

Fourth Meeting of the Technical Advisory Group | Online, 13-15 December 2021

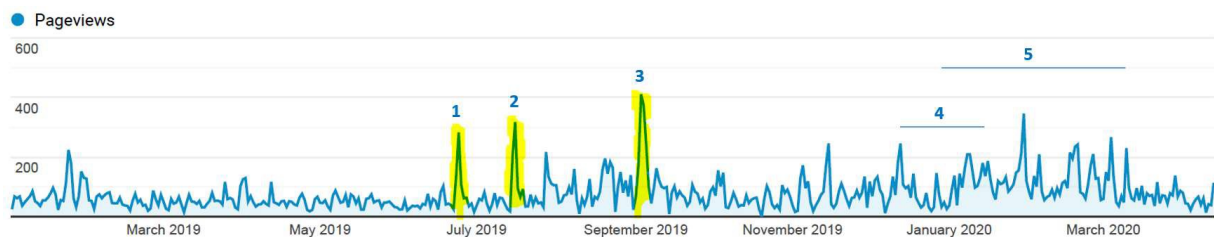
REVIEW OF ACTIONS FROM THE THIRD MEETING OF TAG

Prepared by the Coordinating Unit of the Raptors MOU

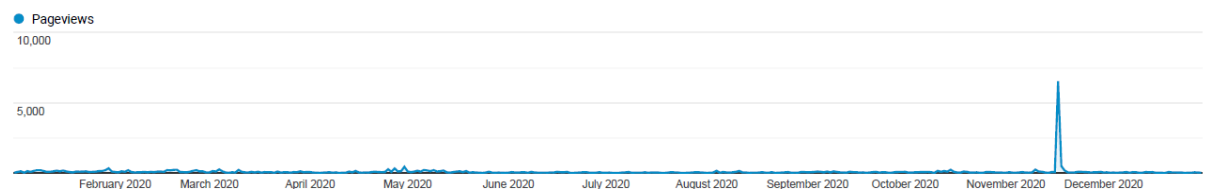
1. The following is a summary of the progress made (as of 20 October 2021) on the 26 Actions that emerged from the Third Meeting of TAG, held in Sempach, Switzerland, in October 2018.

2. Action TAG3-1: Coordinating Unit to check with the CMS Secretariat IT team the amount of traffic on the Raptors MOU website.

Completed – A detailed analysis was supplied by the CMS webmaster and was shared with TAG members. An overview of the number of views on respective pages of the website is shown below within the time frame of 1 January 2019 until October 2021:



The several peaks in traffic to the website result from specific communications to stakeholders and web stories published by the CU that direct users to the website. Higher traffic in December 2020 was due to communications and outreach around the CMS Office – Abu Dhabi’s 10th Anniversary. Similarly, the higher traffic during January, February and March 2020 were as a result of communications materials prepared around CMS COP13, including a press release, three web stories and extensive social media activity.



A large peak in November 2020 was triggered by the release of a web story “From Prey to Protected Species: How the tide turned for the Amur Falcon¹”.

¹ <https://www.cms.int/raptors/en/news/prey-protected-species-how-tide-turned-amur-falcon>



Peaks in 2021 were also due to the release of web stories and communications to the Raptors MOU mailing list such as “Celebrating Raptor Conservation Legends²” (30 March 2021) written by the TAG Chair, and “Granting a Safe Passage for Migratory Birds in Lebanon³” (26 May 2021).

The analytics show that efforts to develop communications materials such as web stories and publications, their promotion via social media and targeted mailings to Range States result in higher traffic on the Raptors MOU website. The CU is constantly seeking interesting content to publish on the website and to share via social media and/or with our Range States, and would be happy to receive such information from TAG members.

3. Action TAG3-2: TAG members to provide feedback to the Coordinating Unit before the end of 2018 on the five key tasks for 2018 – 2020 identified in the SakerGAP draft Implementation Plan.

Completed.

