

53rd Meeting of the Standing Committee

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IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME OF WORK (2020-2023)

(As of July 2022/ Prepared by the Secretariat)

Summary:

The present document provides the status of implementation of the Programme of Work (POW) for 2020-2023, as of July 2022, since the 52nd Meeting of the Standing Committee (StC52, 21-29 September 2021).

The Standing Committee is recommended to take note of the document and to give comments and guidance, as necessary, to the Secretariat.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME OF WORK (2020-2023)

Background

1. The [Programme of Work \(POW\) for 2020-2023](#), as it was adopted by the thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CMS (February 2020, Gandhinagar, India), contains all mandates falling under the responsibility of the Secretariat as well as those that fall under the Standing Committee and Scientific Council and their Working Groups that require the Secretariat's support.
2. These mandates comprise all CMS Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) including those serviced by dedicated personnel, such as those on Dugongs, Birds of Prey, Sharks and IOSEA, as well as Action Plans; Programmes of Work; Initiatives; Concerted Actions and provisions of Resolutions and Decisions which were adopted by COP13 as well as earlier ones still in force.
3. The POW covers only programmatic activities for which voluntary funding is required, and does not reflect the core operational activities of the Secretariat nor the costs associated with them.

Report on implementation

4. The current POW has proven to be an important tool guiding the work of the Secretariat and its fundraising efforts.
5. The present document consists of two sections: (i) a narrative report on the status of implementation, including the challenges the Secretariat has been facing and planned steps to carry out each activity, and (ii) the POW in tabular form which provides a brief overview through a traffic-light rating system.
6. For each activity, where funding is required, the funding source is indicated. This document needs to be read in conjunction with document UNEP/CMS/StC53/Doc.10.2 on *Resource mobilization*.

Recommended actions

The Standing Committee is recommended to take note of the document and to give comments and guidance, as necessary, to the Secretariat.

OVERARCHING ISSUES

MIGRATORY SPECIES IN THE POST-2020 GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY FRAMEWORK

Status and Achievements

Details on progress in the implementation of activities under this item are provided in Document UNEP/CMS/StC53/Doc.17 *Migratory Species in the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework*.

STRATEGIC PLAN

Status and Achievements

Details on progress in the implementation of activities under this item are provided in Document UNEP/CMS/StC53/Doc.11 *Progress in the Implementation of the Strategic Plan for Migratory Species 2015-2023*.

Challenges

Lack of resources and delays in the finalization of the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework have impacted on the extent and timing of activities.

Next steps

Proposals on next steps are included in Document UNEP/CMS/StC53/Doc.12 *Options for a follow-up to the Strategic Plan for Migratory Species 2015-2023* for StC consideration.

NATIONAL REPORTING

Status and Achievements

A revised template for National Reports was finalized by StC52. At the time of writing, the Secretariat is working on the preparation of the online version of the template using the Online Reporting System, with a view to making it available to Parties for the submission of National Reports to COP14. Additional guidance for the compilation of the National Reports is being developed.

Challenges

Financial resources are still to be raised for contracting the analysis of National Reports to be submitted to COP14, as done in previous reporting cycles. In the case of this cycle, the analysis is also expected to inform the assessment of the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Migratory Species 2015-2023.

Next steps

The Secretariat will pursue its fundraising efforts to secure adequate financial resources for the analysis of national reports to be submitted to COP14. Customized online templates for the compilation and submission of national reports are expected to be made available to Parties in the last quarter of 2022.

APPLICATION OF ARTICLE III OF THE CONVENTION

Status and Achievements

Details on progress in the implementation of activities under this item are provided in the Scientific Advisory Services section under "*Conservation Status of Migratory Species*".

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND MIGRATORY SPECIES

Status and Achievements

The Government of Norway provided a generous contribution of €100,000, which was recognized under the Champion Programme in the margins of COP13. The grant, which aims to support CMS work promoting global efforts to reach the 2030 Agenda, has already contributed to the analysis on the direct and indirect impacts of wild meat taking, trade and consumption of terrestrial and avian species. It also contributed to solidifying the ongoing collaboration with the Secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) with the objective to promote integrated approaches for the conservation of land resources and wildlife at the basis of land degradation neutrality and sustainable development.

In late 2021, the Norwegian Government agreed to use the remaining funds to support the capacity of the Secretariat to advance its work on this topic and extend the contract extension of a Junior Professional Officer (JPO) who would assist with a number of relevant workstreams. These include (i) follow up to the analysis of species overexploitation, (ii) work on sustainable infrastructure in line with Decisions 13.130 to 13.134 and (iii) implementation of the CMS Landbirds Action Plan which has among its priorities the establishment of integrated land use policies promoting sustainable farming and management of natural resources.

Further details on progress in the implementation of activities under this item are provided in other sections of this document.

Next steps

The Secretariat plans to continue furthering its work in this area also building on its preliminary analysis highlighting the interlinkages between migratory species and sustainable development published last year in the form of a Factsheet.

IMPLEMENTATION SUPPORT - SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY SERVICES**ATLAS ON ANIMAL MIGRATION****Status and Achievements**

The development of an Atlas on Animal Migration is a long-standing initiative of the Convention, which has been included in the Programme of Work since COP11 (Quito, 2014). It is expected to be developed with a modular approach.

Atlas for migratory mammals in the Central Asian region: a first version of this module was completed in 2019 thanks to financial support from the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety of Germany (BMU) and the Swiss Government. It was published as CMS Technical Series Publication No. 41. Funding for an update and its further development into an interactive online webtool to facilitate greater accessibility and usability has been secured within a joint project proposal with the UNEP Vienna Office submitted to the German International Climate Initiative (IKI).

Atlas of bird migration in the Eurasian-African region: development of this module, funded by the Ministry of the Environment and Protection of Land and Sea of the Government of Italy and undertaken by the European Union for Bird Ringing (EURING) under an agreement with the CMS Secretariat, has been completed. The Atlas was launched at an event at the Museum of Migration on the Italian island of Ventotene in May 2022 (a press release concerning the launch can be accessed [here](#)). The interactive Atlas is publicly accessible at this website [Bird Migration Atlas](#).

Marine Turtle Breeding and Migration Atlas "TurtleNet": this online interactive atlas developed by Queensland's Department of Environment and Science (DES) in collaboration with CMS, brings together decades of Australian and global data on nesting, courtship, feeding and migration routes of marine turtles. It has been launched on 16 June 2021 on the occasion of World Sea Turtle Day 2021. Funding aimed at further developing the Atlas, notably increasing the number of migration animations, have recently been secured from the Government of Australia.

Global Initiative on Ungulate Migration (GIUM): the CMS Secretariat is working in partnership with an international team of scientists and conservationists to create the first-ever global atlas of ungulate (hooved mammal) migrations. The detailed maps of the seasonal movements of herds worldwide will help governments, indigenous people and local communities, planners, and wildlife managers to identify current and future threats to migrations, and advance conservation measures to sustain them in the face of an expanding human footprint. The Global Initiative on Ungulate Migration (GIUM) was launched with the publication of a commentary titled "Mapping out a future for ungulate migrations," in the May 7 issue of the journal *Science*. A meeting between representatives of the international team of scientists developing the module and the CMS Secretariat, aimed at reviewing progress in the initiative and discuss further steps was held at the CMS Secretariat premises in Bonn in May 2022.

Next steps

With a view to providing a consistent framework for the development of further modules of the Atlas, the Secretariat is developing a concept for the Global Atlas of Animal Migration, building on the experience gained and the analytical tools developed within the modules already being realized. To this effect, the Secretariat is planning to convene a workshop in which the participation of members of the Sessional Committee, interested observers and partners in the development of current modules is foreseen.

CONSERVATION STATUS OF MIGRATORY SPECIES

Status and Achievements

Through Decision 13.24 COP13 requested the Secretariat to further develop the preliminary review of the conservation status of migratory species submitted to COP13, and provided guidance towards its further development, including the initiation of an in-depth review of the conservation status of individual CMS-listed species, and undertaking an assessment of the impact of direct use on the conservation status of species listed on Appendix I. The same deliverables are reflected in the Programme of Work.

Through Decision 13.17 *Application of Article III of the Convention Regarding International Trade in Appendix I-listed Species*, COP13 also requested the Secretariat to undertake, within the scope of Conservation Status Report, an assessment of the impact of international trade on the conservation status of relevant Appendix I species.

Fundraising activities undertaken after COP13 by the Secretariat in respect to the implementation of Decisions 13.24 and 13.17 have succeeded in raising significant resources. In particular, resources have been provided by the Government of Australia (Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment), the Government of Switzerland (Federal Office for the Environment FOEN), and by the Government of the United Kingdom (Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs – DEFRA). Thanks to the above-mentioned contributions, the Secretariat has been able to establish an agreement with the UNEP - World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC) to assist with undertaking the activities foreseen in Decision 13.24 (a) - (c) and 13.17. As an initial step, the CMS Secretariat and UNEP-WCMC have been working towards the development of a framework, criteria and methodologies to undertake the activities. Three documents were submitted to the fifth meeting of the Sessional Committee of the CMS Scientific Council (ScC-SC5, 28 June – 9 July 2021) for review:

- a. A proposed framework for a review of the conservation status of migratory species that can serve as a basis for the compilation of the report for COP14;
- b. A template for a set of case studies providing an in-depth assessment of Appendix I species;
- c. A proposed methodology for a rapid assessment of Appendix I taxa to provide further insights on (i) the impact of direct use and trade on the conservation status of Appendix I-listed taxa, and (ii) possible implications on eligibility for inclusion in Appendix I.

The meeting finalized and endorsed the documents.

Based on the methodology for rapid assessment mentioned above, drafts of an *Assessment of the impact of direct use and trade on the status of Appendix I-listed species* and a *Review of the eligibility for listing of Appendix I-listed species* have been produced by UNEP-WCMC and are currently being reviewed by the Sessional Committee of the Scientific Council.

A list of species included in Appendix I, annotated as to whether they are also on the CITES Appendices have also been produced in response to Dec.13.16.

The selection of species to be the object of case studies providing an in-depth assessment of Appendix I species is being undertaken in consultation with the Sessional Committee, considering the review of Appendix-I species mentioned above.

Challenges

Delivery of this activity is dependent on successful fundraising. While significant resources have already been secured, additional funding will be needed to allow the full development of the deliverables foreseen by the relevant COP13 Decisions mentioned above.

Next steps

Discussions are underway with UNEP-WCMC to extend the original agreement to cover also the assessment of the conservation status of individual Appendix II-listed species and advance the development of the conservation status report, using additional resources obtained from the Governments of Australia, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. Fundraising efforts to secure additional resources are continuing.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND MIGRATORY SPECIES

Status and Achievements

With respect to climate change-related activities included in the Programme of Work, no significant implementation has been possible due to a lack of funding. In particular, no progress could be made in (i) the development of a baseline curriculum for webinars and e-learning courses to build capacity on climate change and migratory species among natural resource professionals and decision makers; (ii) undertaking a review of evidence for climate change impacts on migratory species and an assessment of migratory species vulnerability to climate change; (iii) the development of guidelines for adaptation measures. Concepts for the review, assessment and guidelines under (ii) and (iii) have been developed and are used for fundraising purposes.

The possibility of convening an online workshop of the Working Group on Climate Change and Migratory Species under the Scientific Council is being explored by the Secretariat in consultation with the COP-appointed Councillor for Climate Change. The workshop should focus on the development of the advice requested by COP13 Decision 13.128 *Climate Change and Migratory Species* and on the development of a follow up instrument to the Programme of Work on Climate Change and Migratory Species annexed to Res. 12.21 *Climate Change and Migratory Species* and due to expire in 2023.

With a view to promoting the establishment of climate-resilient networks of sites for migratory species the Secretariat, jointly with Wetlands International, led the development of a project concept titled 'Climate Resilient Flyways Asia: Developing a climate resilient network of important sites in the East Asian - Australasian Flyway and the Central Asian Flyway for the conservation of migratory waterbirds in the context of climate change and climate change adaptation'. The concept was submitted to the International Climate Initiative (IKI) of the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU) of the Government of Germany by Wetlands International as lead implementing organization of a consortium that includes the CMS Secretariat, the East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership Secretariat, the Arctic Migratory Bird Initiative and BirdLife International as other implementing partners and the Governments of China, India, Indonesia and the Philippines as political partners. The application unfortunately was not successful.

Challenges

Lack of funding is the main impediment to progress in this area.

Next steps

In relation to the establishment of climate-resilient networks of sites for migratory species, the Secretariat intends to explore opportunities to submit the proposal to other donors/funding schemes. Fundraising efforts to secure resources are going to be continued. Promising discussions have been held in particular with the Government of the United Kingdom.

CONNECTIVITY

Status and Achievements

The two activities foreseen by the Programme of Work in relation to this issue correspond to mandates directed to the Scientific Council specified by Decision 13.114.

Thanks to funding provided by the Government of Switzerland in 2021, initial work on all the elements of Decision 13.114 is being done and is to be submitted to the CMS Scientific Council Working Group on Ecological Connectivity (ScC WG) for its review and input.

This WG was established by the 5th meeting of the Sessional Committee of the Scientific Council (ScC-SC5, 28 June-9 July 2021), that also agreed on its [TOR](#) and workplan. In addition to interested ScC members, the WG now includes numerous experts as well as representatives of intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations.

The primary objective of the WG is to support the delivery of relevant tasks concerning ecological connectivity contained in the Programme of Work of the Sessional Committee of the ScC. In addition, the WG is expected to support the implementation of relevant Resolutions and Decisions directed to the ScC, as well as the implementation of connectivity-related goals and targets of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework and the further development of its monitoring framework. More broadly, the WG aims to provide a platform to discuss and exchange information and scientific findings on ecological connectivity-related matters.

