



Memorandum of Understanding
on the Conservation of
Migratory Birds of Prey in
Africa and Eurasia

Distribution: General
UNEP/CMS/Raptors/TAG4/Doc.6.1

1 November 2021

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

REVIEW OF THE TAG WORKPLAN 2016-2020

Prepared by Coordinating Unit of the Raptors MOU

1. The second Meeting of Signatories to the Raptors MOU, in October 2015, took note of the “Work Plan for the TAG until the Third Meeting of Signatories”. The Coordinating Unit revised and reformatted the Work Plan prior to the Third Meeting of TAG (TAG3), including amending the title of the document to “Raptors MOU – Technical Advisory Group (TAG): Outline Intersessional Work Plan (2016 – 2020)” (see Annex A).
2. The latest updates to the Work Plan are indicated as: Status (October 2021). The Coordinating Unit will present these updates at TAG4 during Agenda Item 6.1. Other agenda items will provide the opportunity for TAG to consider selected major activities under the work plan.

Action requested

TAG is requested to take note of the updates.

Annex A:

Raptors MoU – Technical Advisory Group (TAG): Outline Intersessional Work Plan (2016 – 2020)

MoU – Activity 1: Improvement of legal protection

1. Consider amendments adopted by MoS2 to Annex 1 (species) and amend Table 3 (sites) of the Action Plan, and in particular:
 - a) consider further possible candidate Annex 1 species in light of changes to their status as placed under Categories 1, 2 and 3 on basis of global population trends, and categorisation of existing Annex 1 species;
 - b) consider further comments from the Signatories, make recommendations as to the updating of Table 3 of the Action Plan;
 - c) consider any further changes to the geographic coverage of Annex 2 of the MoU.

Status (November 2018): All of the above items were covered within the consultancy contract with Birdlife International (BLI): All three Activities were granted separate Agenda Items for discussion at TAG3.

Status (October 2021): BLI continued providing technical support through a contract with the Coordinating Unit and proposed amendments to Annex 1 and Table 1 (species) as well as to Table 3 (sites). TAG was consulted through an intersessional online meeting in 2021 and via emails in preparation to TAG4. All three Activities have dedicated Agenda Items for consideration by TAG4.

2. Consider any further changes on raptor taxonomy and nomenclature in relation to species listings within the MoU, having regard to CMS Resolution 11.19.

Status (November 2018): Covered within the BLI consultancy contract: In progress but no changes anticipated (except insertion of Order - *Accipitriformes*).

Status (October 2021): Covered within the BLI technical support contract mentioned above.

Threats – Activity 2: Protect and/or manage important sites and flyways

3. Assess and review threats to Annex 1 species and make recommendations on appropriate measures to alleviate these problems prioritising work on the most threatened species and exploring funding and other avenues to stimulate the development of international species action plans.

Status (November 2018): Covered within BLI consultancy contract. [Need to link with proposed Review of the MoU Action Plan, see Task 6.18 (below)] Activity is granted a separate Agenda Item for discussion at TAG3.

Status (October 2021): A pilot Conservation Status Assessment Report of the raptors covered by the MOU will be produced as part of the BLI technical support to TAG and will be presented to MOS3 for consideration. BirdLife will present a concept at TAG4 under Agenda item 6.5 for TAG to consider and contribute to. Resources have been earmarked by the Coordinating Unit for the completion of the International Sooty Falcon Action Plan. The development of an Action Plan for the Steppe Eagle is supported by Signatories and Range States however no offer of voluntary financial support has been made to take this forward.

4. Consider the need for guidance on species re-introduction measures specific to raptors, and in particular:
- a) advise on any opportunities for international co-operation related to possible re-introduction programmes; and,
 - b) advise the Saker Falcon Task Force, as appropriate.

Status (March 2018): It was concluded the Interim TAG had addressed Task 2.4 by deciding to apply the IUCN Guidelines regarding re-introductions. AEWA had recently adopted [Guidelines for the Translocation of Waterbirds for Conservation Purposes: Complementing the IUCN Guidelines](#) which David Stroud thought might be relevant for raptors as well. It was suggested that a supporting document on raptor re-introductions, available for the Signatories, would be helpful. David suggested that TAG produce a 'Guide to Guidance', which would effectively gather existing guidance into a concise list of resources. He kindly volunteered to compile a first draft. Nick Williams also pointed out that re-introduction was likely to be considered and included as part of the development of the Multi-species Action Plan for Vultures.

