

Sites rationale: TAG-proposed amendments for MOS4

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Technical Advisory Group

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Background

TAG tasks from the 2023-2026 workplan:

- **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.
- **Action 13:** Identify information gaps on key breeding areas, stopovers, refuelling, bottleneck, and other congregational and non-breeding sites along raptor flyways.

Action 1: Taxonomy reflected in Table3

- At MOS3 Annex 1 and Table 1 were amended to reflect that Yellow-billed Kite (*Milvus aegyptius*) had been split from Black Kite (*M. migrans*)
- TAG was planning to identify which of the sites already listed on Table 3 for Black Kite should be changed to Yellow-billed Kite between MOS3 and MOS4
- BirdLife is working with others on a consensus taxonomy for birds (AviList) and is working towards total alignment between BirdLife checklist and AviList
- So need to make many taxonomy/ nomenclature changes over the next year – one of these involves Yellow-billed/ Black Kite as the first version of AviList published in 2025 treats *M. aegyptius* as conspecific with *M. migrans*
- So we do not recommend TAG spends time identifying Yellow-billed Kite sites in Table 3 at this stage, until the taxonomy stabilises

Action 1: Taxonomy reflected in Table 3

Cyprus scops-owl

- As discussed at TAG4 Cyprus scops-owl (*Otus cyprius*) had been recognised as separate from Eurasian scops-owl (*Otus scops*)
- This did not require any change to Annex 1 or Table 1 so was not included in the species rationale info to MOS3 (Cyprus scops-owl is non-migratory)
- TAG proposes the removal of Eurasian scops-owl as a qualifying species at sites in Cyprus on Table 3

Long-eared owl updated from Northern Long-eared Owl

- This common name update has been made in the Annexes to this sites rationale document

Scissor-tailed kite family change does not affect Table 3

Action 1: New species proposed to MOS4 by TAG

- If Signatories agree at MOS4 that Bateleur (*Terathopius ecaudatus*) and Bonelli's eagle (*Aquila fasciata*) should be added to Annex 1, between MOS3 and MOS4 TAG will need to propose:
 - New internationally important sites for these species for Table 3
 - Additional qualifying populations for existing Table 3 sites

Action 13: Gaps in the Table 3 site network

In the sites rationale doc to MOS4 TAG points Signatories to two information sources to support them in filling gaps in the Table 3 site network in their country:

- Annex A of the site rationale doc contains a list of new sites not yet listed on Table 3, and new qualifying populations at existing Table 3 sites that are already documented to support internationally important numbers of Annex 1 species but not yet included in Table 3 (info from IBA/ KBA and SPA data, literature review and the Steppe Eagle international SAP) - *Signatories are asked to consider proposing these sites*
- It also flags the site network analysis report suggesting some areas where further site identification might be possible and desirable for the most threatened migratory raptor species (Category 1) to inform further survey/ monitoring/ site identification efforts by Signatories

Action 13: Types of TAG-proposed additions to Table 3

- Existing IBA/KBAs or SPAs not currently in Table 3 where one or more Category 1 species qualifies as a trigger species.
- Existing Table 3 sites with additional qualifying populations, based on more recent information.
- Selected Steppe Eagle sites from the 2026–2035 Global Action Plan where post-2015 questionnaire, eBird or IBA/KBA evidence confirms internationally important numbers and are not yet listed.
- Other internationally important sites supported by literature, eBird or other evidence and meeting global criteria for international importance.

Keeping the information within Table 3 up to date

- Table 3 needs to remain current and easy for Signatories to interpret, with accurate site names, boundaries and codes for each country.
- Since the list was compiled ahead of MOS2, some sites have been delisted, split, merged, expanded or assigned new or corrected codes.
- TAG recommends that Signatories review the proposed site name and code updates in Annex B and check their national site lists ahead of each MOS.
- Agreed updates could be incorporated after MOS4. Delisted sites (eg/ no longer an IBA/KBA or SPA) may need case-by-case decisions on whether to remove from Table 3 or retain if could in future be restored

MOS4 sites document explaining TAG Table 3 proposals

- ***On Action 1 & Action 13:*** TAG-proposed amendments to Table 3 will be set out in a site rationale document, with annexes detailing the specific TAG-proposed changes.
- The Coordination Unit will provide Signatories with time to review TAG recommendations for their country and decide whether they should be incorporated into Table 3, potentially after MOS4.
- ***On Action 3:*** TAG comments on Signatory-proposed national site changes will be provided separately through a short addendum linked to the Signatory's proposal.

Related to these species-related actions in the TAG workplan TAG is asked to:

Review the sites rationale document, consider and:

- Endorse the TAG-proposed approach of not amending Table 3 to reflect Yellow-billed Kite sites at this stage owing to taxonomy in flux
- Endorse the TAG-proposed amendment to remove Eurasian Scops-owl as a trigger species from the Table 3 sites listed for Cyprus in Table 3;
- Endorse the TAG-proposed amendments to Table 3 presented in Annex A and B;
- Suggest additional sites not yet listed on Table 3 or already proposed in Annex A to this document where there is published evidence that criteria of international importance are met, particularly for Category 1 species;
- Take note of the changed site codes (Annex B) and consider how TAG would recommend the MOU deal with delisted sites that have lost their value for migratory raptors but have the possibility for restoration;