In line with the ScC mandate contained in [Res. 10.8 \(Rev.COP13\)](#), [Decision 13.12](#) and the Programme of Work of the Sessional Committee, the WG might also play an important role in contributing to an initial scoping to form the basis of a fast-track assessment on ecological connectivity under the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES). The 9th Plenary session (IPBES-9, 2-9 July 2022) decided that this scoping process will be undertaken by the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and the Bureau of IPBES with input from relevant multilateral environmental agreements and other organizations for consideration by IPBES-10 in the second quarter of 2023. The Secretariat is in the process of understanding the terms of the WG's participation in this scoping process which will be communicated to the WG as soon as they become available. Further details are contained in Document UNEP/CMS/StC53/Doc.13 *Cooperation between the Intergovernmental Science Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) and CMS*.

In addition, significant progress has been made to promote ecological connectivity in other fora and global processes in collaboration with many partner organizations. Efforts resulted in the inclusion of ecological connectivity in several key international policies and strategic documents including:

- many elements of the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (i.e. Goal A and Targets 1, 2, 3 and 12) concerning spatial and urban planning; development of protected and other conserved areas, wildlife management, climate change adaptation, and others;
- provisions of the UNEA 5.2. Resolution 9 on Sustainable and Resilient Infrastructure assisting sustainable infrastructure development that minimizes ecosystem fragmentation;
- UNEA5.2 Declaration, UNCCD COP15 “Land, Life and Legacy” Declaration and Second Edition of the Global Land Outlook which underpin restoration interventions in the context of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration for 2021-2030. Further details are provided in the Resource Mobilization and Interagency section under *Synergies and Partnerships*;
- programming directions of the eight replenishment of the Global Environment Facility (GEF-8) which gives strong emphasis to the implementation of area-based conservation measures integrated into the wider landscapes and seascapes that also aim at restoring, maintaining and improving ecological connectivity.

Next steps

The Secretariat will continue supporting the work of the ScC WG on Ecological Connectivity and engage its members in the delivery of expected outputs to be reported to the meeting of the Sessional Committee preceding COP14.

The Secretariat will keep seeking opportunities to promote ecological connectivity including the through the effective implementation of policies and projects that addressing connectivity in the conservation of migratory species.

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM**Status and Achievements**

Through Decision 13.135 COP13 requested the Secretariat to, subject to availability of resources, collate existing information on best practices and impacts of tourism on wildlife as basis to develop guidelines for sustainable tourism on wildlife interactions. Fundraising efforts to support this activity have not been successful so far. However, in-kind support towards a compilation of a report covering the mandate of the Decision is being provided by the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) of the UK Government through an intern.

Challenges

Lack of funding is the main impediment to progress in this area.

Next steps

Further development of the report being prepared, with a view to its submission to COP14 for consideration.

SMALL GRANTS PROGRAMME**Status and Achievements**

The CMS Small Grant Programme (SGP) is fully dependent on external resources, and is activated when sufficient funding becomes available to justify a call for project proposals. A pledge to support the programme in the intersessional period between COP13 and COP14 was made by the Government of India.

Since the administrative arrangements required to disburse small grants have become increasingly complex and cumbersome over the years, the Secretariat held consultations with partner organizations to explore possible synergies with similar established mechanisms. Talks are under way with UNDP, which implements the GEF Small Grants Programme, to identify areas and initiatives of common interest that could be the focus of upcoming calls for projects in the context of the programme.

Next steps

The Secretariat will make the necessary and most efficient arrangements to utilize these funds in support of small-scale projects.

LIGHT POLLUTION

Status and Achievements

Through Decision 13.138 COP13 requested the Secretariat to:

- a) suggest to its partners that one of the next World Migratory Bird Days should be dedicated to highlighting the effects of light pollution on migratory birds (and also taking into account its effects on bats, marine turtles, insects and other affected animals);
- b) subject to the availability of resources, prepare guidelines for adoption by COP14 on how to effectively avoid and mitigate the indirect and direct negative effects of light pollution for those taxa not yet in the focus of the Guidelines for Wildlife, including Marine Turtles, Seabirds and Migratory Shorebirds taking also into account other existing guidance as relevant

Activities relevant to World Migratory Bird Day are reported in the Information, Communication and Outreach section under *Communication*.

As regards preparation of guidelines on mitigation of the effects of light pollution, the Secretariat, in consultation with the Sessional Committee of the Scientific Council, has been working on the development of guidelines for landbirds and bats, aimed at complementing the guidelines already adopted by COP13. Draft guidelines have been developed through a consultancy thanks to a voluntary contribution provided by the Government of Germany, and with guidance provided by the COP-appointed Councillor for Marine Pollution, Mark Simmonds. A CMS Technical Workshop on Light Pollution, facilitated by Mark Simmonds, was convened from 29 31st March 2022 to provide input to the development of the guidelines.

Next steps

Additional funding to further the development of the draft guidelines have recently been provided by the Government of Australia. The Secretariat, in consultation with the chair of the Scientific Council, plans to consolidate the draft guidelines so far developed with the guidelines already adopted by COP13, and submit the consolidated document to the Sessional Committee for review.

INSECTS

Status and Achievements

Through Decision 13.129, COP13 requested the Scientific Council to undertake the following activities for consideration by the meetings of its Sessional Committee during the intersessional period leading to COP14:

- a) identifying and prioritizing the main factors causing the established loss of insect biomass;
- b) collecting relevant information regarding the current insect decline, and assessing its cascading effects on migratory insectivorous animal species;
- c) developing and publishing guidelines for the most urgent or prioritized actions identified.

To support the activity of the Scientific Council, the Secretariat has been actively fundraising.

Thanks to voluntary contributions obtained from the Governments of Germany and Australia, and following the recommendation of the Sessional Committee of the Scientific Council at its 4th meeting in 2019, the Secretariat would proceed with the implementation of the Decision with a step-wise approach, starting with the development of an assessment covering a) and b) above which would provide the necessary background to evaluate the need for guidelines in consultation with the Scientific Council. At the time of writing, the Secretariat is in the process of identifying a suitable partner for the development of the assessment.

Challenges

This is a new area of work for CMS, and the Secretariat is facing some difficulties in identifying a suitable partner for the development of the assessment above-mentioned.

Next steps

The Secretariat counts to contract the development of the assessment above-mentioned shortly. The assessment so produced will be submitted to the Sessional Committee of the Scientific Council for its consideration and decision on any further work on this matter.

IMPLEMENTATION SUPPORT – AQUATIC SPECIES

MOUS AND STANDALONE ACTION PLANS

IOSEA Marine Turtle MOU

Status and Achievements

The Secretariat and Advisory Committee have continued systematically addressing the implementation of the tasks assigned to them, respectively, in the [Work Programme 2020-2024](#) agreed by Signatory States at their eight meeting (Vietnam, October 2019). Regular updates are provided to Signatory States, along with offers of support to them to stimulate implementation of the measures foreseen for them.

Two further well-attended sub-regional meetings were held since the last report, with reports being available under the following links:

- [1st Sub-Regional Meeting North-Western Indian Ocean, 29 November 2021](#)
- [3rd Meeting of the Northern Indian Ocean Marine Turtle Task Force, 13-14 December 2021](#)

The Advisory Committee, consisting of ten experts appointed by Signatory States, continues having regular calls, which help to maintain momentum with implementation of the many activities requested by the Signatory States. Much appreciated by the Secretariat and the Signatory States is the AC Members' regular participation in these calls despite the challenges posed by the spread of time zones (U.S. west coast to Australian east coast).

A new page was created on the MOU website for [Capacity-building Resources](#), which contains guidelines mentioned and products requested in the Work Programme, including a list of IOSEA AC-endorsed research and other priorities, and an overview of funding opportunities and fundraising resources. Further, an update of the [Flipper Tag Series database](#) was produced, which is available online as a searchable table or a PDF. It shows the flipper tag series in use in the IOSEA region, thereby allowing finders of tags to identify where they might have come from, and helping to prevent the duplication of tag codes between countries or projects.

A third issue of the series of species assessments undertaken under leadership of the Advisory Committee was published in March 2022: [Assessment of the Conservation Status of the Hawksbill Turtle in the Indian Ocean and South-East Asia Region](#). The Secretariat has also been able to send a Newsletter at regular intervals. An archive of recent issues can be accessed [here](#).

As a joint initiative with CMS, the [Single Species Action Plan for the Hawksbill Turtle \(*Eretmochelys imbricata*\) in South-East Asia and the Western Pacific Ocean Region](#), which covers part of the range of the MOU, was adopted on 2 June 2022. The first four countries to adopt the Action Plan for their use, Cambodia, Myanmar, Philippines and Viet Nam, are all Signatory States to the MOU. Other range states, whether CMS Parties, MOU Signatories or neither, are encouraged to consider adopting the plan for their countries. More details on the SSAP can be found below under the heading "Marine Turtles".

Challenges

While the MOU has an agreed scale of voluntary contributions, the support of Signatories in implementing the MOU through the Secretariat has always been very insecure. Besides issues related to staffing security, this also means that activities foreseen in the work programme, such as organization of meetings and capacity-building workshops or development of guidance material, cannot be implemented in a timely fashion. This also includes saving up sufficient resources in order to be able to hold the next Meeting of Signatory States.

Next steps

Systematic implementation of the priorities identified in the Work Programme 2020-2024 will continue. A key priority is mobilizing resources for technical support and capacity-building, as well as providing support to Signatory States to implement conservation actions.

Preparations are ongoing for meetings of all [four sub-regions](#) (Western Indian Ocean, North-Western Indian Ocean, Northern Indian Ocean, and South-East Asia+) in 2022 or early 2023.

The Advisory Committee is continuing its work on a capacity-building strategy, which will be the basis for renewed efforts in this regard, with several (virtual or in-person) capacity-building workshops in priority countries foreseen. The Secretariat and AC have also continued working towards development of an online survey for the IOSEA constituency (both past and present) to review the performance of the MOU over the last two decades. To that, a comprehensive set of Key Performance Indicators is in the final stages of development.

The 9th Meeting of Signatory States is foreseen to take place in late 2023 or early 2024 (the latter being more likely to avoid clashes with CMS COP14), and the search for a host country is ongoing.

Sharks MOU

Status and Achievements

The Advisory Committee continued to hold regular online meetings to work on the various tasks of the Committee, which includes amongst other things to develop regional priorities for shark and ray conservation. The Advisory Committee contributed to a number of CMS processes, in particular, supporting the implementation of Concerted Action for Angelsharks and Rhino Rays. AC members were instrumental in drafting the Single Species Action Plan for the Angel Shark, which was finalised during an online meeting in June 2022.

Challenges

The financial situation of the MOU remains difficult, with only a few donors providing regular voluntary contributions, some of which are earmarked for extra-budgetary activities with tight deadlines for implementation. The Secretariat remains understaffed when viewed against the volume of work that could be achieved. The organization of the 4th Meeting of the Signatories has been delayed due to Covid-19 and related travel restrictions. Bearing in mind that the MOU is trilingual and has a global membership spanning many time zones, it was seen as a challenge to hold the meeting online.

Next steps

The Secretariat informed Signatories that the 4th Meeting of the Signatories will be held in person, at a location yet to be finalized and is now scheduled for the week of 27 February to 2 March 2023.

Pacific Islands Cetaceans MOU

Status and Achievements

The 4th Meeting of the Signatories ([MOS4](#)) was held online on 5-6 August 2021, in collaboration with the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) in the framework of the ACP third phase of the Capacity Building Project for the implementation of Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) in the African, Caribbean and Pacific regions (ACP MEAs III), and back-to-back with SPREP meetings to refine the draft Regional Marine Species Programme (now finalized and published [here](#)).

MOS4 discussed regional cetacean conservation issues (such as disentanglement, fish aggregating devices, marine tourism, IMMAs, strandings, climate change, deep sea mining), and endorsement of the draft Whale and Dolphin Action Plan 2022-2026. It dealt with some institutional issues, and agreed on action points and recommendations, to give guidance on the way forward.

Challenges

There are no regular voluntary contributions to support this instrument. Accordingly, the Secretariat coordinates this MOU without dedicated staff time, which severely limits the assistance it can give to Signatories.

Next steps

The Government of Australia has pledged AUD30,000 to implement some priority activities arising from MOS4. Securing such funding for the MOU and implementation of activities remains a priority. Pledges for voluntary contributions are encouraged and most welcome.

Dugong MOU

Status and Achievements

The Dugong MOU Secretariat continues to be hosted by Environment Agency – Abu Dhabi (EAD), on behalf of the Government of the United Arab Emirates and is part of CMS Office – Abu Dhabi. The hosting arrangement with EAD provides the core budget of the Dugong MOU Secretariat, as well as its premises and other practical support. EAD has hosted the Dugong MOU Secretariat since 2009, and the partnership was extended in February 2020 until December 2023.

The Secretariat is currently liaising with the Government of Thailand with regards to hosting the Fourth Meeting of Signatory States (MOS4) and an associated international conference on dugong and seagrass conservation tentatively scheduled for either last quarter of 2023 or first quarter of 2024. MOS4 will provide a Programme of Work for the period 2024-2026 to support the MOU's implementation.