4. Action TAG3-3: Coordinating Unit to consider providing Letters of Support, on request, to organizations and individuals approaching governments to implement the Vulture MsAP.

Ongoing – Three Letters of Support issued. The Coordinating Unit stands ready to consider additional Letters of Support upon request.

5. Action TAG3-4: Coordinating Unit to share briefing with TAG on the Egyptian Vulture New LIFE Project.

Completed – The Coordinating Unit shared with TAG members the first mid-term project report from November 2019. Project newsletters are available here and on the project website: www.lifeneophron.eu

6. Action TAG3-5: TAG to consider if there was a need to address the definition of the concept of Vulture Safe Zones after the publication of the paper by BirdLife International.

Ongoing – The paper by BirdLife International was published in early 2019 and comprised a review of the origin and differing approaches to Vulture Safe Zones adopted in various countries and regions. An outline definition is also included, as follows:

“In basic terms a ‘Vulture Safe Zone’ is an appropriately sized geographic area in which targeted conservation measures are undertaken to address the key threats relevant to the vulture species present. Whether the threat is diclofenac in South Asia, lead poisoning in south-western California or poison baits in Cambodia, Zambia or Kenya, conservation benefits of a VSZ approach, should be achievable when implemented with consideration to local circumstances and an understanding of the species specific threats”.

Subsequent bilateral discussions between BirdLife International and the Coordinating Unit led to the suggestion that the Raptors MOU could promote the wider concept of “Raptor Safe Zones” as opposed

² <https://www.cms.int/raptors/en/news/celebrating-raptor-conservation-legends>

³ <https://www.cms.int/raptors/en/news/granting-safe-passage-migratory-birds-lebanon>

to focusing solely on vultures. An agenda item on Raptor Safe Zones is included in the TAG4 Meeting Agenda for discussion.

7. Action TAG3-6: TAG should continue with efforts to provide accessible, digestible guidance ("Guides to Guidance") on measures to address various key threats to migratory raptors. Mr Botha to raise this at meeting of IUCN SSC Specialist Group chairs in October 2019.

Ongoing – Mr. Botha raised this matter in plenary at the IUCN SSC Leaders Meeting in Abu Dhabi on 9 October 2019. The feedback he received was that a number of guideline documents are currently under review and that some have recently been updated. All IUCN guidance documents are readily accessible on the IUCN portal. Mr. Prommer has compiled and shared with the Coordinating Unit (in March 2020) a collection of guidance documents in regards to electrocution, which have been uploaded to the Raptors MOU website under "Threats". TAG is kindly requested to provide more input on how this section of the website can be evolved and to share with the CU any relevant information and/or documents that can be published here.

8. Action TAG3-7: Ralph Buij and Munir Virani to prepare a proposal about tagging Tawny Eagles, to follow their behaviour as indicators of poisoning, and to circulate to TAG members for comment after this meeting.

Completed – Mr Buij and Mr Virani provided an update that 16 Tawny Eagles have been tagged thus far in southern Kenya.

9. Action TAG3-8: On behalf of TAG, the Coordinating Unit will propose to Signatories at MOS3 that they consider adding the Order Acciptriformes to the MOU text and its Annexes.

Completed – This proposal is included in the amendments to MOU text and Annexes for discussion at TAG4 and for subsequent submission to MOS3.

10. Action TAG3-9: On behalf of TAG, the Coordinating Unit will propose to Signatories at MOS3 that they consider adding Northern Boobook to replace Brown Boobook in Annex I of the MOU.

Completed – This proposal is included in the amendments to MOU text and Annexes for discussion at TAG4 and for subsequent submission to MOS3.

11. Action TAG3-10: Coordinating Unit to write to Israel advising that, based on current information, TAG felt unable to support a proposal to list Bonelli's Eagle on Annex 1 to the Raptors MOU but that further evidence showing its migratory behaviour of wild birds would be welcome.

Completed – The Coordinating Unit wrote to Israel as planned. A detailed response, including new data on the movements of tagged wild Bonelli's Eagle, is anticipated from Israel.

