quality records and professional data that must be considered in future iterations of the analysis, in addition to the increasing tracking data for African raptors. Unlike standard citizen-science checklists, GRIN systematically incorporates records from experienced raptor researchers and data from structured road transect surveys conducted in remote, data-deficient areas that are rarely visited by most others supplying records to eBird.

The TAG endorsed the overall content of the draft Site Network Analysis pending any further comments.

5.3. Sites Rationale Document

Ms. Jones presented the *Sites Rationale: TAG-Proposed Amendments for MOS4*. She explained that this exercise contributes to three actions of the TAG 2023-2026 Work Plan: Action 1. *Ensure*

changes in taxonomy and/or conservation status and knowledge of movement of migratory raptors are reflected in the Raptors MOU lists; Action 3. Review proposals submitted to MOS for the inclusion of sites in Table 3 of the MOU's Action Plan; and Action 13. Identify information gaps on key breeding areas, stopovers, refuelling, bottleneck, and other congregational and non-breeding sites along raptor flyways.

The presentation is included as Annex 3 to this report for further detail.

In concluding her presentation, Ms. Jones invited TAG members to review the Sites Rationale Document and:

- Endorse the TAG-proposed approach of not amending Table 3 to include yellow-billed kite (*Milvus aegyptius*) sites at this stage, given ongoing taxonomic uncertainty;
- Endorse the proposed removal of Eurasian scops owl (*Otus scops*) as a trigger species for the Cyprus sites listed in Table 3;
- Endorse the proposed amendments to Table 3 presented in Annexes A and B;
- Suggest additional sites not currently listed in Table 3, or already proposed in Annex A, where published evidence demonstrates that criteria for international importance are met, particularly for Category 1 species;
- Note the revised site codes (Annex B) and consider how the MOU should address delisted sites that have lost their value for migratory raptors but retain potential for restoration.

The deadline for TAG members to submit comments was 27 August.

The TAG endorsed the overall content of the draft Site Network Analysis pending any further comments.

The CU asked whether the TAG should wait until the AviList taxonomy is finalised before updating the Raptors MOU species list and incorporating any taxonomic amendments. Vicky Jones noted that BirdLife International's taxonomy, on which the Raptors MOU taxonomy is based, is expected to be aligned with AviList by next year. She therefore recommended continuing to follow the current BirdLife taxonomy in the meantime, as has historically been the case.

5.3a Italian proposed amendments to the List of Sites

The CU then presented proposed amendments to the Italian sites listed in Table 3 of Annex 3. The proposals, received from Italy and shared with the TAG on 13 July 2026, result from a systematic review of Italy's IBA network based on the updated national IBA inventory. The review resulted in revised site boundaries, names and codes, updated qualifying species records, and the identification of new sites meeting the relevant criteria. The work was undertaken jointly by the Ministry of Environment and LIPU, the BirdLife Partner in Italy in 2024. The CU proposed that the revised table be submitted to MOS4 for approval, together with a mandate to amend Table 3 accordingly.

Ohad Hatzofe noted that IBAs are identified by BirdLife International under the global IBA programme. The CU clarified that the sites listed in Table 3 are approved by the TAG and identified using criteria comparable to those applied to IBAs, but they are not IBAs themselves and do not require BirdLife International approval.

The CU further explained that the Italian proposals would be presented at MOS4 as endorsed by the TAG and asked whether a specific statement of endorsement was required. Arianna Aradis confirmed that no separate statement was needed, provided the endorsement was reflected in the Sites Rationale Document. Ms. Jones noted that in the proposal there are Annex 1 species stated not to meet thresholds of international importance at a site, but presented by Italy for information, TAG recommends these species are not added as qualifying populations in Table 3, otherwise the TAG recommendation is in favour of reflecting all of the changes in Table 3. TAG comments will be added to Italy's proposal document.

TAG supported Italy's proposed amendments and Ms Jones' proposal regarding the non qualifying species.

5.4. Species Rationale Document

Ms. Jones presented the *Species Rationale: TAG-Proposed Amendments for MOS4* and provided an overview of the work undertaken. She explained that this exercise contributes to four actions of the TAG 2023-2026 Work Plan: Action 1. *Ensure changes in taxonomy and/or conservation status and knowledge of movement of migratory raptors are reflected in the Raptors MOU lists;* Action 2. *Review proposals submitted to MOS for the inclusion of species in Annex 1 of the MOU;* Action 8. *Monitor consistency between the IUCN Red List status, Table 1 Category, and CMS Appendix listings of species;* and Action 9. *Clarify the criteria for inclusion of a species in Category 2 of Table 1 of the MOU's Action Plan.*

The presentation is included as Annex 4 to this report for further detail.