In 2021-2022, the Secretariat undertook the following activities:

- A new coordinator for the Dugong MOU was recruited and onboarded in March 2022. Gabriel Grimsditch was recruited from UNEP in Nairobi, Kenya;
- A new project manager for the IKI Seagrass Ecosystem Services Project was recruited and onboarded in March 2022. Yasmeen Tel Wala was recruited from FAO in Rome, Italy;
- The IKI Seagrass Ecosystem Services Project has progressed significantly with activities on the ground ongoing and the project on track as per the project document. 6 technical partners and 6 national partners in 5 countries have been mobilized and are collaborating to deliver the project. The project has also been successfully amended and extended until December 2023, with approval from IKI;
- The Dugong MOU Conservation and Management Plan has been reviewed by an expert consultant, and a draft update is available. The reviewed plan will be sent out for review by the Technical Advisory Group to the Dugong MOU and in advance of the MOS4;
- The four community-based dugong and seagrass conservation projects in Bahrain, Indonesia, New Caledonia and Tanzania have all received their small grants and project activities are ongoing. The project in New Caledonia on awareness-raising on the importance of dugong and seagrasses has been completed and final deliverables have been received. In Bahrain, the first training for government officials and other partners on implementing the Dugong Catch and Bycatch Questionnaire has been carried out. The projects in Bahrain, Indonesia and Tanzania have all been extended into Q2 of 2023;
- A draft report on 'Options for handling an orphaned dugong calf: advice to policy makers and managers' has been produced by an expert consultant and has been peer reviewed. It will go for publication as a CMS Technical Series.

Challenges

A turnover in staff managing the Dugong MOU has meant a hand-over period and a steep learning curve related to Dugong MOU and IKI Seagrass Ecosystem Services project issues. This challenge is being overcome through a supportive and continuous hand-over process with other staff.

Another challenge experienced in the past year has been related to ongoing travel restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Although restrictions are now easing, the ongoing pandemic has caused challenges related to workshop planning and especially MOS4 planning.

Next steps

The Secretariat will focus on the following priorities in the coming year:

- Planning and preparing for the MOS4 and associated international conference on dugong and seagrass conservation. The plan is still to organize the MOS4 in Thailand.
- Developing a new strategy and results-based framework for the Dugong MOU.
- Establish a Technical Advisory Group (TAG) comprises of approximately 10 experts to provide technical support and guidance to the Dugong MOU. This process will be initiated by developing a Terms of Reference (ToR) and a call for nominations for an updated Dugong Technical Advisory Group.
- Organizing regional workshops related to implementing the Dugong MOU Conservation and Management Plan.
- Continued implementation of the IKI Seagrass Ecosystem Services Project and the small grants projects.

Single Species Action Plan for the Loggerhead Turtle in the South Pacific

Status and Achievements

CMS and the Australian Government convened a half-day workshop on this Action plan, on 25 March, 2022, as part of the 40th International Sea Turtle Symposium, which was held online. It provided an excellent opportunity for Range States and experts to meet and discuss progress and challenges in the implementation of the Action Plan and to update the threats table in the plan.

Next steps

The meeting agreed to establish a working group of interested stakeholders. Australia has made some funds available for projects to help implement the plan.

IMPLEMENTATION OF CONCERTED ACTIONS

Angelshark

Status and Achievements

The implementation of the [Concerted Action for the Angelshark](#) in the Mediterranean region includes specifically the development of a Single Species Action Plan. To this end, and following preliminary discussions with Range States in 2021, the Range State Meeting on the Single Species Action Plan for the Angelshark in the Mediterranean Sea took place online on 5 – 6 July 2022. The meeting finalised the draft Single Species Action Plan and discussed options for its governance. These documents will be submitted for formal adoption at CMS COP14.

The draft plan was prepared by the Secretariat in cooperation with the Advisory Committee of the Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of Migratory Sharks (Sharks MOU).

Next steps

A small working group was established at the above meeting to consider both priority projects for funding in 2022 and to further elaborate the governance structure for the implementation of the plan.

Atlantic Humpback Dolphin

Status and Achievements

This Concerted Action aims to develop an action plan for this Critically Endangered species, which should be agreed at a meeting of Range States. As a first step, a Steering Committee comprised of stakeholders (governmental, NGO, Secretariat) was formed, which advises the Secretariat on the development of the draft action plan and will support it actively in the practical preparation of the meeting, including seeking funding, venue and date selection, definition of agenda, invitation of participants, as well as all other practical and logistical aspects.

A consultant was hired in November 2021 to develop in collaboration with local experts a first draft of the Action Plan, using funds provided by the Principality of Monaco under the Migratory Species Champion programme. This draft was consulted on with the Steering Committee in May and June, and a revised draft is under preparation.

Challenges

The implementation of this Concerted Action requires significant time commitment from the Secretariat, which is difficult to realize given the limited staff time available, and no dedicated funds available to increase capacity.

The Range State meeting foreseen in the Concerted Action also requires very significant funding, which to date has only partly been secured. A virtual meeting is not seen as a suitable solution, given the unequal access to stable internet services across the region.

Next steps

The draft Action Plan will shortly be sent to CMS Focal Points and other relevant stakeholders in all range states for their comments, based on which the consultant will develop a further revision. Depending on the nature of comments, a further round of written consultations might be undertaken, or the process will move on to the planning stage of the Range State meeting.

Arabian Sea Humpback Whales

Status and Achievements

No action since the last report

Challenges

Over a three-year period, close to US\$1 million is estimated to be required to implement the Concerted Action's work plan in full. The ASWN coordinator role (previously funded with a small grant from Emirates Nature) has not been funded since April 2019, although a dedicated group has been working to maintain momentum on several initiatives advancing the Concerted Action's implementation. The effectiveness of the Concerted Action would be significantly enhanced with urgent government engagement and support, particularly to scope a range-wide process to develop a CMP. Progress has been slowed by the COVID pandemic, and new relationships are being developed as a result of personnel changes in government posts in the two key range states.

Next steps

The Secretariat will continue to explore options to support implementation of the Concerted Action, while pursuing the engagement of range states jointly with the IWC Secretariat to consider and initiate development of an ASHW CMP.

Rhino Rays

Status and Achievements

The Secretariat is closely liaising with the IUCN Sharks Specialist Group, the Sharks MOU Advisory Committee, and donor countries to support the implementation of the Concerted action for Rhino Rays.

Significant funding for the development of a regional Conservation Strategy and Action Plan for the Indo-West Pacific was secured from the government of Australia as voluntary contribution to the CMS Sharks MOU. The activities will also contribute to developing and implementing regional priorities for conservation of species included in the Appendices of CMS and Annex 1 of the Sharks MOU, specifically critically endangered sawfish in the Indo-West Pacific.

Next steps

A conservation planning workshop is planned for the Indo-Pacific region in late 2022.

IMPLEMENTATION OF RELEVANT RESOLUTIONS, DECISIONS AND OTHERS

European Eel

Status and Achievements

The Secretariat, together with the Sargasso Sea Commission have held online discussions with Range States regarding the development of a single species Action Plan.

Challenges

The limited Secretariat capacity is currently the main challenge for making progress on this work.

Next steps

The Secretariat plans to develop a draft Action Plan, hold consultations among the Range States and relevant IGOs and NGOs on the draft Action Plan, and convene another meeting of the Range States.

Polar Bear

Status and Achievements

Following the Biennial Meeting of the Parties to the Polar Bear Agreement in 2020, the Secretariat has been participating in its Climate Change Communications Working Group.

Global Programme of Work on Cetaceans

Status and Achievements

Resolution 10.15 (Rev.COP12) contains a comprehensive work programme for the Secretariat, Scientific Council and its Aquatic Mammals Working Group. This work programme has resulted in the establishment of numerous now independent work streams under CMS, such as those on marine wildlife tourism, aquatic wild meat, and animal culture. It has also contributed to closer collaboration with other relevant organizations, such as the International Whaling Commission.

To facilitate the review of the implementation of the POW to date, preparation of a gap analysis and identification of the priorities for the future period, as foreseen in the related Decision 13.81, the Secretariat concluded a Small-Scale Funding Agreement with CMS partner organization OceanCare, using funds provided by the Principality of Monaco under the Migratory Species

Champion programme. The resulting document will serve as the basis for the development of a new revised POW to be submitted to COP14.

Challenges

Commissioning a review of regional threats to aquatic mammals other than cetaceans is also foreseen. This will require funding and prioritization of species to be addressed first.

Next steps

Also foreseen in the Decisions is the potential development of an Action Plan for cetaceans in the Red Sea region. The first step will be consultation with the Range States. The Secretariat is coordinating internally between the Bonn and Abu Dhabi offices.

Marine Turtles

Status and Achievements

Decision 13.70 requests the development of a [Single Species Action Plan](#) for the conservation of Hawksbill Turtles to address their trade and use in South-East Asia and the adjacent Western Pacific. The SSAP was drafted by the CMS Secretariat in collaboration with the CMS partner organization WWF. It was shared with the Advisory Committee and the Illegal Trade Working Group of the IOSEA Marine Turtle MOU, the Scientific Council of CMS and all Range States for written comments. A revised draft was put before three sub-regional meetings of the Range States for their more detailed comments (10-12 May 2022), and a further revision was presented to, finalized and adopted at a Range State plenary meeting (31 May - 2 June 2022). The plan, as adopted by the Range States, will be presented to the 14th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CMS and the 9th Meeting of Signatory States to the IOSEA Marine Turtle MOU for endorsement.

With the goal '*To address unsustainable use and trade of hawksbill turtles in the South-East Asia and Western Pacific Ocean region and build resilience in the populations*', the SSAP addresses both the domestic and international level and takes into account the complex linkages between community and commercial use.

Challenges

The [Single Species Action Plan for the Hawksbill Turtle in South-East Asia and the Western Pacific Ocean Region](#) was adopted by the first four countries, Cambodia, Myanmar, Philippines and Viet Nam, at the end of the meeting on 2 June 2022. Others indicated their readiness to do so in the near future. Concerted outreach effort to the other States and territories within the range of the SSAP is needed to secure their engagement in the efforts to address the key threats to this critically endangered species.

Next steps

Decision 13.70 also foresees a review of relevant scientific information on conservation and threats to marine turtles, such as climate change, and the development of new recommendations for the conservation of all CMS-listed species of marine turtle, including the preservation of the current nesting beaches and the identification of new nesting beaches. Development of terms of reference for the global review of relevant scientific information on conservation and threats to marine turtles will commence shortly.

Marine Wildlife Watching

Status and Achievements

To assist the Scientific Council with implementation of [CMS Decision 13.68](#), the Secretariat developed draft guidelines for recreational in-water interactions with marine species: cetaceans, sirenians, pinnipeds, marine turtles, sharks, mobulid rays, stingrays, seabirds. This was possible thanks to funding from the Government of Monaco to hire a consultant for the task.

On 9 December 2021, a draft document was circulated to the Members of the Scientific Council, CMS Aquatic Mammals Working Group; Secretariats of ACAP, ACCOBAMS, ASCOBANS, IWC, Common Wadden Sea, SPREP, Dugong MOU, IOSEA Marine Turtle MOU, and the Sharks MOU. Deadline for feedback was 28 February 2022. By the deadline, feedback had been received from 21 experts or organisations.

The guidelines aim to assist Parties in adopting appropriate measures to regulate recreational in-water interactions with marine wildlife in their area of jurisdiction. The guidance complements the *Guidelines on Sustainable Boat-Based Marine Wildlife Watching* (endorsed in [Resolution 11.29 \(Rev.COP12\)](#)) and builds on the review of existing guidelines and issues of concern (available in Annex 2 of UNEP/CMS/COP13/Doc.26.2.5).

Next steps

The Secretariat will produce a revised clean version of the draft guidelines, which will be submitted to the next meeting of the Sessional Committee of the CMS Scientific Council, and to COP14, with associated draft decisions.

Conservation Implications of Animal Culture and Social Complexity

Status and Achievements

Decision 13.104 requests the Secretariat to convene a workshop on Animal Culture and Social Complexity, which is to assist the Expert Group to identify priority species and populations on the CMS Appendices, and to provide advice to Parties on rapid assessment techniques and how to augment existing conservation efforts using insights on aspects of sociality. This workshop was originally planned for mid-2020, and a number of preparatory steps had already been taken, including the identification of a host and venue. Due to the pandemic, the workshop had to be postponed several times.

It is now planned in a different format, with a one-day virtual workshop involving all interested Expert Group members to be held in October 2022 at which sub-groups for intersessional work will be formed and sub-group leaders appointed. A follow-on meeting in early 2023 will then review results of the work of the sub-groups and agree the recommendations to be made to the CMS Scientific Council and Parties.

Further developments are included in the Implementation Support – Terrestrial Species section under “*Chimpanzees*”.

Challenges

Ideally, the second part of the workshop foreseen for early 2023 would be held in-person. At this stage, it is not possible to confirm whether that will be possible due to the pandemic.

Next steps

The Secretariat will continue working closely with the Expert Group Chair and a small steering group of key experts involved in this process to develop the details of the sub-groups to be established and associated timelines.

Aquatic Wild Meat

Status and Achievements

Decision 13.64 outlines the tasks of the Aquatic Wild Meat Working Group. The key focus to date has been on background work necessary for the development of a Wild Meat Action Plan for the Gulf of Guinea for consideration by Range State Parties in the region. A workshop involving key government stakeholders and others is under preparation.

The Working Group and Secretariat have also worked closely with the IWC Small Cetacean Subcommittee on this issue.

While not an official output of the Working Group also worth noting is a [paper](#) developed by several of its members, who undertook a review of the literature and prepared an overview of the contemporary use of aquatic megafauna (cetaceans, sirenians, chelonians, and crocodylians) in the global tropics and subtropics, for 37 species listed on the Appendices of the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS).

Challenges

The main challenge is the lack of staff time and expert capacity.

Next steps

The Working Group is planning targeted outreach to the Collaborative Partnership on Sustainable Wildlife Management. Also, Decision 13.64 foresees the development of a working paper on CMS Appendix I-listed Sharks and Rays that are subject to takes as aquatic wild meat, as well as development of criteria for assessing if any Appendix II-listed sharks and rays should be included within the scope of the Working Group, for consideration by the Scientific Council.