Status (November 2018): David Stroud shared a link to AEWA's '*Conservation Guidelines: Format and Future Priorities*' via the online Workspace. The [Vulture MsAP](#) was developed and adopted by Parties at CMS COP12 in Manila, Philippines (October 2017). It includes a specific section on conservation (captive) breeding and re-introduction. [Guide to Guidance on captive breeding and re-introduction under preparation.](#)

Status (October 2021): Reintroductions and reinforcements are covered by the IUCN Guidelines for Reintroductions and Other Conservation Translocations. Miguel Ferrer will present on reintroduction programmes in Spain at TAG4 which will open a discussion on the potential scope of further work on the issue by TAG.

5. Advise on gaps in current information on key breeding areas, stop-over, refuelling, bottleneck, other congregational and non-breeding sites along raptor flyways, and:
- a) make recommendations on how these might be filled, and
 - b) advise on appropriate approaches for the conservation and management of critical areas.

Status (March 2018): Nick Williams suggested that Activity 2.5 could at least be partially covered within the proposed contract with BirdLife International (BLI). Neil Deacon suggested species could be grouped according to flyways. Vicky Jones said data was available for the IBA component but complicated for the SPA sites in Table 3 (List of Sites) of Annex 3 of the MoU. Focussing on Category 1 species might be too restrictive so David suggested one way of approaching this would be to look at a few carefully selected species (noting migration ecology) and explore a methodology on these species only. It was agreed that consideration being given to including Activity 2.5 within the contract with BLI.

Status (March 2018): Covered within BLI consultancy contract. Considered dependent upon finalising the Table 3 List of Sites. Activity was granted a separate Agenda Item for discussion at TAG3.

Status (October 2021): Covered within the BLI technical support contract. A pilot site network analysis report will be made available at TAG4. TAG4 will consider this activity under Agenda Item 6.4.

6. Building on existing reviews and exchanges of information with Signatories concerning the negative impacts on raptors arising from collision and electrocution from power-lines, make recommendations to Signatories as to the best means of engaging with the power generation and distribution sectors to address these impacts.

7. Exchange guidance related to the mitigation of negative impacts of other energy generation sectors (e.g. wind and solar), and make recommendations to Signatories to address impacts.

Status (March 2018): Key aspects of Activities 2.6 and 2.7 are included within the CMS Multi-species Action Plan to conserve African-Eurasian Vultures (Vulture MsAP) adopted by CMS COP12 in November 2017 and are incorporated in draft Strategic Implementation Plan for the Saker Falcon Global Action Plan (SakerGAP) which includes a Flagship Project to either install or retro-fit a million new or existing electricity poles to make them 'bird-safe'; and, considered by the Energy Task Force overseen by the CMS Secretariat. A Recommendation on combatting electrocution of birds had been adopted at the IUCN World Congress (September 2016, which includes the need to engage with the power industry (win-win situation for both, including economically). A 'Guide to Guidance' document was proposed and Mátyás volunteered to produce a resources list. An International Conference on the threats posed to birds by electrocution and poisoning took place in Hungary (November 2016).

Status (November 2018): Threats of electrocution and collision covered in both [SakerGAP](#) and Vulture MsAP with Implementation plans in preparation for both these initiatives. Progress made by several countries and agencies (e.g. International Association of Falconry and Conservation of Birds of Prey (IAF) led drafting of [IUCN Recommendation WCC-2016-Rec-098-EN](#) and establishment of dedicated website – www.birdelectrocution.org). UAE announced USD 1 million funding for Project to Combat Electrocution of Raptors at Flyways Summit (April 2018). 'Guide to Guidance' regarding preventing electrocution of raptors and mitigating the potential threat posed by renewable energy under preparation.