In concluding her presentation, Ms. Jones invited TAG members to review the *Species Rationale* Document and consider endorsing:

- The proposed amendments to Annex 1 and Table 1 reflecting changes in taxonomy, nomenclature, and knowledge of migratory status, therefore including Bonelli's eagle and bateleur in Annex 1 and Table 1 of Annex 3;
- The assessment of consistency between the CMS Appendices, Raptors MOU Annex 1 and Table 1, and the IUCN Red List;
- The summary of TAG discussions on Category 2 of Table 1, including whether it fairly reflects the discussions at TAG9, captures the key issues, provides a balanced way forward, and supports the inclusion of guidance development in the next TAG Work Plan;
- The proposed amendment to the Table 1 footnote; and
- The proposal for a stand-alone species-focused document for MOS4.

The deadline for TAG members to submit comments was 27 August.

Mr. Buij commented that some species undertake nomadic movements across large areas rather than regular seasonal migrations. Mr. Hatzofe supported Mr. Buij's observations regarding species with variable migratory behaviour, such as the short-eared owl. Mr. Buij referred to the CMS definition of migratory species and highlighted that some populations of the same species may be largely sedentary while others are migratory. He noted that assessing African species can be challenging, particularly where data gaps exist and the proportion of migratory individuals is uncertain.

It was suggested that regional experts be engaged to provide expertise and data for species occurring in areas not fully covered by the TAG's expertise. The CU confirmed that regional experts may be consulted, but responsibility for the information provided remains with the relevant TAG members in particular for those with a regional mandate.

The CU reminded members that the agreed CMS taxonomic sources should be used. The CU emphasized the importance of taking a conservative approach when considering the inclusion of additional migratory species or amendment to taxonomic changes, given the time and effort required for governments to adopt formal changes.

Mohammed Shobrak asked whether the adoption of AviList taxonomy would be discussed at the next CMS COP. Vicky Jones replied that a related document is likely to be considered, with discussions expected within the Scientific Council ahead of COP16. The CU confirmed that the expectation is for CMS to adopt AviList at COP16, provided BirdLife International proceeds with the planned transition. The Raptors MOU would subsequently align with the same taxonomy.

The TAG endorsed the overall content of the draft Species Rationale document and specifically the proposed amendments to Annex 1 and Table 1, welcomed the summary of TAG discussions on Category 2 of Table 1, that reflected the discussions at TAG9 and supported the inclusion of guidance development in the next TAG Work Plan as well as the proposed amendment to the Table 1 footnote. TAG recommended a stand-alone species-focused document.

5.5. Expansion of the Geographical scope

The CU introduced Nada Zalabia, who recently completed an internship with the Raptors MOU, and explained that her work focused on assessing the potential relevance of expanding the geographical scope of the Raptors MOU to South-East Asia and Australasia. The assessment was conducted during her internship from May to July 2026, with methodological guidance from Stephen Garnett, COP-appointed Councillor for Birds.

Ms. Zalabia then presented the interim results of the analysis, which was based on a standardized GIS-based gap analysis of species currently listed in Annex 1 of the Raptors MOU. The presentation is included as Annex 5 to this report for further detail.

Ms. Jones commended the analysis, describing it as well prepared and presenting a compelling case. She noted, however, that consideration should be given to how Signatories, particularly those involved in defining the current geographical scope of the MOU, might receive the proposal. She suggested that a more cautious framing of the conclusions may be strategically beneficial and enquired whether there were indications of interest from countries currently outside the Raptors MOU range.

Mr. Shobrak thanked Ms. Zalabia for her work and asked whether a similar gap analysis had been undertaken for migratory raptor species occurring in South-East Asia and Australasia that are not currently listed under the Raptors MOU.

Dr. Thompson recommended reviewing the wording on the document to better describe the discussion held during the negotiations meetings regarding the geographical scope of the MOU.

The CU thanked members for their suggestion regarding the wording and clarified that the current exercise was limited to reviewing species already listed under the Raptors MOU and did not consider additional candidate species. For MOS4, the CU intends to seek the views of Signatories on the potential expansion of the geographical scope, including a mandate to continue the assessment, evaluate additional species for possible inclusion, and initiate engagement with the relevant range states.