Marine Noise

Status and Achievements

The Secretariat is working with the CMS/ACCOBAMS/ASCOBANS Joint Noise Working Group (JNWG) in order to prepare the report on Best Available Technology (BAT) and Best Environmental Practice (BEP) for publication as an issue of the CMS Technical Series. The JNWG is currently undertaking its second review of the report following comments received from the affiliated Industry Advisory Group.

The Industry Advisory Group supporting the JNWG was formally established in December 2020, and specific efforts to expand the membership to cover all relevant sectors were undertaken throughout 2021.

Next steps

A notification will be sent to Parties in line with Decision 13.58 to solicit input with respect to experiences and lessons-learned in the application of the EIA Guidelines.

Marine Debris

Status and Achievements

CMS COP13 established a new COP Appointed Councillor position for Marine Pollution, and selected Mark Simmonds for the role. His work programme was developed at the 5th meeting of the Sessional Committee of the Scientific Council, and was included in the Aquatic Species POW. The following priority areas were identified:

- Marine debris including Fishing Aggregating Devices (FADs), noting links to the work of the Councillors for Bycatch and Marine Fish;
- Evidence of the effect of persistent organic pollutants (POPs) on marine migratory species; and
- Nutrient Pollution.

Contributing to the implementation of Decision 13.123 in the Asia and Pacific region, the CMS Secretariat lead the Migratory Species Focal Area of the project, "Promotion of Action against Marine Plastic Litter in Asia and the Pacific (CounterMEASURE II)". For more details, please refer to the [webpage](#).

Next steps

The Secretariat, together with the COP-appointed Councillor for Marine Pollution, will prepare documents for COP14 including draft decisions on marine pollution.

Important Marine Mammal Areas (IMMAs)**Status and Achievements**

IMMAs are a global aquatic mammal place-based conservation tool developed by the IUCN Marine Mammal Protected Areas Task Force. The relevance of IMMAs to aquatic mammal conservation was recognised by CMS with Resolution 12.13. The current work on IMMAs related to CMS is led by the former COP-appointed Councillor for Aquatic Mammals who is also the Co-chair of the IUCN Task Force.

To date, 173 IMMAs – which can be found in www.marinemammalhabitat.org – have been identified encompassing habitat of 30+ marine mammal species listed in at least one of the CMS Appendices. Identification of IMMAs based on ad hoc criteria on a regional basis is planned to continue for the coming years, pending availability of funds, while 35 per cent of the world's oceans have been covered by the effort already.

Next steps

A notification will be sent to Parties in line with CMS Decision 13.56 a) to make use of the identified IMMAs; Decision 13.56 c) regarding the dugong; and Decision 13.57 b) to support scientific research about the habitats of marine mammals and other migratory species in the high seas. The Secretariat will continue to engage in the negotiation process for and implementation of the treaty on marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (Decision 13.57 c), and will aim to implement Decision 13.57 a-b with the financial support of the Government of Monaco.

Live Capture**Status and Achievements**

Decisions 13.74 and 13.75 on the subject relate to Parties submitting information on the implementation of the *Best Practice Guidelines relating to the Live Capture of Cetaceans from the Wild for Commercial Purposes* (annexed to Resolution 11.22 (Rev.COP12)). A CMS Notification was circulated in 2021 to request Parties to submit this information through the National Report process.

Next steps

Upon request and subject to the availability of resources, the Secretariat would provide assistance to Parties to amend their national legislation, in line with the recommendations contained in the Best Practice Guidelines mentioned above, and in line with CMS Decision 13.74 b).

Seagrass Ecosystem Project**Status and Achievements**

Seagrass ecosystems provide essential services and have immense importance for local coastal communities, who rely on them for their wellbeing, livelihoods, and food security (commercial and subsistence fishing). In particular, the potential of seagrasses to provide nature-based solutions (NbS) to climate change and their importance for carbon sequestration are rapidly becoming recognized.

The project on “Conservation of biodiversity, seagrass ecosystems and their services – safeguarding food security and resilience in vulnerable coastal communities in a changing climate”, funded by the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU)

through the International Climate Initiative (IKI), aims to improve the conservation status of seagrass meadows and the biodiversity (e.g. dugongs) they support. The project is being implemented in Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand and Timor-Leste. The project assesses the value of seagrass ecosystem services (SES) and will integrate them into decision-making and business models to ensure the sustainability, productivity, and resilience of seagrasses and the coastal communities that rely on them.

The key achievements by the project in 2020-2021 include:

- The website for the Dugong & Seagrass Hub was completed and went live on World Seagrass Day, 1 March 2021: <https://www.dugongseagrass.org/>;
- A total of six additional tools and supporting training materials were developed and/or adapted for use across the project: 1. Blue Carbon assessments; 2. Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) dugong surveys; 3. Household questionnaires; 4. Baited Remote Underwater Video Stations (BRUVs); 5. Open Ocean cameras and remote sensing, and 6. Seagrass-Watch Monitoring Protocols for remote sensing. Relevant methodological tools such as the Dugong questionnaire Survey and the Seagrass Spotter app were translated into local languages to enable use by local communities;
- Sites for data collection on key seagrass ecosystem services assessments and blue carbon have been identified at all the five project sites. The data collection is ongoing at project sites;
- Stakeholder needs assessments and policy gap analyses were conducted at each of the five project sites to underpin and inform the integration of key seagrass ecosystem services guidelines and recommendations into sectoral policies;
- Two business models integrating key seagrass ecosystem services (ecotourism and Spirulina aquaculture) were identified, conceptualized, and are in development to provide sustainable funding to protected areas.

Challenges

The COVID-19 pandemic, compounded delays to the implementation of planned activities. This demanded significant and critical changes in project operationalization and the delivery model. The project team adapted quickly and effectively to travel restrictions and regular remote meetings were held with all national and technical partners.

Natural disasters in the region, such as tropical cyclones and typhoons, also pose a significant risk to project implementation.

To overcome the delays due to COVID the project has been extended until December 2023.

Next steps

The activities to be covered in the year 2022-2023 are as listed below:

- Data on seagrass ecosystem services, blue carbon, seagrass mapping and marine megafauna will be analysed;
- Policy recommendations will be submitted to relevant policymakers for all five sites;
- At least one of the non-signatory Range States involved in the project will be mobilized to sign the Dugong MOU;
- At least one business model will be deployed at each of the five sites specifying reinvestment of funds into conservation;
- All training materials and data will be made available as resources on the Dugong & Seagrass Hub;
- A participatory video will be developed to disseminate information generated and promote greater understanding of seagrass status, threats, and SES;
- The importance of seagrass ecosystems, key SES, and dependent biodiversity will be widely promoted at targeted events and peer-reviewed publications.

Bycatch

Status and Achievements

Since 2018, the Secretariat has managed the CMS component of a MAVA-funded multi partner project to minimize bycatch of seabirds and sea turtles in West African industrial fisheries, in cooperation with BirdLife International. The final phase of the project started in 2020 and ends in October 2022.

The aim of the project is to pave the way for improved fisheries governance in West Africa to ensure that use of marine resources is sustainable. Although the project largely focusses on seabirds and marine turtles, it has also generated some positive outcomes for other species that are fished either directly or indirectly in regional fisheries, such as sharks and rays. With financial support from the governments of Germany and Monaco training materials were developed and training workshops for fisheries observers were held in the context of the project on the identification of shark and ray species, data collection and reporting and safe handling and release. This activity also contributed the implementation of the Sharks MOU Capacity-building strategy. Furthermore, a roadmap on mitigation of bycatch of seabirds and sea turtles has been developed and the development of an atlas on seabird with regards to bycatch hotspots in the region is expected to be finalized.

Next steps

Work with Birdlife International and other partners to seek funding to further build on the work done and undertake further activities in the coming years.

Maltreatment and Mutilation of Seabirds in Fisheries

Status and Achievements

The Fifth Meeting of the Sessional Committee of the Scientific Council (ScC-SC5), decided to establish an Intersessional Working Group (IWG) on the Maltreatment and Mutilation of Seabirds in Fisheries.

The Secretariat is supporting the IWC is chaired by the Scientific Councillor from New Zealand and comprises members who are experts and/or Government representatives with an interest in the Southern Oceans. Data collection on the nature and extent of the problem is ongoing.

Next steps

The IWG will analyse the issue and prepare draft recommendations to ScC-SC6, and to COP14.

IMPLEMENTATION SUPPORT – AVIAN SPECIES

MOUS AND STANDALONE ACTION PLANS

Aquatic Warbler MOU

Status and Achievements

The 4th Meeting of Signatories (MOS4), originally envisaged to be held in 2020, was postponed to a date to be determined. Potential new Signatories will be invited to sign the MOU.

Challenges

Funds for MOS4, and for a sustainable coordination arrangement need to be identified.

Next steps

Identification of date and host country for MOS4 is pending. The Secretariat will continue to try to raise funds for the coordination, and to approach Signatory States regarding the possibility of voluntary contributions for small projects to implement the MOU. Project proposals are still awaited for small projects in Africa (cf. [UNEP/CMS/StC52/Doc.15](#)).

Raptors MOU

Status and Achievements

The Coordinating Unit (CU) of the Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of Migratory Birds of Prey in Africa and Eurasia (Raptors MOU) is hosted by the Environment Agency – Abu Dhabi (EAD), on behalf of the Government of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and is part of the CMS Office – Abu Dhabi. The hosting arrangement with EAD provides the core budget of the Raptors MOU CU, as well as its premises and other support.

EAD has hosted the Raptors MOU CU since 2009, with the partnership being extended in February 2020 until the end of 2023. Discussions regarding the extension of the Partnership beyond 2023 have been initiated between EAD and the CMS Office -Abu Dhabi.

In 2021-2022, the Secretariat undertook the following activities:

Technical Advisory Group to the Raptors MOU

- Supported the organization of the Fourth Meeting of the Technical Advisory Group of the Raptors MOU (TAG4, December 2021). The meeting resulted in the development of technical and scientific recommendations to be submitted to MOS3, including a revised list of species and sites to be covered by the Raptors MOU, and an updated classification of priority species.
- Supported a further meeting of the TAG, held in February 2022, to progress the TAG Work Plan, which is anticipated to be completed in the third quarter of 2022.

Meeting of Signatories & Amendments to the MOU

- Commenced the preparations for the Third Meeting of Signatories (MOS3), including by reviewing the Raptors MOU Text and its Annexes. The Species List in Annex 1 and the species' classifications in Annex 3 (Action Plan) have been updated. Additionally, necessary changes to the official names of Signatories (Eswatini, North Macedonia, Türkiye) have been reflected in Annex 2.
- Developed drafts for species and site listing proposal forms and a draft national reporting form for Signatories and Cooperating Partners.
- Invited Signatories to use the draft national reporting form and sought their feedback on the form developed.

- Compiled Signatories' National Reports.
- Not having received from Signatories a viable proposal to host MOS3, the Secretariat commenced discussions with the UAE Ministry of Climate Change and Environment to be able to host MOS3 in the UAE, tentatively, in March 2023.

National/Regional Raptor Conservation Strategies

- Supported the development of national and regional raptor conservation strategies. This included assisting Pakistan with the development of its National Raptor Conservation Strategy by reviewing a first draft of the document and supporting the organisation of a workshop to finalise it.
- Took note of the experiences in developing national raptor conservation strategies shared by Signatories at TAG4, which may be showcased at MOS3 to encourage additional strategy development.

Saker Falcon Global Action Plan

- Continued to support the work of the Saker Falcon Task Force. This included organizing its eighth meeting and furthering the implementation of the Saker Falcon Global Action Plan (SakerGAP; see section below).

Multi-species Action Plan to Conserve African-Eurasian Vultures

- Supported the implementation of the Multi-species Action Plan to Conserve African-Eurasian Vultures (Vulture MsAP; see section below).

Challenges

Long-standing financial resource gaps continue to constrain the complete delivery of the Raptors MOU work programme, particularly, the implementation of the SakerGAP and Vulture MsAP, which would benefit from Signatories' voluntary contributions. At MOS2, Signatories agreed to a minimum joint annual target of USD 150,000 to be raised in voluntary contributions as a complement to the generous, longstanding core support provided by EAD. This voluntary annual target has never been met since the commitment to it was made, although the number of Signatories providing voluntary contributions to the Raptors MOU has increased in the last two years. COVID-19, as well as staff changes impacted the work capacity of the CU over the period 2021-2022.

Next steps

The Coordinating Unit plans to:

- Organize the Third Meeting of Signatories (tentatively March 2023).
- Support national strategic planning work by Signatories.
- Seek to increase the number of Raptors MOU Signatories, targeting countries based on the number of occurring Globally Threatened migratory birds of prey and presence of bottleneck sites for migratory birds of prey.
- Actively seek opportunities to secure additional financial resources to advance the MOU's work programme.

High Andean Flamingos MOU

Status and Achievements

It was not possible to organize the 2nd Meeting of Signatories to the MOU on the Conservation of High Andean Flamingos and Their Habitats (MOS2) so far due to lack of funds, staffing capacities and the Covid-19 pandemic. Upon becoming a signatory, the Government of Argentina is foreseen to fulfill the role of coordination between 2020 and 2022, as per the agreed coordination mechanism.

The Secretariat has reached out to Bolivia (previous coordination) and Argentina to facilitate further planning.

Challenges

The main challenge is to identify financial resources for coordination, and to implement the MOU's action plan by carrying out coordinated surveys and other conservation measures. Stakeholder groups have brought attention to a detrimental impact of lithium mining activities on the habitats of High Andean Flamingo, .

Next steps

For the planning of MOS2, the Secretariat will continue the correspondence and assist Signatories in raising funds and identifying time and venue.

Middle-European Population of the Great Bustard MOU

Status and Achievements

The implementation of the MOU on the Conservation and Management of the Middle-European Population of the Great Bustard (*Otis tarda*) and its action plan is in progress, including national and cross-border projects.