Status (October 2021): An Electrocution Discussion Group was established in 2020 under the Saker Falcon Task Force (STF). The Terms of Reference (TOR) for this Discussion Group has been developed and further work is expected by the end of 2021 as well as improved collaboration with the CMS Energy Task Force (ETF). The investment of ca. USD 1 million by the Mohamed Bin Zayed Raptor Conservation Fund to retrofit mid-voltage powerlines in Mongolia is expected to be completed by the end of 2021 and to have a significant impact on the local breeding population. A dedicated [webpage](#) on the Raptors MOU website collates guides relating to electrocution and collision as well as other threats. TAG was invited to provide input and comments into the IAF's *Reference note: Quick Guidance for Preventing Electrocution Impacts on Birds*.

8. Provide recommendations on approaches to tackling the issue of illegal persecution including:
- the value of technologies such as electronic tracking methods as means of assessing the extent and location of persecution hotspots, x-ray monitoring, and DNA techniques;
 - possible approaches to conflict resolution – where conflicts with other interests may be an ultimate driver for illegal killing; and,
 - possible approaches to addressing persecution where illegal killing may be a long-standing practice with cultural elements.

Status (March 2018): An overarching Intergovernmental Task Force on Illegal Killing, Taking and Trade of Migratory Birds in the Mediterranean (MIKT) convened by CMS is leading on this topic.

Status (November 2018): Contributed inputs to two MIKT meetings (Egypt, July 2016 and Malta, June 2017) and also IAF led gathering on IKB (raptors) in the MENA Region held in Abu Dhabi, UAE in April 2017. Parties adopted voluntary use of an [IKB National Scorecard](#) at CMS COP12 in Manila, Philippines in October 2017. In addition, BLI has published two important reports covering, IKB in the Mediterranean Region (2015) and IKB in Europe, Central Asia and the Middle East (2017). Awaiting assessment of national contributions to initial IKB National Scorecard baseline exercise. Plans in place to host at least one IKB Workshop, probably in the Middle East region, as part of the EU LIFE funded project to conserve the Egyptian Vulture along its Western flyway (in late 2019 or 2020).

Status (October 2021): Contributed input into the Fourth Meeting of the MIKT online (June 2021). Ongoing contribution to an EU-led good practice document on combating IKB. The Coordinating Unit supported an IKB workshop in the Middle East (24-28th October 2021), coordinated by BirdLife Middle East Secretariat as part of the Egyptian Vulture New LIFE Project.

Habitat conservation and management – Activity 3: Raise awareness of issues and guidance

9. Contribute scientific and technical advice on issues and good practice brought to attention of TAG by Signatories to support (a) conservation and management activities and promulgation of guidance, and (b) capacity building to develop guidance, practices and other activities.

Status (March 2018): Activities 2.4 and 2.7 include work relating to preparing ‘Guides to Guidance’. TAG2 concluded that no additional action was required on Activity 3.9 until such time as Signatories bring new issues to the attention of TAG.

Status (November 2018): No further action anticipated.

Poisoning – Activity 4: Raise awareness of problems faced by birds of prey and measures needed to conserve them

10. Contribute technical expertise on raptors and their poisoning to the work of the CMS Preventing Poisoning Working Group and CMS Energy Task Force.

Status (March 2018): Nick Williams highlighted the support already provided by the Coordinating Unit to the CMS Preventing Poisoning Working Group (PPWG) and that this was anticipated to continue. Also he anticipated the Coordinating Unit’s participation in the CMS Energy Task Force. The Head of the Avian Program at CMS informed TAG that a Regional Implementation Plan on Preventing Poisoning in the Southern African Region was being prepared based on discussions at a Regional Workshop Preventing Poisoning of Migratory Birds that took place in Cape Town, South Africa in August 2015. No specific additional inputs were immediately required by TAG.

Status (November 2018): The Regional Implementation Plan on Preventing Poisoning in the Southern African Region had been published. Poisoning (in various forms), was identified as the most critical threat to African-Eurasian vultures during development of the Vulture MsAP. The 2nd meeting of CMS PPWG was held back-to-back with the Vulture MsAP Overarching Workshop in Toledo, Spain in February 2017 to exploit synergies. CMS Secretariat to provide an update in their report to TAG.