TAG welcomed the draft document and recommended reviewing the draft document based on the input from TAG.

5.6. TAG report

The CU presented an overview of the TAG report which summarises the work undertaken by the TAG since MOS3. It reports on the six formal TAG meetings held during the intersessional period (TAG5 to TAG10), summarises progress in implementing the TAG 2023-2026 Work (Annex 1 of the TAG report), and outlines the proposals, guidance and documents the TAG has prepared for consideration by Signatories at MOS4, including a proposal to include Bonelli's eagle in Annex 1 of the Raptors MOU. A list of invited experts and observers who contributed to the work of the TAG is also provided as an annex to that document.

The CU invited TAG members to provide final comments on the TAG report by 15 September.

5.7. TAG Work Plan 2027-2029

The CU presented the draft TAG 2026-2029 Work Plan for the next intersessional period, highlighting proposed additions in coloured text.

Ms. Jones noted that a small project is scheduled to begin next year to assess the impacts of pesticides on birds along the African-Eurasian Flyway. The project aims to strengthen the network of experts working on this topic and support advocacy efforts. She added that a dedicated session is planned at the Pan African Ornithological Congress (PAOC) and invited TAG members interested in contributing to the project to get involved. She noted that members of the African-Eurasian Migratory Landbirds Action Plan (AEMLAP) community are already participating. The CU welcomed the initiative.

Des Thompson observed that the draft Work Plan contained a substantial number of activities and suggested reviewing lower-priority tasks in light of limited resources. He proposed moving such items to a list of potential additional activities to be undertaken if capacity allows, enabling TAG to focus on the highest-priority actions.

Mr. Botha agreed with this suggestion and asked whether any members opposed the proposed approach. No objections were raised. He further noted that additional funding could be sought to engage consultants to undertake some of the activities.

Ms. Ogada highlighted potential overlap with work being undertaken by the IUCN Vulture Specialist Group. She suggested that closer coordination could improve efficiency and that some tasks might be delegated to the group where it has particular expertise or authority.

Ms. Jones asked whether Signatories could provide further input on TAG priorities, noting that greater engagement from Signatories would help inform the focus of the Work Plan. The CU explained that TAG serves primarily as an advisory body and that its role is to facilitate the

availability of guidance to Signatories rather than necessarily develop all guidance itself. He also noted that new conservation guidelines are available on the [website](#). The CU agreed that the draft Work Plan contains too many activities and would benefit from further prioritisation.

The CU invited TAG members to provide final comments on the TAG report by 15 September.

5.8. Internationally Important Raptors Areas

The CU provided an overview of the Internationally Important Raptor Areas (IIRAs), noting that their establishment represents a significant achievement for the Raptors MOU. It marks the first time that a network of sites developed under a CMS instrument for a taxonomic group of terrestrial migratory species has been formally recognised by the Convention at the global level. The related MOS4 document will inform Signatories of the adoption of IIRAs by CMS COP15, including Resolution 15.10 and Decisions 15.175-15.178, which build directly on the list of internationally important sites established under the Raptors MOU.

The CU further informed members that a draft IIRAs brochure, prepared by Yoana Mihaylova during her recent internship with the Raptors MOU, was circulated to TAG members for review on 3 August.

The CU invited TAG members to provide final comments on the IIRAs MOS4 document and brochure by 15 September.

6. **Any Other Business**

Avian strikes in airport

The Chair invited Albert de Hoon to introduce the issue. Mr. de Hoon explained that he is from the Netherlands and has a background in landscape ecology. Following a fatal bird strike incident involving a military aircraft, he began working on the interface between aviation safety and nature conservation. He then presented an overview of bird strikes and proposed the establishment of a CMS/Raptors MOU Flight Safety Working Group or Task Force to identify solutions that support both aviation safety and bird conservation.

During his presentation, Mr. de Hoon noted that raptors rank among the top three bird groups posing flight safety risks. Approximately 70,000 bird strikes have been reported worldwide over the past eight years, although actual numbers are believed to be significantly higher due to underreporting. He explained that grassland around airports often have issues with rodent populations, which in turn attract raptors. As a result, birds are often lethally controlled for safety reasons. In the EU, exemptions to bird protection legislation may be granted for aviation safety purposes, and he cited one airport where several hundred kestrels are reportedly shot each year. He stressed the need to strengthen collaboration between aviation and raptor experts, drawing parallels with successful initiatives addressing goose-aircraft conflicts. Improved grassland management and habitat modification around airports could help reduce their attractiveness to raptors, while relocation programmes are often considered too costly and time-consuming by airport authorities.