Challenges

The lack of financial resources for a regular coordination is the main challenge. For the 5th Meeting of Signatories (MOS5), funds and a host still need to be identified.

Next steps

The Secretariat will stay in contact with potential host countries for MOS5.

Siberian Crane MOU

Status and Achievements

Plans for the 8th Meeting of Signatories (MOS8) to the Memorandum of Understanding concerning Conservation Measures for the Siberian Crane (*Grus leucogeranus*) have not made progress due to lack of financial resources, staffing capacities and the Covid-19 pandemic. As the main MOU partner, the International Crane Foundation (ICF) provides in-kind support to the coordination of this MOU through various activities.

Challenges

The main challenge is to ensure sustainable funding to support the coordination through relevant partners such as the ICF, which amounts to €10,000 per year; and to identify funding for MOS8.

Next steps

The Secretariat will continue its efforts to fundraise for the coordination through ICF, and for organizing the MOS8.

Southern South American Migratory Grassland Birds MOU

Status and Achievements

After the virtual Monitoring meeting on the MOU's action plan held in September 2020, the Brazilian authorities and institutions, Ministry of the Environment of Brazil (MMA), and the National Center for Bird Conservation and Research (CEMAVE) of the Chico Mendes Institute for Biodiversity Conservation (ICMbio), have been continuing the MOU's coordination, which is foreseen to run until

2023 as per the agreed rotational mechanism. The next meeting of Signatories (MOS3) is expected to take stock of the implementation of the MOU Action Plan.

Challenges

The main challenge is the raising of funds to support the implementation of the MOU, and for organizing MOS3.

Next steps

The Secretariat will keep contact to the Signatories regarding resourcing, timeline and planning for MOS3, and assist the Range States and the MOU coordination in the implementation of the actions agreed at MOS2 and outlined in the MOU Action Plan in the possible ways.

African-Eurasian Migratory Landbirds Action Plan

Status and Achievements

In 2021, the Swiss Ornithological Institute (SOI) began hosting the Coordination Unit for the African-Eurasian Migratory Landbirds Working Group (AEML WG), funded by voluntary contributions from Switzerland. The Secretariat prepared a small-scale funding agreement (SSFA) for the collaboration with the SOI based on the Terms of Reference which were endorsed in 2021. To implement [Decision 13.38](#), the Coordination Unit began drafted a new Programme of Work (POW) for the AEML WG for the period 2021-2026, which underwent several rounds of reviews by the Secretariat, the AEML Steering Group and WG. In 2021 and 2022, two virtual meetings of the members of the AEML Steering Group and the Coordination Unit were facilitated by the Secretariat. Options for the way forward of the AEMLAP and the new POW were discussed. The new POW is nearly finalized. The SOI also provided a new logo for the AEMLAP.

Challenges

Key challenges for the implementation of the AEML WG POW included budgetary constraints, lack of political will or stability in some key regions, lack of expertise and workforce, and insufficient collaboration between institutions. The membership of the AEML WG has an uneven distribution across the range of AEMLAP. Moreover, to enable long-term coordination of the AEML WG and successfully implement its POW and the AEMLAP, sustainable and longer-term funding is needed.

Next steps

The new POW will be circulated and published. The uneven distribution of the membership of the AEML WG across the AEMLAP range should be addressed by the WG and Steering Group. Virtual meetings of the Steering Group should be held more regularly. Fundraising activities will be continued. If funding becomes available, an in-person meeting of the AEML Working Group can be considered.

Birds International Single Species Action Plans

Baer's Pochard Action Plan

Status and Achievements

The Action Plan for the critically endangered Baer's Pochard (*Aythya baeri*) is under implementation. Activities are coordinated with the help of the Baer's Pochard Task Force under the lead of the Beijing Forestry University and the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust. Due to the lack of staff and financial resources, the Secretariat has not been involved in particular activities supporting the implementation of this action plan in the current intersessional period until now.

Challenges

The main challenges are obtaining funds for the implementation of the action plan, and raise the awareness of its importance, particularly in the Range States that are not Parties to the Convention.

Next steps

In line with [Decision 13.47](#), the Secretariat will continue to invite those Range States that are not yet Parties to ratify or accede to CMS (or support the action plan), and will coordinate with the Secretariat of the EAAFP to support and monitor the implementation of the action plan to the extent possible. The Secretariats of CMS and EAAFP have agreed to keep each other informed about the implementation status. The EAAFP Secretariat has updated a reporting template to facilitate information gathering on bird action plans of the region.

Dalmatian Pelican Action Plan

Status and Achievements

In line with Decision 13.47 b), the Secretariat coordinates with the Secretariat of the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (AEWA) regarding the implementation and monitoring of this Action Plan for the Dalmatian Pelican. The Avian Influenza (AI) outbreak in south-eastern parts of Europe in late 2021/early 2022 has led to a dramatic mortality in the Dalmatian Pelican population particularly at the Small Prespa Lake (Albania, Greece). In Greece, more than 2,000 Dalmatian Pelicans fell victim to the AI¹. Thanks to fast and well-planned actions of the authorities in the affected countries, the outbreak could be stemmed. A recent [census](#) coordinated by the Hellenic Ornithological Society through the 'Pelican Way of LIFE' initiative counted 1,642 Dalmatian Pelicans in Greece this year, while the census of 2021 recorded 3,359 individuals. In 2021, 5,200 Dalmatian Pelicans were counted in the Balkans, while the corresponding figure for 2022 was only 3,222, meaning a decrease by almost 40%. Related to outbreaks in other countries in late of 2021, the [Scientific Task Force on Avian influenza and Wild Birds](#), co-convened by FAO and the CMS Secretariat, had already taken initiative, monitored the situation and published a statement including recommendations on 24 January 2022, accessible through the [CMS website](#)².

Challenges

The main challenge is to raise sufficient funds for supporting the implementation. The population in East Asia, which breeds in Mongolia and migrates into China is in a critical situation. The largest colony of Europe at Small Lake Prespa as well as in the whole Balkan region has declined dramatically in numbers due to the AI outbreak. Close monitoring and immediate action by relevant authorities and project partners will be required in case of future AI outbreaks to prevent further decline.

Next steps

The Secretariat will remain in contact with the AEWA Secretariat and other partners to support and raise funds for the implementation of this Action Plan, and further support the Scientific Task Force on Avian Influenza and Wild Birds in its coordination and activities.

White-headed Duck Action Plan

Status and Achievements

In line with Decision 13.47 b), the Secretariat coordinates with the Secretariat of AEWA regarding the implementation and monitoring of this Action Plan for the White-headed Duck. An International Species Working Group on the White-headed Duck exists under AEWA. In the intersessional period, due to the lack of resources and capacities, the CMS Secretariat itself was not able to undertake any specific activities in support of its implementation though.

¹ <https://life-pelicans.com/news/the-population-of-the-dalmatian-pelican-has-decreased-in-greece-and-the-balkans/>

² https://www.cms.int/sites/default/files/uploads/avian_influenza_0.pdf

Challenges

The main challenge is raising funds for supporting the implementation. The critical threat of over-hunting/illegal killing of this species can be considered as the most sensitive issue.

Next steps

The Secretariat will remain in contact with the AEWA Secretariat, the AEWA International Species Working Group and other partners to support and raise funds for the implementation of this Action Plan to the extent possible.

Far-Eastern Curlew Action Plan

Status and Achievements

Thanks to voluntary contributions from the Government of Australia (AUD 95,000 in the year 2021; AUD 50,000 pledged in 2022); and in complementarity to the studies undertaken in Kamchatka in 2019 and Sakhalin in 2020, another study has been commissioned through an SSFA with the non-profit making organization *Birds Russia* as implementing partner to undertake surveys and analyze the impacts of shorebird hunting in the Khabarovskiy Krai and Amur oblast, the Russian Federation. *BirdsRussia* undertook relevant field work for the project. However, due to the current political situation in relation to the Russian Federation, it has not been possible to transfer project funds to the partner. The Secretariat has been working closely with the partner, the United Nations Office Nairobi and the UN Headquarters, New York, to overcome the situation. However, the partner organization is still trying to find a banking mechanism to receive the funds. Recently at the time of writing, the Secretariat started preparing another SSFA with the not-profit making organization *Malaysian Nature Society* to conduct exploratory surveys to clarify the status of the Far-Eastern Curlew on the Sarawak coastline in Borneo, Malaysia. The liaison was facilitated by the University of Queensland and the study aims to clarify the local distribution, migration phenology and movements of Far-eastern Curlews and identify important stop-over sites, and thereby contribute to achieving the objectives 1, 2, 6 and 7 of the [Far-Eastern Curlew Action Plan](#).

Challenges

The main challenge is to raise the awareness of the importance of this action plan, and increasing resources and capacities for its implementation, particularly in the Range States that are not Parties to the Convention. The current political situation related to the Russian Federation is a big challenge for completing the project with *BirdsRussia*.

Next steps

In line with [Decision 13.47](#), the Secretariat will continue to invite those Range States that are not yet Parties to ratify or accede to CMS (or the action plan), and will coordinate with the Secretariat of the EAAFP to support and monitor the implementation during the intersessional period. The Secretariat aims at finalizing the SSFA documentation with the *Malaysian Nature Society* in September 2022 to ensure a timely start of the project.

European Roller Action Plan

Status and Achievements

As requested by [Resolution 11.17 \(Rev.COP13\)/Rev.1](#), the Secretariat supports the activities of the African-Eurasian Migratory Landbirds Working Group (AEML WG) and the CMS Scientific Council, in liaison with the Migrant Landbirds Study Group and the Friends of the Landbirds Action Plan in supporting the implementation of this Action Plan. Dedicated activities to promote the action plan have been included in the new Programme of Work 2021-2026 of the AEML WG, (cf. African-Eurasian Migratory Landbirds Action Plan, above). Several organizations including BirdLife partners

(e.g. MME Hungary) are actively involved in implementing this action plan on local and national levels.

Challenges

The main challenge is to secure dedicated funding for the international coordination and implementation.

Next steps

The Secretariat will continue its support to the implementation of this action plan and its monitoring in liaison with the relevant groups and partners.

European Turtle Dove Action Plan

Status and Achievements

The Secretariat has continued promoting the action plan particularly in non-European Range States in the flyway. This had included a call for the collection of robust and accurate hunting bag data, and reporting the hunting bag statistics annually to the Turtle Dove Harvest Working Group, to calculate a yearly hunting bag statistics. Several Range States implemented a temporary hunting moratorium. Dedicated activities to promote the action plan have been included in the new Programme of Work 2021-2026 of the African-Eurasian Migratory Landbirds Working Group (cf. African-Eurasian Migratory Landbirds Action Plan above).

Challenges

The main challenge for appropriate conservation of the Turtle Dove is information gathering from and implementation non-EU Range States, especially needed to refine the adaptive harvest management mechanism, and for well-informed habitat management.

Next steps

The Secretariat will continue raising awareness about the Turtle Dove action plan and the need to share data on the state of its populations, particularly in non-EU Range State Parties, as well as to support the European Commission, Parties and Range States in the implementation. The action plan will be further promoted through the new POW 2021-2026 of the AEML WG (see above).

Christmas Island Frigatebird

Status and Achievements

The Government of Australia has pledged AUD 50,000 to the Secretariat in support of the development and implementation of an action plan for the Christmas Island Frigatebird (*Fregata andrewsi*; listed as Vulnerable on the IUCN Red List ver. 3.1, November 2021). The Secretariat is in close contact with the Government of Australia, who is leading on the development of the plan.

Saker Falcon Global Action Plan

Status and Achievements

The Secretariat through Coordinating Unit (CU) of the Raptors MOU supports the Saker Falcon Task Force (STF) and promote and oversee the implementation of the Saker Falcon Global Action Plan (SakerGAP).

In 2021-2022, the Secretariat undertook the following activities:

- Re-established the Saker Steering Group (composed of a Chair, a Technical Advisor and the Coordinator of the Electrocution Discussion Group).

- Supported the development of the workplans for the Adaptive Management Framework and Electrocutation Discussion Groups.
- Identified issues that need to be addressed regarding the membership of the STF.
- Upon request of the European Commission, coordinated the undertaking of a *Legal analysis on the consistency of the development and implementation of an adaptive management framework for the Saker Falcon with the provisions of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS)*.
- Initiated preparations for the Eight Meeting of the STF (STF8), where updates on activities were shared, the new team of the Raptors MOU CU presented, and ways forward discussed.
- Sought voluntary contributions from Signatories to advance the work planned for in the SakerGAP.

Challenges

The main challenge is fulfilling the Resolution 11.18 (Rev.COP12) to mobilize resources from CMS Parties and Saker Falcon Range States to support and coordinate activities identified within the SakerGAP. This includes addressing electrocution and further conceptualizing an adaptive management framework.

Next steps

The Secretariat plans to:

- Convene the Discussion Groups established by the STF.
- Organize and virtually host STF8.
- Continue to seek opportunities to secure additional resources to support the coordination and implementation of the SakerGAP.

Multi-species Action Plan to Conserve African-Eurasian Vultures (Vulture MsAP)

Status and Achievements

In 2021-2022, the Secretariat undertook the following activities:

- Oversaw the development of a threat map and stakeholder analysis concerning West African vultures produced by IUCN.
 - Provided financial and technical support towards the development of an international workshop organised by BirdLife International and the Nigerian Conservation Foundation in Nigeria to develop a West African Vultures Action Plan.
 - Convened regular Vulture MsAP Coordination Team (VCT) teleconferences (March, April, December 2021, February 2022) to monitor implementation.
 - Oversaw and supported a training mission to Guinea Bissau by the Vulture Conservation Foundation in May 2022, that led to the production of a national vulture action plan.
- Supported financially a LIFE project on Egyptian vulture conservation and participated in the project's Partners Assembly held in Bulgaria in May 2022; provided technical support to the planning of the next project phase.
- Participated in a workshop on conservation planning for Rueppell's vulture.
 - Worked with an informal Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs (NSAIDs) Working Group to draft a fact sheet on NSAIDs.
 - Sought financial support from selected Signatories for the coordination and implementation of the Vulture MsAP.