Status (October 2021): No activities were undertaken in the frame of the PPWG due to a lack of available resources. Nevertheless, several activities on preventing poisoning were delivered. CMS Resolution 11.15 (Rev.COP13) specifically addressed the threats to vultures and other scavenging birds of prey deriving from carcasses of animals treated with Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs (NSAIDs). A Working Group on NSAIDs was established by TAG in June 2021 and is working to produce a questionnaire and a factsheet on the risks posed by the veterinary use of some NSAIDs, targeting the governmental agencies involved in the licencing of veterinary drugs and the veterinarian institutions and associations. Following [CITES Decisions 18.88 - 18.93](#) on illegal trade of West African vultures, a Working Group on West African Vultures was established and at the 31st Animal Committee, draft resolutions were prepared, with the support of TAG and the Coordinating Unit. Such resolutions, if endorsed by CITES will contribute to the implementation of the Vulture MsAP. The Coordinating Unit is member of the ETF and the TOR of the Electrocution Discussion Group under the STF includes cooperation and coordination with the ETF.

11. Make recommendations on priorities for raising awareness of raptor conservation needs in different regions.

Status (March 2018): Given all the other tasks to be done, as TAG2 it was decided that Activity 4.11 be put on hold, with no immediate action planned by TAG.

Status (November 2018): Awareness raising to be included within Implementation Plans for both the SakerGAP and Vulture MsAP. No further action anticipated.

Guidance – Activity 5: Monitor bird of prey populations, carry out conservation research and take appropriate remedial measures

12. Make recommendations as to the crucial needs for common standards for methods, drawing from a review of national experiences and good practices, to:

- a) estimate the size of raptor populations;
- b) undertake monitoring of populations and migratory patterns; and,
- c) assess the threats, current conservation actions (including existing protective designations at sites), condition of habitats, and thus consequent need for further management and protection measures at important sites.

Status (March 2018): Nick Williams pointed out that there are already a considerable number of publications (books and papers) on methodologies relating to the issues covered by Activity 5.12 a) and b) but that with 93 species now listed on the Raptors MoU, this was considered to be a rather significant piece of work. Vicky Jones said she thought that BLI might be able to contribute to Activity 12 c) but that it might be preferable to delay this work until the amended Table 3 of Annex 3 (List of Sites) had been formally adopted by Signatories (anticipated at MoS3). Nick Williams highlighted that the TAG Work Plan had been 'noted' by MoS2 so this could allow some flexibility for TAG in light of detailed consideration. Activity 5.12 a) and b) could be addressed via another set of 'Guide to Guidance'. David Stroud pointed out that Wetlands International had reviewed important sites for AEWA and may be able to provide some assistance in avoiding pitfalls.

Status (November 2018): Task 5.12 c) is covered within BLI consultancy contract (to be completed once Table 3 List of Sites is finalised). During the African Regional Action Planning Workshop to develop Vulture MsAP held in Dakar, Senegal in October 2017, a Task Group was established to consider developing standardised research methodologies and protocols relating to vultures. Ultimately, the Task Group decided that the amount of work required was unrealistic and the activity was abandoned.

Status (October 2021): A *Guide for Attaching Research devices to Vultures and Condors* produced by the IUCN Vultures Specialist Group was shared on a [dedicated page](#) on the Raptors MOU. BLI technical support contract includes the development of a Raptor Conservation Status Assessment report to be prepared in time for MoS3. A concept will be presented at TAG4. Furthermore, the Pilot Site Network Analysis will provide insights onto how well the network of sites currently identifies are potentially effective in protecting migratory birds of prey.

13. Develop further appropriate mechanisms for the sharing of data on raptors for the better implementation of the MoU's objectives.

Status (March 2018): No specific immediate actions agreed by TAG.

Status (November 2018): To be considered as part of the consultancy to Review the MoU Action Plan, see Task 6.18 (below). Jari gave a short introductory presentation on the European Raptor Biomonitoring Facility at TAG3.

Status (October 2021): The consultancy to Review the MoU Action Plan, did not cover this activity. No further action anticipated.

Reporting – Activity 6: Supporting measures and horizon scanning

14. Advise the MoS and Coordinating Unit on the perilous state of vultures, noting MoS2 concerns, and provide inputs to multi-species action planning.