In concluding, Mr. de Hoon suggested further discussions on how to advance the initiative. The Chair proposed that the new TAG take the matter forward after MOS4, which may host a potential side-event on the matter. The presentation is included as Annex 6 to this report for further detail.

Ms. Ogada thanked Albert de Hoon for raising what she considered a highly important issue, particularly in developing countries where airport expansion and the construction of airstrips increasingly overlap with key bird habitats. She believed that Signatories would be interested in both a working group and practical solutions.

Mr. Buij noted that the translocation of young kestrels is being tested successfully at some airports and expressed interest in exploring whether similar approaches could be applied elsewhere.

Mr. Shobrak observed that many technical guidelines already exist, but greater engagement from governments is needed. He supported the creation of a working group and highlighted the importance of coordinating with wildlife and aviation bodies working on bird strikes. He also expressed willingness to participate in a potential MOS4 side event. Mohammed recalled that Saudi Arabia had raised the issue at CMS COP13, emphasizing the need to mitigate infrastructure impacts on migratory species through approaches such as sensitivity mapping and improved guidance. He further noted that airport management practices, including waste and water management, play an important role in reducing bird strike risks, and that BirdLife International had supported these discussions. He added that he would make every effort to attend MOS4.

Ms. Jones noted that some Asian countries also face challenges associated with netting around airports, including significant bycatch, in addition to the shooting of birds. She observed that the issue shares many similarities with conflicts involving energy infrastructure, where strategic planning, risk assessment, and mitigation are essential. She suggested that an exchange of experience with the CMS Energy Task Force could be beneficial.

Mr. Hatzofe agreed that the issue is a major concern. He explained that Israel has invested heavily in bird tracking and modelling to address aviation conflicts, supported by detailed data on bird movements and environmental factors such as waste disposal and insect emergence. He noted that significant technological advances and expertise have been developed that could be shared more widely.

The Chair proposed taking the discussion to MOS4 for further consideration and thanked Mr. de Hoon for his presentation and for bringing the issue to the TAG's attention.

The TAG asked the CU to prepare, with the support of Mr. de Hoon, a short document for MOS4 seeking a mandate to establish a working group on aviation safety and raptor conservation.

Red-billed quelea control

Mr. Deacon responded to a question from Imad Cherkaoui regarding the control of red-billed quelea (*Quelea quelea*). He explained that quelea control measures are generally reactive rather than preventative and may be implemented at various times of the year depending on the occurrence of outbreaks. Current concerns are focused primarily on East Africa, where a highly toxic chemical is used for control operations. Although the chemical does not accumulate in the environment, it is extremely lethal to exposed wildlife. Mr. Deacon noted that information on application rates, timing, and locations of spraying is often not publicly available, and that accountability and reporting mechanisms are limited.

Additionally, drawing on reports available online, Mr. Deacon highlighted what appears to be a strong correlation between pesticide spraying campaigns targeting quelea and locusts and periods of raptor migration, including for species such as the sooty falcon, steppe eagle, and

kestrels. He noted that locusts are a key food source for a wide range of wildlife, including raptors, storks, hyenas, and other insectivorous species. Regarding non-lethal control methods, he referred to research on repellents that make grain crops less palatable to quelea, as well as alternative approaches that have been tested in some countries. He noted that the issue remains highly political.

Ms. Ogada asked whether the topic would be raised at MOS4. Mr. Deacon replied that he is preparing a proposal for a side event on the issue.

The CU added that the topic could be incorporated into the TAG Work Plan without necessarily establishing a dedicated task force, unless TAG members considered this necessary. He noted that there is time until the end of September to prepare a document for consideration at MOS4.

Ms. Jones welcomed the information and asked whether the available evidence had been compiled into a report or literature review. She noted that it would be valuable to consolidate existing knowledge on the topic and encouraged TAG members to provide comments in the CSAR2 document accordingly.

Ms. Ogada emphasized that there is currently an opportunity to address the issue and that it should be reflected at MOS4. She stressed that quelea control poses a major challenge in East Africa and suggested that leadership from Zimbabwe could help drive progress and encourage action by other countries, including Kenya.