Challenges

The main challenge is fulfilling Resolution 12.10 to mobilize resources from CMS Parties, vulture Range States, UNEP, and other relevant international organizations to fully implement the Vulture MsAP.

Next steps

The Secretariat plans to:

- Participate in the international workshop organized in Nigeria to develop a West African Vultures Action Plan.
- Follow-up on the outcomes of the LIFE project's Partners Assembly held in Bulgaria, including follow-up on the implementation of the project's next phase.
- Actively seek opportunities to secure additional resources to support the implementation of the Vulture MsAP.

IMPLEMENTATION OF CONCERTED ACTIONS

Asian Population of the Great Bustard Concerted Action

Status and Achievements

The Secretariat has been in regular contact with coordinators of the Concerted Action, the Government of Mongolia and the Eurasian Bustard Alliance. The revision of the Action Plan on the Great Bustard in Asia is not completed yet. However, recently, the Eurasian Bustard Alliance and the Ornithological Society of the Middle East (OSME) announced the publication of a series of scientific articles based on the proceedings of the workshop held in Ulaanbaatar in 2017, and new data and results since then. It was found that the regional Central Asian population of *Otis tarda tarda* has dropped to perhaps 500 individuals, which is less than one per cent of the global population. The updated assessment of the global population of *Otis tarda* is 40 per cent lower than the previous one in 2014. In July 2022, a notification was sent to all Parties and partner organizations regarding the opportunity of small grants for projects issued and coordinated by OSME and the Eurasian Bustard Alliance.

Challenges

The main challenge remains to identify sufficient resources for supporting Parties and Range States in the coordination and implementation, including the revision of the action plan, which is largely depending on work under the lead of Mongolia and the Eurasian Bustard Alliance.

Next steps

The Secretariat will continue to endeavour to raise funds for implementation including the finalization of the action plan and for a conference to review progress. In supporting the dissemination of the new research and recent alarming findings on the population status, and promoting the species and the Concerted Action in general, the Secretariat is currently liaising with interested journalists and planning to prepare relevant outreach materials, supported by the partner organizations and experts.

Concerted Action for the Great Indian Bustard

Status and Achievements

[Concerted Action 13.10](#) for the Great Indian Bustard (*Ardeotis nigriceps*) is implemented under the lead of the Government of India and the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS). The Secretariat works generally in close cooperation with the Government of India in the frame of the COP presidency, and on the process for the Central Asian Flyway (CAF; as per [Decision 13.46, see below](#)).

Concerted Action for the Bengal Florican

Status and Achievements

[Concerted Action 13.11](#) for the Bengal Florican (*Houbaropsis bengalensis bengalensis*) is implemented under the lead of the Government of India and the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS). The Secretariat works generally in close cooperation with the Government of India in the frame of the COP presidency, and on the process for the Central Asian Flyway (CAF; as per [Decision 13.46, see below](#)).

Concerted Action for the Antipodean Albatross

Status and Achievements

[Concerted Action 13.12](#) for the Antipodean Albatross (*Diomedea antipodensis*) is under implementation under the lead of the Proponent Governments. A progress report for the period May 2020 to April 2021 was submitted as [UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC5/Inf.2](#) to the Fifth Session of the Sessional Committee of the Scientific Council, held from 28 June to 9 July 2021.

IMPLEMENTATION OF RELEVANT RESOLUTIONS, DECISIONS AND OTHERS

Illegal Killing, Taking and Trade of Migratory Birds (IKB)

Intergovernmental Task Force in the Mediterranean (MIKT)

Status and Achievements

Based on the provisions of [Resolution 11.16 \(Rev.COP13\) The Prevention of Illegal Killing, Taking and Trade of Migratory Birds](#), the Intergovernmental Task Force to Address Illegal Killing, Taking and Trade of Migratory Birds in the Mediterranean (MIKT) has continued its activities. MIKT undertakes the activities outlined in its Workplan 2021-2025 in the frame of the [Rome Strategic Plan 2020-2030](#) as the strategic joint framework of the Council of Europe's Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention) and the MIKT towards eradicating illegal killing, taking and trade in wild birds (IKB) in Europe and the Mediterranean region.

As of May 2022, the Membership of the Task Force consists of 22 CMS Parties. A list of all Members and Observers is available on the CMS [MIKT website](#).

Effective and efficient national legislation

The Secretariat signed an SSFA with the Global Law Alliance for Animals and the Environment (GLA) of the Lewis & Clark Law School, U.S. to produce draft legislative guidance on combating IKB and examples of model legislation. Additionally, the GLA undertook an analysis of the legislation in nine MIKT countries and highlighted several model approaches that can be useful and interesting for other countries.

Guidance and best practice on monitoring motivations for IKB

The Secretariat signed an SSFA with BirdLife International to produce a Common Format and Guidance for Monitoring Motivations for IKB to be completed by October 2022.

Recommendations on drafting and implementing National IKB Action Plans

The Secretariat commissioned a consultant to produce a document on *Recommendations for the Development and Implementation of National Action Plans Against the Illegal Killing, Trapping Taking and Trade of Birds*. The document will be circulated for online consultation in the summer 2022 and finalized before the end of the year.

Translations of National Action Plans and the Rome Strategic Plan

The Secretariat commissioned the translation of two national Action Plans into English and French to provide a useful resource for other MIKT countries in their work to combat IKB and/or in developing National IKB Action Plans. Both translations are on the MIKT website.

MIKT Meetings

The Secretariat organized two meetings of the MIKT Consultative Group, an advisory group set up under the [Modus operandi](#) of the MIKT in October 2021 and January 2022.

The **Fourth Joint Meeting** of the Bern Convention Network of Special Focal Points (SFPs) on Eradication of Illegal Killing, Trapping and Trade in Wild Birds and the MIKT (in total the fifth MIKT meeting) was organized from 7 to 9 June 2022 in hybrid mode, in Valencia, Spain and online. The meeting was hosted jointly by the Spanish Government, the Region of Valencia and the Municipality of Valencia town. It was attended by 120 participants (of which 50 attended online) from 31 Member and Observer countries. Main outcomes of the meeting include the adoption of guidance for enhanced narrative comments in the Scoreboard; the presentation for comments of the legislative guidance document on combating IKB; and the presentation for comments of the guidance on conducting socio-economic surveys to monitor motivations for IKB. Additionally, there was an opportunity to learn about progress in different countries on combating IKB, hear about best practice examples and exchange ideas and experience.

The CMS and the Bern Convention Secretariats organized the **Third Joint Meeting** of the Bern Convention Network of SFPs and the MIKT [between 9-11 June 2021, online](#) (cf. [UNEP/CMS/StC52/Doc.15](#)). In addition, the Secretariat showcased the work of MIKT through presentations at a high-level Workshop on a Road Map to tackle illegal killing, taking and trade of migratory birds (IKB) in the Middle East, held in Jordan on 25-29 October 2021, and at Fourth Adriatic Flyway Conference, Zadar, Croatia, 25-29 April 2022.

Funding

The European Union continued funding MIKT. During 2021, Phase I of the Global Public Goods and Challenges (GPGC) Cooperation Agreement with UNEP for supporting the work of MIKT was extended to 31 October 2022, while funding for Phase II had already been approved in 2021. The remaining Phase I funds were used during 2021-2022 to support the MIKT Coordinator's post, some delegates attending the MIKT5 meeting; and support two consultancies and two SSFAs to support delivery of the Rome Strategic Plan.

Challenges

The main challenge related to the work of MIKT is the strengthening of the engagement of the Governments for the implementation of the Rome Strategic Plan. Additionally, while the current funding supports MIKT operations, there is need to secure additional and long-term support beyond 2023 for securing a permanent MIKT coordination and promoting the full implementation of the Rome Strategic Plan. There are clear capacity building, training and human resource needs which, if addressed, would greatly enhance the impact of the ongoing work to eradicate IKB.

Next steps

At the time of writing, next steps include the finalisation of the documents presented at the Joint IKB meeting in June 2022. Additionally, a document titled "*Recommendations for the development and implementation of National Action Plans against IKB*" will be circulated for comments in July 2022, and is expected to be finalised by the end of 2022.

An online webinar will be organised in September 2022, outlining examples of different approaches to monitoring IKB.

Finally, the MIKT website will undergo a restructuring by September 2022, aiming to become a depository of interesting information, guidance and relevant studies related to eradicating IKB.

Intergovernmental Task Force to Address Illegal Hunting, Taking and Trade of Migratory Birds in the East Asian-Australasian Flyway (ITTEA)

Status and Achievements

The establishment of this Task Force is mandated through CMS/Resolution 11.16 (Rev. COP13)³ *The Prevention of Illegal Killing, Taking and Trade of Migratory Birds* and the annexed Terms of Reference⁴, as initially adopted by the 12th meeting of the Conference of the Parties, Manila, 2017. The Task Force is foreseen to work in complementarity with the East Asian-Australasian Flyway (EAAFP) Task Force on Illegal Hunting, Taking and Trade of Migratory Waterbirds⁵.

Towards implementing [Decision 13.33](#), in March 2022, the Secretariats of CMS and the EAAFP sent joint invitation letters to all EAAFP Member countries (including CMS Parties and Non-Party Range States) to nominate representatives as members to the ITTEA. At the time of writing, a total of five out of 17 countries have responded, and four of them confirmed their participation in the ITTEA and nominated representatives: Australia, Bangladesh, Cambodia and Thailand.

Thanks to the support of the Australian Government of AUD 150,000, the Secretariat launched the recruitment of a consultant as ITTEA Coordinator. A job opening was published in July 2022 and the new Coordinator should be hired in the last quarter of 2022.

Challenges

The main challenge is to catalyze action and political will for the eradication of illegal hunting, taking and trade of migratory birds especially with regard to engaging the governments of the large number of Non-Party Range States in the region. In partnership with the EAAFP Secretariat, the Secretariat will continue liaising with the governments to increase their engagement. The funding pledged by Australia is important for the establishment of the ITTEA, but more funding needs to be raised for the sustainability of the initiative.

Next steps

The Secretariat aims to finalize the process of identifying Members of the Task Force and call for a first online meeting. A second step, funding depending, will be to organize an in-person meeting of the Task Force, potentially back-to-back with the Meeting of the Partners of the EAAFP, planned to take place in Brisbane, Australia, 12-17 March 2023.

Other IKB-related activities

Action Plan to eradicate the illegal killing, taking and trade of migratory birds in the Arabian Peninsula, Iran and Iraq (Islamic Republic of)

Status and Achievements

In October 2021, the Secretariat supported, alongside BirdLife International a high-level workshop in Jordan with a view to develop a Road Map to tackle illegal killing, taking and trade of migratory birds (IKB) in the Middle East. The workshop addressed all countries in the region with a focus on launching a process for development of an action plan for the following ones: Bahrain, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen. The Action Plan was further discussed in an online meeting in February 2022.

The Action Plan responds to the request of the CMS COP, which through adoption of Resolution 11.16 (Rev.COP13) in 2014, instructs the Secretariat, in collaboration with Parties and relevant international organizations, subject to the availability of funds, and building on the experience in the Mediterranean to support efforts to address IKB elsewhere in the world, including through the

³ <https://www.cms.int/en/document/prevention-illegal-killing-taking-and-trade-migratory-birds-7>

⁴ <https://www.cms.int/en/document/terms-reference-intergovernmental-task-force-address-illegal-hunting-taking-and-trade-0>

⁵ <https://www.eaaflyway.net/task-force-on-illegal-hunting-taking-and-trade-of-migratory-waterbirds/>

organization of workshops; and calls on Parties and invites non-Parties and stakeholders, with the support of the Secretariat, to strengthen national and local capacity for addressing IKB, *inter alia*, by developing training courses, dissemination of relevant materials and other best practice examples and activities.

A concept note and fundraising brief were developed to outline the steps and financial support needed to establish a mechanism for the delivery of the IKB Action Plan for the region. It is envisaged that the Secretariat will support the establishment of a working group composed of representatives of Range States and observers, and including the Secretariat and BirdLife International. The working group should be supported by a coordinator, and would prepare a process including proposals to COP14. Assuming COP14 will approve the establishment of a dedicated CMS Task Force similar to the example of the MIKT, the Secretariat will develop Terms of Reference of a Task Force Coordinator and, once agreed by all working group members, work alongside the Range States to fundraise for and recruit this position.

The concept note and fundraising brief were circulated to the countries of the region and discussed at as well as in the margins of a workshop which was convened by the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), UNEP Regional Office for West Asia (ROWA) and the Kuwait Environment Public Authority (EPA) on 30-31 May 2022 in Kuwait for representatives from GCC countries to raise awareness of biodiversity-related Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) including CMS, and to build capacity in environmental diplomacy and negotiations in the region. Preliminary interest to financially support the establishment of this initiative was expressed by two countries.

Challenges

The key challenges are ensuring sufficient support from CMS Parties and Non-Party Range States in this region, also with regard to champion this initiative towards the next COP and with a view of resourcing it afterwards.

Next steps

The Secretariat will follow up on the expressions of interest made by two countries to fund the initiative and will support the establishment of the working group and the subsequent steps planned.