12. Action TAG3-11: Coordinating Unit to invite Switzerland to prepare a paper for MOS3 on their national approach to raptor conservation, including the way in which key sites of international importance for migratory raptors had been identified.

Ongoing – The Coordinating Unit has already alerted Switzerland informally and will issue a formal invitation in advance of MOS3. Switzerland has been invited to present their national approach to raptor conservation at TAG4.

13. Action TAG3-12: Coordinating Unit to re-contract BirdLife International to include consideration of enlargement of the geographic scope of the Raptors MOU, before assessing the interest of the Signatories States and approaching the prospective additional Range States.

No longer being considered at this time – After discussion with BirdLife International and the Chair and Vice-Chair of TAG, it was decided that for the time being, there is limited capacity to enlarge the geographic scope of the Raptors MOU.

14. Action TAG3-13: Coordinating Unit to write to Department of Environmental Affairs in South Africa raising the issue of the need for a joint Action Plan with Namibia on the Black Harrier.

Ongoing – The Coordinating Unit sent letters to South Africa and Namibia but no official response received as yet (July 2021). The Vice-Chair was in contact with the South African Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment and feedback was given that their available staff were engaged in the drafting of the National Vulture Conservation Action Plan and the Plan of Work for the National Wildlife Poisoning Prevention Working Group, both of which are reaching expected completion by the end of 2021 or early in 2022 and resources do not allow them to become engaged in another process until this has been completed. Ms Mafumo from the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and Environment of South Africa will update TAG members of the development on the national action plans at the TAG4 meeting.

15. Action TAG3-14: TAG agreed to review a proposal to promote the preparation of a Global Species Action Plan for Steppe Eagle to be circulated by the Coordinating Unit following receipt of the anticipated communication from the Russian Raptor Research and Conservation Network.

Completed – In October 2019, the Coordinating Unit circulated the proposal, accompanied by a short questionnaire, to all Signatories to the Raptors MOU and 87 Range States of the Steppe Eagle. All survey respondents support the development of a single or multi-species action plan, however, no offer of financial contribution was made. Many were interested in contributing their expertise and being involved in the development of a plan. Funding is needed to take forward the development of an action plan.

16. Action TAG3-15: Priority species for International Species Action Plans were identified as: Black Harrier, Steppe Eagle, Tawny Eagle (following collection of more data), Beaudouin's Snake Eagle, Pallas's Fish Eagle and Steller's Sea Eagle.

Ongoing – The priority species will be highlighted in the pilot Conservation Status Assessment Report which will be considered by TAG4 and shared with Signatories in advance of MOS3.

17. Action TAG3-16: TAG recommended the following 11 species to be used as pilot species for a site network analysis by BirdLife International: Grasshopper Buzzard, Ruppell's Vulture, Cinereous Vulture, Lappet-faced Vulture, Mountain Hawk Eagle, Steppe Eagle, Wahlberg's Eagle, Egyptian Vulture, Lanner Falcon, Pallas's Fish Eagle and Amur Falcon.

Completed – BirdLife International will provide a report on the pilot site network analysis for TAG4.

18. Action TAG3-17: TAG to create guidance on satellite tagging raptors, Andre Botha as the lead.

Completed – The IUCN Species Survival Commission Vulture Specialist Group hosted a 3-day workshop in August 2019 in the United Kingdom, which was attended by more than 25 experts with extensive experience in the tagging of vultures. During the workshop, participants collated a vast amount of information on the different techniques and developed a set of step-by-step guides, which is accessible on the VSG website and Raptors MOU website⁴.

⁴ <https://www.cms.int/raptors/en/page/research-and-guidelines>

19. Action TAG3-18: Des Thompson to contact Steve Redpath regarding best approaches to conflict resolution.

Ongoing – Steve Redpath retired. The Chair contacted Arjun Amar, Professor at the University of Cape Town who will attend TAG4 and give a short presentation on wildlife and human conflict resolution.

