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CMS

RAPTORS MOU

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.13.6(Rev.1)

PROPOSAL FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A RAPTOR FLIGHT SAFETY WORKING GROUP

(Prepared by the Government of the Netherlands)

Summary:
The document introduces the issue of collisions between aircraft and birds of prey and calls for a coordinated approach under the Raptors MOU to coordinate and catalyse activities related to raptor conservation and management and flight safety.

The Meeting is invited to take note of this proposal and to consider to establish a Raptor Flight Safety Working Group under the Raptors MOU.

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Background

1. Collisions between aircraft and birds (bird strikes) pose a significant risk to aviation safety and can also result in injury or mortality to birds. According to data from the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO), raptors rank among the top three bird groups posing flight safety risks with 70,701 raptor strikes being officially reported worldwide between 2016-2024[1], although actual numbers are believed to be significantly higher due to underreporting. Raptors are a high-risk species group due to their body mass, flight behaviour and their preference to look for food in the grassland areas that generally surround runways at both civil and military aerodromes.

2. Raptor-aircraft collisions happen throughout the whole geographical scope of the Raptors MOU. The scale and nature of these collisions, the raptor species involved, reporting practices and effectiveness of measures to prevent bird strikes are not well understood. A coordinated approach under the Raptors MOU would add to the work of ICAO by departing from a position of Raptor Conservation. A coordinated approach under the Raptors MOU could help Signatories and relevant stakeholders to identify the scale of the issue, information gaps, exchange experience, improve understanding of risks and develop proportionate measures that balance flight safety measures with raptor conservation obligations. This proposal does not presume a uniform level of risk across all Signatories and their aerodromes; rather, it seeks to establish a forum through which information and experience is shared to allow for improved management of this issue.

3. There is a relevant precedent under the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (AEWA). The European Goose Management Platform (EGMP)[2] established a Flight Safety Task Force in 2023 to assist Parties in coordinating and catalyzing activities related to goose management and flight safety. Its work provides a useful institutional example of advancing the work on bird strikes.

4. The idea of establishing a Raptor Flight Safety Working Group under the Raptors MOU was presented at the Eleventh Meeting of the Technical Advisory Group to the Raptors MOU (TAG11). The TAG endorsed this proposal and asked to prepare a document to allow for decision making by Signatories at MOS4 (UNEP/CMS/RAPTORS/TAG11/Report).

Proposal to establish a Raptor Flight Safety Working Group

5. Pursuant Rule 13 of the Rules of procedures (see document UNEP/CMS/RAPTORS/MOS4/Doc.3) the MOS can establish Committees and Working Groups to carry out its functions. Each Committee and Working Group shall elect its own officers. As a general rule, sessions of Committees and Working Groups shall be open to Signatories and Observers, unless the Chair of the Committee or Working Group, on request of a Signatory, determines otherwise.

6. It is proposed that the Meeting of Signatories establish a Raptor Flight Safety Working Group under the Raptors MOU. The Working Group would provide an international forum to identify issues relating to raptors and flight safety within the MOU's geographical scope; catalyze and support relevant activities to address these issues; and report on progress through the Raptors MOU Coordinating Unit.

[1] International Civil Aviation Organization (2026) 2022-2024 Wildlife Strike Analyses (IBIS) (UNEP/CMS/RAPTORS/MOS4/nf.26)
[2] https://egmp.aewa.info/

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7. As set out in the draft Terms of Reference presented in Annex 1 of this document, participation would be open to designated governmental representatives of all Signatories, experts and stakeholder organizations designated by state authorities from Signatories and Range States, admitted observer organizations and other experts as required. The working group would consist of a chair, a coordinator and general members. A voluntary coordinator is already available. The Working Group would initially operate mainly electronically, with no specific funding allocated under the Raptors MOU.

Recommended actions

8. The Meeting is requested to.

a) Establish the Raptor Flight Safety Working Group under the Raptors MOU;
b) Adopt the Terms of Reference for the Raptor Flight Safety Working Group contained in the Annex to this document;
c) Mandate the Coordinating Unit to organize the follow-up process, including inviting Signatories and relevant Range States to designate representatives and experts, facilitating the initial constitution of the Working Group, and supporting the election of its Chair at its first meeting;
d) Invite Signatories and relevant Range States to identify appropriate governmental representatives and, where relevant, national experts and stakeholder organizations to participate in the Working Group;
e) Encourage members and observers to contribute expertise and in-kind support, noting that no specific funds are allocated under the Raptors MOU for the Working Group; and
f) Request the Working Group Coordinator to report on progress to the Coordinating Unit, the Technical Advisory Group and subsequent Meetings of Signatories, in accordance with the Terms of Reference.

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Annex 1

Draft Terms of Reference for the Raptor Flight Safety Working Group

Role

The role of the RAPTOR Flight Safety Working Group is to:

1) assist the Raptors MOU Signatories in identifying issues related to flight safety and raptors within the geographical scope of the Raptors MOU;
2) coordinate and catalyse the implementation of activities related to raptor management in relation to flight safety;
3) assist and support the Signatories in the implementation of activities related to raptor management and flight safety; and
4) monitor and report on the implementation of these activities to the Meeting of Signatories via the Coordinating Unit.

Tasks

The Raptor Flight Safety Working Group will:

- develop and support the implementation of an international interdisciplinary cooperation framework for dealing with interaction between raptors and flight safety;
- assist in other ways as requested by the Signatories.

Membership

The Raptor Flight Safety Working Group will be open to (1) designated governmental representatives of all Raptors MOU Signatories, (2) representatives of national expert and stakeholder organisations as designated by the state authorities from all Signatories and Range States, (3) representatives of admitted observer organisations, and (4) other experts as required. The working group consists of a Chair, a Coordinator and general members.

The Chair of the Raptor Flight Safety Working Group may invite and admit international expert and stakeholder organisations as well as individual experts to the Task Force via the Coordinating Unit and in consultation with the members of the Raptor Flight Safety Working Group and relevant Range States, as necessary.

Officers

The Chair will be elected at the first meeting of the Working Group to oversee the operations of the Task Force in close cooperation with the coordinator and the Coordinating Unit.

Communication

The Raptor Flight Safety Working Group will mainly conduct its work electronically as well as via e-mail and online communication platforms, as appropriate. A dedicated webpage will be established within the Raptors MOU Website.

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Meetings
Periodical meetings will be planned and organised by the Chair and Coordinating Unit. These meeting will initially be held online. No specific funds are allocated under for the Raptor Flight Safety Working Group. Chair, Coordinator and members are encouraged to arrange or support face-to-face meetings if opportunities present themselves, for example in combination with other meetings or conferences.

Reporting

A brief report on the general progress of the Raptor Flight Safety Working Group (convening, membership, activities, etc.) will be presented by the Working Group Coordinator to the Coordinating Unit of the Raptors MOU at each meeting of the Technical Advisory Group and to the Meeting of Signatories.

Financing

No specific funds are allocated under the Raptors MOU for the Raptor Flight Safety Working Group. The operations of the Working Group, including that of the voluntary Coordinator, are therefore to be financed primarily by its members and observers, such as through in-kind support in form of personnel time or separate funding.

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