Flyways

World Coastal Forum (WCF)

Status and achievements

In relation to the mandate from [Resolution 12.25 Promoting Conservation of Critical Intertidal and other Coastal Habitats for Migratory Species](#), the Secretariat has been participating as an observer in the constitution of a multistakeholder global Coastal Forum (WCF). The WCF is foreseen to catalyze, facilitate and upscale local and national efforts to promote and conserve coastal wetlands and its associated ecosystems. The Secretariat is a member of the WCF Establishment Group, alongside other stakeholders and MEAs (Ramsar Convention, CBD).

Next Steps

The Secretariat is attending WCF Working and Steering Group meetings (usually online) and supports this process that should be officially launched at the 14th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands in November 2022.

Flyways Working Group

Status and Achievements

In line with [Decision 13.41](#), despite the lack of dedicated financial and personnel resources, the Secretariat has continued to support the activities of the Flyways Working Group (FWG), promoting

the implementation of the Global Programme of Work on Flyways 2014-2023, and coordinating with other CMS WGs and Task Forces such as MIKT, the Preventing Poisoning WG, the African-Eurasian Migratory Landbirds WG and the Energy Task Force in the context of thematic areas and regional approaches. As the previous Chair of the FWG, Dr. Taej Mundkur is no longer in the role of COP-appointed Councillor due to the expiry of his term, the future chairmanship has been discussed with the COP-appointed Councillors for Birds, and is to be confirmed by consultations with the FWG in due course.

Challenges

The main challenge is to secure funding for the coordination of the FWG, for its meetings, and for the implementation of the Flyways Programme of Work.

Next steps

Consultations regarding the future chairmanship, and a virtual meeting of the FWG are going to be planned in close cooperation with the COP-appointed Councillors for Birds.

Americas Flyways Framework Task Force

Status and Achievements

In line with [Decision 13.41 c](#)), the Secretariat has been in contact with the Chair of the Task Force, Brazil. However, since the finalization of the Task Force's workplan by a voluntary group under the lead of Audubon, no major coordination activities were implemented due to insufficient staff and financial resources. Nevertheless, progress with regard to substantive matters has been made such as through Brazil's activities in the Energy Task Force (ETF) to support the development of good practice guidelines on reconciling renewable energy developments with the conservation of migratory species. The Secretariat further facilitated the information exchange in the context of renewable energy technologies and migratory species between countries and with multilateral entities. The Secretariat promoted the Task Force and its work at ad-hoc occasions and consultations of the Executive Secretary with CMS Parties and Non-Parties in the Americas region.

Challenges

The main challenge is to secure funding for the coordination and meetings of the Task Force, and for the implementation of its workplan.

Next steps

The Secretariat will continue to support the Task Force in raising resources for its coordination, to support the implementation of the workplan, and to organize in-person meetings, in close consultations with the Members and other interested partners. Facilitated by the ETF and its coordinator, a webinar for interested CMS Parties of the region is foreseen to be held on 20 September 2022, to increase participation in the dialogue of the ETF and engagement across the American region. The intention of the webinar is to hear from experts and case studies in the region, as well as hosting a discussion on the top issues/priorities for energy, climate, and biodiversity.

Central Asian Flyway (CAF)

Status and Achievements

To support the implementation of [Decision 13.46](#), the Secretariat has been working closely with the Government of India and in cooperation with the AEWA Secretariat to advance the process of defining an institutional framework for the CAF. In October 2021, the Secretariat contributed to an online meeting of all Range States organized by the Government of India. The objectives were to a) provide an update to all CAF Range States on the implementation of CAF-related provisions of Resolution 12.11 (Rev.COP13) *Flyways*; b) showcase the work led by the Indian Government and especially India's National Action Plan 2018-2023 and c) share information on activities and conservation priorities, and actions taking place within CAF.

In February 2022, the Secretariat sent an online survey to all CAF Range States to gather information on their current engagement with regard to migratory bird conservation in the region. From May to July 2022, several online meetings took place between the Secretariat, the Government of India and other relevant entities including UNEP's Office in India to discuss the way forward. In July 2022, the CAF Situation analysis was launched by BirdLife International. This survey will compile the most updated information on migratory bird conservation in the region. A concept note and fundraising brief were developed to outline the steps and financial support needed to define and establish an institutional framework for the delivery of coordinated implementation under the CAF and were circulated to potential donors.

Challenges

The main challenge continues to be ensuring the political support of all Range States and required resources to organize an inter-governmental meeting of the Range States and to establish an institutional framework for the CAF by COP14, as well as to raise the resources and capacities for updating the CMS Central Asian Flyway Action Plan for the Conservation of Migratory Waterbirds and their Habitats.

Next steps

The Secretariat will continue to liaise with the Range States, in cooperation with the Government of India, towards finding the resources needed to organize a meeting of the Range States in the first half of 2023.

Preventing Bird Poisoning

Status and Achievements

Through [Resolution 11.15 \(Rev.COP13\)](#), COP13 reaffirmed the adoption of the *Guidelines to Prevent the Risk of Poisoning to Migratory Birds* and proposed the continuation of the open-ended Preventing Poisoning Working Group (PPWG) until COP14. Following the adoption of the Terms of Reference of the Intergovernmental Task Force on Phasing Out the Use of Lead Ammunition and Lead Fishing Weights by the Standing Committee at its 52nd meeting, the Secretariat has continued to work alongside key partners in addressing the impact of poisoning to CMS species. In May 2022, a capacity building workshop for local authorities was organized by the [Vulture Conservation Foundation \(VCF\)](#), [Endangered Wildlife Trust](#), [IUCN SSC Vulture Specialist Group](#) and [BirdLife International](#) with support from the CMS Raptors MOU in Guinea-Bissau to stop wildlife poisoning incidents.

Challenges

The main challenge of this Resolution and related [Decisions 13.39 to 13.40](#) is the lack of financial resources to hire a Coordinator for the PPWG and the foreseen Intergovernmental Task Force, to organize regional workshops to implement the actions identified in the POW of the PPWG, and to organize PPWG and task force meetings.

Next steps

The Secretariat is planning to issue a call for gathering Members of the new Intergovernmental Task Force, and also to work alongside Parties to jointly organise its first meeting. Due to limitations of current capacity and resources, it is anticipated that the first meeting will be held online and the decisions taken will need to be in line with the existing resources to ensure effective implementation.

Energy Task Force

Status and Achievements

Through [Resolution 11.27 \(Rev. COP13\) *Renewable Energy and Migratory Species*](#), COP13 reaffirmed the instruction to the Secretariat to convene a multi-stakeholder Task Force on Reconciling Selected Energy Sector Developments with Migratory Species Conservation (the Energy Task Force, ETF). Following the generous contribution of the Government of India at COP13, in 2021, the Government of France provided EUR 25,000, through its Ministère de la Transition écologique et de la Cohésion des territoires (EUR 10,000), and the Office français de la biodiversité (OFB; EUR 15,000) for ETF-coordination related activities. A new contractual arrangement with Birdlife International for the coordination of the ETF was signed in June 2022.

Membership

At the time of writing, 17 CMS Parties, one international development government agency, the secretariats of six MEAs and 12 international organizations are Members to the ETF. A further 22 national and international organizations are Observers.

Activities

In the intersessional period, the Secretariat has collaborated with the ETF and its coordinator and delivered various activities including:

- The organization of the 6th Meeting of the ETF (ETF6) in February 2022, online; new guidance documents were produced, and other initiatives, such as an agreement to develop an engagement strategy with international finance institutions launched. For more information, please refer to the [Report of the ETF6 meeting](#) and its [Summary](#).
- Several events on the ETF and how it can play a key role in ensuring migratory species do not suffer from energy developments: side events and talks at New York Climate Week (Sep 2021), the UNFCCC COP26 in Glasgow in November 2021, the Middle East and North Africa UNFCCC Regional Climate Week in Dubai, March 2022, the Conference on Wind Energy and Wildlife Impacts, April, 2022, the Adriatic Flyway Conference, Zadar, April 2022, and the UNFCCC SB56 in Bonn, June 2022.
- Presentations on the role of the ETF and how to become a member to various institutions, including the Dutch Development Bank, FMO, The Nature Conservancy, and others, resulting in seven new Member and Observer organisations joining.
- Fundraising activities, including the preparation and dissemination of various fundraising concepts to support the implementation of the ETF Workplan 2021-2024.

Further major activities and events are highlighted in [the report of the ETF6 Meeting](#).

Challenges

The main challenge is to develop a sustainable funding model for coordination for the coming years, to expand the scope and membership of the ETF in America and Asian Flyways, and to ensure best practice guidance reaches out to financial institutions in the planning phases of energy developments. Other challenges are the engagement, commitment and action by ETF Members and Observers towards the workplan implementation and wider ETF delivery and promotion, and strengthening the involvement of financial institutions.

Next steps

Based on the available resources and subject to additional funds in the future, the Secretariat will continue to support the ETF coordination and delivery of the workplan in the long term, including through relevant contractual arrangements. A specific webinar for the Americas Flyway is planned to take place in September 2022.

Strategic planning for the CMS Avian Team

The Avian team convened strategic planning meetings, the objective of which being to undertake a strategic review of the Programme of Work concerning avian matters, identifying gaps and solutions, and building synergies between the Bonn Team and the Raptors MOU CU in Abu Dhabi. The meetings' outcomes, anticipated to be finalised later in the year, shall provide the team a fallback strategy to guide the prioritisation of its work.

IMPLEMENTATION SUPPORT- TERRESTRIAL SPECIES

MOUS, STANDALONE ACTION PLANS AND INITIATIVES

Gorilla Agreement

Status & Achievements:

With funding received from the Government of Germany through the Secretariat of the Great Apes Survival Partnership (GRASP), the CMS Secretariat commissioned a legal study "[Legal Assessment of the implementation of the Convention on Migratory Species and the Gorilla Agreement in Cameroon and Nigeria](#)" for two listed species, the Cross River Gorilla (*Gorilla gorilla diehli*) and the Nigerian-Cameroon Chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes ellioti*). The study analysed more than 60 national laws and regulations of Cameroon and Nigeria to verify the implementation level of selected norms contained in the Convention text and the Gorilla Agreement. The study concluded that among all the norms analysed, less than 15 per cent had been fully implemented, raising concerns on the adequacy of current laws and regulations. With only four norms fully implemented each, both Nigeria and Cameroon presented similar amounts of legal gaps, although gap areas did not always coincide. Some of the weakest areas of implementation in both countries were related to exceptions to the take of gorillas, insufficient criminal liability, and a lack of consideration of human-gorilla conflict in legal procedures of land-use planning. The study identified only one site at which full implementation of the norms had been achieved. All other sites identified by the study as requiring formal legal protection in light of the adopted norms remain legally unprotected at this point. The study concluded that addressing the identified legal gaps would require amending existing or creating new legislation in both jurisdictions.

A collaborative arrangement with GRASP was formalized to bring coherence to both entities' work.

Calls were held with the Intersessional Chair of the Gorilla Agreement (Uganda) to discuss the way forward of the Gorilla Agreement and a possible 4th Meeting of the Parties to the Agreement (MOP4). E-mails were sent to the Parties to remind them of outstanding contributions, seek offers for a host for as well as topics to be discussed at MOP4, and to extend the budget of the Gorilla Agreement until the end of 2022 by postal procedure.

Challenges:

Parties are slow in paying their agreed contributions, thereby limiting the funding that is available for implementation of conservation activities.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the preparations of MOP4 had to be postponed to 2023. A host is being sought for this meeting.

Next steps:

A Technical Meeting is planned to be held with experts from the IUCN and the GRASP Secretariat, in order to identify a project that could drive forward the conservation of the Gorilla in its Range States, using funding that is still available for the Gorilla Agreement.

MOP4 is envisaged to be arranged in 2023.

Central Asian Mammals Initiative (CAMI) (including Saiga MOU and Bukhara Deer MOU)

Status and Achievements

The Secretariat has been implementing the Joint Work Programme 2020-2023 with the Federal Agency for Nature Conservation of Germany (BfN), funded by the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection of Germany (BMUV), which supports the implementation of the CAMI Programme of Work 2021-2026. In the framework of the Joint Work Programme, the following activities were completed:

- 1) Conducting the Technical Workshop (online) under the Memorandum of Understanding concerning Conservation and Restoration of the Bukhara Deer (*Cervus elaphus bactrianus*) (Bukhara Deer MOU), which included preparation of the Overview Report on the Conservation Status and MOU Implementation, the new Reporting Format and the revised Work Programme (2020-2026) for the MOU. As there was insufficient interest in holding an online Meeting of Signatories from the MOU Signatories, the abovementioned documents were adopted by the Signatories by correspondence.
- 2) Preparation of the Overview Report on the Conservation Status and MOU Implementation for the Memorandum of Understanding concerning Conservation, Restoration and Sustainable Use of the Saiga Antelope (*Saiga MOU*).
- 3) Conducting a workshop to identify approaches to mitigate the impacts of infrastructure on migratory wildlife (Meeting of the CMS Scientific Council Intersessional Working Group on Linear Infrastructure).

The following activities from the CMS-BfN Joint Work Programme are being prepared and will take place in 2022:

- 1) The First Range States Meeting for The Persian Leopard, aiming to endorse the Range-Wide Conservation Strategy for the species, scheduled for 20-22 September 2022.
- 2) A desk study on “Poaching as a threat to CAMI species and community-based conservation approaches.”

The CMS Secretariat conducted the fourth Meeting of Signatories to the Saiga MOU (online) in September 2021, which adopted the new Medium-Term International Work Programme 2021-2025 and the report “The Sustainable Use of Saiga Antelopes: Perspectives and Prospects”, prepared by the Saiga Conservation Alliance for the CMS Secretariat and BfN in the framework of the completed CMS-BfN Joint Work Programme 2016-2019.