20. Action TAG3-19: Tilman Schneider, on behalf of the CMS Secretariat, to follow up on the letter that the CMS Secretariat sent to the European Commission (EC) regarding diclofenac.

Completed – The Coordinating Unit received a response to the letter regarding the use of veterinary diclofenac from the Directorate General for Health and Food Safety, DG SANTE, in January 2020. Since EU members states had not reported any diclofenac-related deaths among vultures and other necrophagous bird populations to date (January 2020), they concluded that they had no indication or evidence that the risk mitigation measures implemented by national competent authorities would be inadequate to contain the risk effectively. The Coordinating Unit shared the response with TAG members and members of the Vulture MsAP Coordination Team and a working group has been established to produce a guidance document on the threat posed by NSAIDs to vultures and other scavenging raptors to share with all Raptors MOU Range States. Furthermore, TAG members and members of the Vulture MsAP Coordination Team have been following-up with the EC on this matter since there have been several reported cases of birds dying from flunixin intoxication in Europe, and one case of diclofenac poisoning of a cinereous vulture indicating that NSAIDs do reach the vulture food chain and are killing European vultures.

21. Action TAG3-20: Coordinating Unit to create, with the help of TAG, and post a web story on volunteering related to raptor conservation/TAG members' motivation to study raptors.

Ongoing – In progress.

22. Action TAG3-21: Coordinating Unit to encourage Signatories to submit female nominations of future TAG members in advance of MoS3.

Ongoing – The Coordinating Unit plans to include a reference to this request from TAG in a future communication to Signatories at the appropriate time.

23. Action TAG3-22: All TAG members agreed to record a one-minute video clip outlining why they are interested in birds of prey, and to submit these to the Coordinating Unit as soon as possible.

Ongoing – The Coordinating Unit has received submissions from several TAG members which are posted on the TAG webpage⁵ and is standing by to receive submissions from others.

24. Action TAG3-23: Coordinating Unit to commission BirdLife International to draft guidance/standard form that could be used by Signatories to propose amendments to the species list of the Raptors MOU (Annex 1).

Completed – The Coordinating Unit has included this task within the work plan developed with BirdLife International to provide technical support to TAG.

25. Action TAG3-24: Coordinating Unit to update guidance on preparing national or regional raptor conservation and management strategies to include reference to Resolutions adopted by CMS at COP11 in 2014, COP12 in 2017 and COP13 in 2020).

⁵ <https://www.cms.int/raptors/en/meetings/advisory-committee>

Ongoing – *In progress. The TAG4 agenda includes an item on preparing national or regional raptor conservation strategies.*

26. Action TAG3-25: Coordinating Unit to invite Switzerland, the EU (and the Czech Republic if the anticipated National Strategy is submitted) to present at MoS3, to share their experiences of preparing and implementing raptor conservation strategies.

Ongoing – *The Coordinating Unit has invited Switzerland, South Africa and Norway to contribute to a session of National and Regional Raptor Conservation Strategies at TAG4.*

27. Action TAG3-26: Coordinating Unit to circulate the Swiss Raptor Conservation Guidelines (once submitted) and prepare a short, appealing web story as publicity to inspire Signatories to prepare their raptor conservation strategies.

Completed – *Switzerland submitted their ‘Raptor and Owl Conservation in Switzerland - Strategic Guidelines and Management Priorities’ document to the Coordinating Unit in July 2019. The Coordinating Unit published a web story⁶ and circulated an email to all Signatories to highlight the Swiss achievement and to encourage similar actions at national level. Some positive responses and contributions were received which resulted in the Coordinating Unit developing a new National/Regional Strategies webpage⁷ to showcase efforts by Signatory States.*

Action requested:

TAG is requested to take note of the progress and consider the outstanding actions.

⁶ <https://www.cms.int/raptors/en/news/switzerland-submits-national-guidelines-protect-migratory-raptors>

⁷ <https://www.cms.int/raptors/en/documents/national-regional-strategies>