Flyway Summit

Mr. Shobrak enquired whether any agenda items related specifically to raptors would be included in the upcoming Flyway Summit.

Ms. Jones explained that the event will comprise the BirdLife World Congress followed by the Flyway Summit, which will focus on migratory species and include the launch of the *State of the World's Birds* report. The Flyway Summit, scheduled to take place in Nairobi from 7 to 11 September, is an invitation-only event designed to bring together conservation partners, governments, multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs), the private sector, and funding institutions. The objective is to strengthen commitments and mobilize support for migratory species conservation, with a declaration or similar outcome document expected to emerge from the meeting.

7. Closing of The Meeting

The Chair thanked all participants for their valuable contributions and active engagement throughout the meeting.

Umberto Gallo-Orsi reminded participants that this would be his final TAG meeting, as he is due to retire at the end of the year. He expressed his appreciation for the opportunity to work with TAG members over the years and said he hoped to see everyone at MOS4. Should this not be possible, he thanked colleagues for their collaboration and friendship, and expressed his hope of meeting them again in the future.

8. Action Points

CSAR2

1. TAG Members to review the draft CSAR2 by 30 September. and in particular
 - Add any (regional) conservation status assessments conducted since CSAR1 that may have been overlooked;
 - Review and supplement the avian influenza case study, including additional evidence of HPAI in raptors (with a specific request for Mátyás Prommer to review this section);
 - Provide additional publications on the impacts of war zones on raptors;
2. Identify any international species action plans missing from Section 14 of CSAR2.
3. TAG members to review and provide final comments on the Sites Rationale Document by 27 August and specifically suggest additional sites not yet listed on Table 3 or already proposed in Annex A to the site rationale document where there is published evidence that criteria of international importance are met, particularly for Category 1 species.
4. TAG members to review and provide final comments on the Species Rationale Document by 27 August.
5. Ms. Jones to send to the CU the amended Site rationale and Specie rationale documents by 1 September
6. TAG members will review and provide final comments on the Site Network Analysis by 15 September.
7. TAG members would review and provide final comments on the TAG report by 15 September.
8. TAG members will review and provide comments on the draft IIRAs brochure by 15 September.
9. The CU will add on item on raptors poisoning due to red-billed quelea control in the TAG 2026-2029 Work Plan.
10. The CU to prepare, with the support of Mr de Hoon, a document for MOS4 calling for the establishment of a WG on airstrikes and raptors.
11. Mr. Deacon to finalize the fact sheet on raptors poisoning due to red-billed quelea control in East Africa, to be presented at MOS4 as Info Document.

ANNEX 1

ALPHABETICAL LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Members of the TAG

Andre' Botha <i>Chair</i>	Co-Chair Vulture Specialist Group Africa Projects Manager Hawk Conservancy Trust South Africa
Mátyás Prommer <i>Vice-Chair</i>	Senior Ecologist Tilad Environmental Consultancy Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Arianna Aradis	Senior Researcher , Bird Migration Research Area Italian Institute for Environmental Protection and Research (ISPRA) Italy
Darcy Ogada	Program Director (Northeast Africa) The Peregrine Fund Kenya
Des Thompson	Leverhulme Emeritus Fellow UHI North, West and Hebrides Environmental Research Institute United Kingdom
Imad Cherkaoui	Associate Professor Institut Scientifique de Rabat (University of Mohamed V) Morocco
Karen Aghababyan	Executive Director BirdLinks Armenia Armenia
Mohammed Shobrak	Consultant & Board member National Centre for Wildlife Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Neil Deacon	International Association for Falconry and Conservation of Birds of Prey Vice-President, BirdLife Zimbabwe, Zimbabwe
Ohad Hatzofe	Head Avian Ecologist, Division of Science & Conservation Israel Nature & Parks Authority Israel
Ralph Buij	Senior Scientist, Animal Ecology Wageningen University & Research Africa and Asia Conservation Director The Peregrine Fund The Netherlands
Vicky Jones	Flyways Science Coordinator BirdLife International United Kingdom

Convention on Migratory Species

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Kateryna Shalimova	Programme Support Intern CMS Office - Abu Dhabi United Arab Emirates
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Nada Zalabia	Former Programme Support Intern CMS Office - Abu Dhabi United Arab Emirates
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Apologies

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