Status (March 2018): Activity 6.14 delivered by actively contributing to the development and review of the Vulture MsAP, led by the Coordinating Unit and adopted by CMS Parties at COP12 (November 2017). Six TAG members attended at least one of the five Action Planning Workshops. In addition, at CMS COP12, Parties adopted all of the eleven Appendix 1 species listing proposals (10 Old World vultures and Steppe Eagle) that TAG had recommended and that members commented upon last year.

Status (November 2018): Development of a Vulture MsAP Strategic Implementation Plan included as part of a consultancy contract let by the Coordinating Unit (September 2018). A separate presentation to TAG3 is planned on this topic.

Status (October 2021): The Vulture MsAP Strategic Implementation Plan (IP) was published on the website in February 2020. The IP identifies 11 flagship projects of which several are currently being implemented to different degrees by partners and Signatories, despite the lack of resources for a coordination framework.

15. Report on issues of concern and for action relating to conservation, management, science and awareness-raising on the horizon, and advise on new conservation practices.

Status (March 2018): David Stroud kindly volunteered to update the Horizon Scanning paper he had developed in advance of MoS2. Andre Botha offered to contribute to this.

Status (November 2018): A Horizon Scanning paper is under preparation and a separate session has been programmed in the Agenda for TAG3.

Status October 2021: The paper on emerging issues by David Stroud was presented at TAG3 and informed the discussion. Progress on relevant actions has been significant. A 'Guide for Attaching Research devices to Vultures and Condors' has been produced by the IUCN VSG and is available on the Raptors MOU website. Work is ongoing on NSAIDs (see work on poisoning above). Also, the involvement of the Raptors MOU in the MIKT and the progress in that process contributes to addressing the issue of mass killing of raptors in the Middle East.

16. Develop an interim National Reporting Form, linked to the CMS Online Reporting System.

Status October 2021: A National Reporting Form and Cooperating Partner Reporting Form based on the CMS Online Reporting System has been prepared, reviewed by TAG and circulated to Signatories for pilot use prior to MoS3. The reporting forms will be presented for formal adoption at MoS3.

17. Advise on the integration of national reporting with strategic planning processes.

18. Review the MoU's Action Plan (Annex 3 of the MoU) in advance of MoS3.

Status (March 2018): Nick Williams reported that the Coordinating Unit had not yet received any National or Regional Strategies from Signatories. Given that Signatories would be reporting on their progress in delivering these Strategies, this presented challenges for the development of a National Reporting Form. It was concluded that Activities 6.16, 6.17 and 6.18 (taking note of Activity 5.13 – above) would be addressed together.

Status (November 2018): Coordinating Unit drafted Terms of Reference for this piece of work, including incorporating development of a Strategic Implementation Plan for Vulture MsAP. The consultancy was advertised and Dave Pritchard was recruited in September 2018. Work is now underway to progress the Review of the Action Plan to the Raptors MOU and a separate session was programmed in the TAG3 Agenda. Draft raptor conservation strategies had now been submitted to the Coordinating Unit by Switzerland (national) and the European Commission (regional) – a separate session on this topic was included in the TAG3 Agenda.

Status (October 2021): The analysis by Dave Pritchard resulted in the Review of the Raptors MOU Action Plan published and posted on the Raptors MOU website in April 2020. It highlights the successes and challenges of the MOU implementation and identified the need to improve clarity and the linkages between the MOU, its Action Plan and the activities identified in Table 2. A separate session on this topic is included in the TAG4 Agenda.

19. Support and advise the various CMS Task Forces, as appropriate.

Status (March 2018): Via the Coordinating Unit, TAG had contributed to three key CMS Task Forces covering the threats from IKB, energy and poisoning.

Status (November 2018): Ongoing support being provided. Activities to be considered under Agenda Item entitled Report by the CMS Secretariat.

Status (October 2021): Ongoing support being provided. Activities to be considered under TAG4 Agenda Item entitled Report by the CMS Secretariat.

20. Support other relevant scientific and technical actions for the Raptors MoU listed in the Programme of Work (PoW) on Migratory Birds and Flyways (CMS Resolution 11.14).

Status (March 2018): Development of the Vulture MsAP was the most significant item in the Flyways PoW (available on the CMS website as [Resolution 11.14](#)).

Status (November 2018): No specific additional tasks are assigned to the Raptors MoU in the Flyways PoW. No additional further action anticipated.