The Secretariat is implementing the Project under the working title “Climate Change Adaptation and Migratory Mammals in Central Asia” (CAMCA) led by the UNEP Vienna Office and funded by the German International Climate Initiative (IKI). The project started in January 2022; however, transfer of funds was delayed for administrative reasons. In 2022, the CMS Secretariat co-organized the kick-off webinar for the project, contributed to the organization of and participated in the national consultation meetings. Recruitment of project staff is ongoing. Other activities planned within this project include complementing the ongoing work on the Central Asian Mammals Migration and Linear Infrastructure Atlas by updating it and making it a zoomable online tool, updating the Programme of Work for CAMI and the *International Single Species Action Plan for the Conservation of Argali*.

The Secretariat contributed to the development of the proposal for funding by the German International Climate Initiative, titled “Enhancing landscape resilience to zoonotic disease emergence by consolidating nature conservation systems in Central Asia”, led by IUCN’s regional office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia (ECARO). The project was approved to proceed to the preparation phase. This project will implement some of the activities of the CAMI POW 2020-2026 in relation to wildlife health and land use management.

Given the increasing plight of the Asiatic Cheetah (*Acinonyx jubatus venaticus*) and the precarious status of the North-Eastern African Cheetah (*A. j. soemmeringii*), the 5th Meeting of the Sessional Committee of the Scientific Council (ScC-SC5) agreed on the development of a coordinated conservation and recovery strategy for Cheetah across North-Eastern Africa and its former Asian distribution. An intersessional working group was established to elaborate such a strategy. With the support of the Government of the United Kingdom, the Secretariat commissioned the preparation of a report to assess the genetic and conservation status of the Asiatic Cheetah (*Acinonyx jubatus venaticus*) based on best available data to determine whether supplementation from other Cheetah populations is needed. The report is currently being prepared for the Secretariat by the IUCN Cat Specialist Group and will support the activities of the working group.

The Secretariat issued the [CAMI Newsletter](#) in English and Russian (CAMI POW Activity 29.2).

The Secretariat received information on the dramatic situation of the transboundary populations of Goitered Gazelles along the Southern borders of Kazakhstan caused by barriers to migration in the form of border fencing. The Secretariat reached out to the National Focal Points of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan to address the problem. Additionally, the Secretariat wrote a letter to the Ministry of Ecology, Geology and Natural Resources of the Republic of Kazakhstan, offering assistance in identifying a solution to this problem.

With funding received from the Government of Switzerland, the Secretariat commissioned an expert to extend the report Mapping Transboundary Hotspots for CAMI in 2021 to those species included by COP13 in the CAMI POW as well as extend it to relevant areas in South and East Asia. This was accomplished and the study is being finalized for publication by the Secretariat.

Challenges

The COVID-19 pandemic remains a challenge limiting travel possibilities, jeopardizing the organization of in person meetings and causing delays due to related sick leaves. Hence some of the planned meetings had to be held online instead of in-person.

The delays in recruitment of project staff for CMS resulted in a high workload for the CAMI coordinator and other members of the Terrestrial Species Team, which will be resolved soon with the project staff recruitment for the CAMCA project being close to completion.

Staff changes in the ministries of several Range States led to the loss of several CMS National Focal points. Despite several reminders, new nominations have been delayed for many months, resulting in two countries in the CAMI region not having focal points at present.

Multiple instances of fences having a dramatic impact on populations of migratory mammals have been reported to the Secretariat (along Trans-Mongolian railway and border fences between Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan and others). Despite several attempts by the Secretariat, there was little progress on these issues. In order to make progress, the Secretariat would benefit from enhanced political support by Parties in addressing these issues.

Next steps

The Secretariat will continue to implement the existing Work Programme between CMS and BfN until the end of 2023, and the activities for which funding had been secured through IKI. However, further staff and financial resources are lacking to implement the CAMI POW 2020-2026 as mandated.

The report on the situation of the Cheetah in Iran will be circulated to the IWG members and will form the basis for their discussions, deliberations and recommendations to the Scientific Council.

African Elephant Action Plan and Western African Elephant MOU

Status and Achievements

From 30 November – 1 December 2021 the Secretariat convened the Third Meeting of the Signatories of the Memorandum of Understanding Concerning Conservation Measures for the West African Populations of the African Elephant (*Loxodonta africana*) online. The Meeting was attended by delegates from Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Liberia, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo, as well as IUCN, the Minimising the Illegal Killing of Elephants (MIKE) project of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), the Elephant Protection Initiative (EPI), and Fauna & Flora International, as well as the CMS Ambassador for Migratory Species, Ian Redmond and Secretariat representatives. At the meeting Signatories decided to amend the MOU. The amendment includes agreement that the Signatories

adopt the African Elephant Action Plan (AEAP) as the core strategy for Elephant conservation under the MOU and that Signatories will focus their efforts on the development of project proposals to implement the AEAP and for submission to the African Elephant Fund or other donors. The CMS Secretariate has continued in its *ex officio* role as observer on the Steering Committee of the African Elephant Fund.

Next steps

As agreed by the Signatories, MOU Meetings will in the future be used to discuss and develop transboundary projects. Future meetings will be held as and when necessary, through either physical or online meetings, with support from the Secretariat, pending the availability of resources.

Joint CMS-CITES African Carnivore Initiative (ACI)

Status and Achievements

The Programme of Work (POW) for the Joint CITES-CMS African Carnivores Initiative (ACI) was adopted by the Standing Committees of CITES and CMS in September 2021 (document UNEP/CMS/StC52/Outcome 5).

At ScC-SC5, an intersessional Working Group was formed with the mandate to review the conservation status of Cheetah populations of Botswana, Namibia and Zimbabwe and their potential inclusion in Appendix I of CMS and to report to ScC-SC6 on its findings and to inform a decision at COP14. A report is being prepared by cheetah experts under the aegis of the IUCN Cat Specialist Group to inform the IWG that has been formed (see Next Steps).

At the recent IUCN Africa Protected Areas Congress (APAC, Rwanda, July 2022), the hosted a session on the ACI to present on the ACI POW, share perspectives from some ACI Range States, and to further the collaboration with the IUCN Save Our Species (IUCN SOS) initiative and the Panthera/WWF “Living with Big Cats” initiative.

Challenges

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, no ACI Range State Meeting has yet been possible, but it is aimed to be held in the first half of 2023, pending the receipt of additional resources and identification of a host. Partial funding is available through CITES and further funding sources are being explored.

Next steps

The Secretariat will continue to cooperate with the CITES Secretariat on the ACI and items related to the ACI species. This cooperation will include the preparations of the Second ACI Range States meeting, which is vital for shaping the future implementation and governance of the initiative, and for the prioritization and implementation of work under the POW by the Range States, as well as updates of the *Guidelines for the Conservation of the Lion in Africa* (GCLA) and the *Roadmap for the Conservation of the Leopard in Africa* (RCLA).

A collaboration is being developed with IUCN regarding the establishment of a sustainable funding mechanism for the ACI under the IUCN SOS initiative.

A side event on the ACI is envisaged at the upcoming 19th Conference of the Parties of CITES (COP19, Panama), together with the CITES Secretariat, IUCN SOS, and the Panthera/WWF “Living with Big Cats” Initiative, to further the collaboration with these partners and raise further awareness on the ACI.

The expert report on the African Cheetah shall be circulated with the IWG members and form the basis for their discussions, deliberations and recommendations to the Scientific Council.

IMPLEMENTATION OF CONCERTED ACTIONS

Sahelo-Saharan Megafauna

Status and Achievements

In 2020, COP13 adopted the renewal and continuation of the Sahelo-Saharan Megafauna Concerted Action. COP13 further agreed on the inclusion of two additional species in the Concerted Action: the Red-fronted Gazelle (*Eudorcas rufifrons*), and the Barbary Sheep (*Ammotragus lervia*). Together with the Scientific Council, the Secretariat supports the Sahelo-Saharan Megafauna Concerted Action.

In response to a proposal prepared by the Secretariat in close cooperation with the IUCN Specialist Group for Antelopes (ASG), in August 2021, the Government of Germany signed a donor agreement with the Secretariat pledging EUR 1.46 million for a project addressing the illegal killing and disturbance of Sahelo-Saharan megafauna.

The project was launched in December 2021 and runs until 2024. It aims to support the Range States in enhancing the regional conservation of the Sahelo-Saharan megafauna by further developing Range State's capacity to foster the sustainability of their actions through regional and multi-stakeholder cooperation. In particular, the project will support activities to stop the extinction of the last Addax remaining in the wild in the area adjacent to the Termit Tin Toumma National Nature Reserve in Eastern Niger. The activities include the GPS-collaring of a few Addax individuals to collect and analyze data on their roaming and migration patterns to enable better monitoring, and the establishment of a regular patrol programme.

In December 2021, the Secretariat and Sahara Conservation Fund (SCF) signed an agreement for SCF to undertake the collaring operation. In February 2022 the collaring operation did not find Addax to collar.

In May 2022, the Secretariat and Marwell Wildlife, which hosts the IUCN ASG co-chairs, signed an agreement for the co-chairs to, amongst other activities, prepare a draft Regional Roadmap addressing illegal killing and disturbance and promoting conservation and management of the Sahelo-Saharan Megafauna and its habitat and a draft Roadmap for Addax conservation to be discussed by the Range States at the upcoming Third Regional Seminar, hosted by Morocco.

As part of the project, a multi-stakeholder dialogue is planned between the Government of Niger, oil exploration companies and conservation NGOs to agree on measures to protect Addax in oil sectors in Niger.

Challenges

Halting the extinction of the remaining less than 100 wild-ranging Addax in Niger is the greatest challenge of the project described above. The collaring operation of February 2022 not finding any Addax highlights the scale of this challenge.

Security issues in various countries of the Sahelo-Saharan region, and the complex logistics necessary for on-the-ground interventions pose significant challenges as well.

Next steps

The Secretariat is liaising with the project Donor, the Government of Niger, experts and partners and the possibility of repeating the collaring operation.

At the time of writing, the Third Regional Seminar of the Sahelo-Saharan Megafauna Concerted Action Range States is planned to be held in Morocco in 2023.

Chimpanzee

Status and Achievements

In the context of the Concerted Action 13.1 for the Nut-cracking Populations of the Chimpanzees (*Pan troglodytes verus*) of West Africa, the Secretariat liaised with IUCN Primate Specialist Group Section for Great Apes and their Working Group on Chimpanzee Cultures (hereafter WGCC), and organized an online meeting with its members in July 2020 to explore opportunities for collaboration between the WGCC and the CMS Concerted Action on Western Chimpanzees. A timeline for the preparation of a draft project proposal was agreed. To support the implementation of the Concerted Action, the Secretariat initiated, developed and submitted a concept for a project proposal to the International Climate Initiative (IKI) under the title “Protecting vulnerable communities and migratory species in West Africa against zoonotic diseases through building connected landscapes and habitats”, in a consortium with the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), the Elephant Protection Initiative Foundation (EPIF), IUCN, Fauna and Flora International (FFI), Tacugama Chimpanzee Sanctuary (TCS), and the Wild Chimpanzee Foundation (WCF), responding to the IKI thematic call on Pandemic preparedness: natural protective barriers between humans and animals by expanding, linking and improving protected areas, in March 2021. The concept for a project proposal was rejected in September 2021.

Challenges

The main challenge of this initiative is to raise sufficient funds for the organization of planning meetings of the Range States and the relevant experts and stakeholders, for data collection, conservation priorities and implementation on the ground, and for strategic outreach work to increase public engagement

Next steps

The Secretariat will maintain the contact with the WGCC and Range States, and seek funding opportunities for this initiative.

Giraffe

Status and Achievements

Since the Secretariat circulated the manual ‘A Journey of Giraffe – A practical guide to wild giraffe translocations’ prepared by the Giraffe Conservation Foundation in early 2021 the Secretariat was not able to raise further funds for the implementation of Concerted Action 13.3.

Next steps

The Secretariat will continue trying to raise funds to implement the Concerted Action.

IMPLEMENTATION OF RELEVANT RESOLUTIONS, DECISIONS AND OTHERS

Plastic pollution

Status and Achievements

The Secretariat participated in the implementation of the CounterMEASURE II project, managed by the UNEP Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific and funded by the Government of Japan. Leading on the migratory species component with a funding volume of USD 271,000, the Secretariat commissioned the preparation of a series of assessments. With the support of the National Oceanographic Organization of the United Kingdom, the Secretariat prepared the report *Impacts of Plastic Pollution on Freshwater Aquatic, Terrestrial and Avian Migratory Species in the Asia and Pacific Region*, which was launched in August 2021, followed by a *Risk Assessment of Plastic Pollution to Migratory Species in the Mekong and Ganga River Basins*, prepared in collaboration with the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization and launched in March 2022. In cooperation with the Secretariat of the Mekong River Commission (MRC), the Secretariat

prepared a Regional Report on Plastic Wastes and a Protocol for Monitoring Microplastics in Fish, both of which are still undergoing final adoption by the MRC member states. The reports were presented during several events in the margins of UNEA 5.2 in March 2022 as well as regional fora.

Challenges

Decisions 13.122 to 13.125 call for the analysis of impacts of plastic pollution on all species in all geographic regions. CounterMEASURE II, only covered the Asia Pacific region.

Next steps

Funds need to be raised to also cover the other geographic regions.

Linear Infrastructure

Status and Achievements

With funding received from the Government of Germany, the Secretariat commissioned an EIA/SEA expert to assist with the implementation of Decisions 13.130 to 13.134 Infrastructure Development and Migratory Species. A report was prepared which was submitted to ScC-SC5. The Sessional Committee established a multi-stakeholder Intersessional Working Group on linear infrastructure composed of stakeholders with experience and knowledge on the impact of linear infrastructure development on migratory species and options for mitigation. As part of the implementation of the Joint Work Programme between the Secretariat and the Federal Nature Protection Agency of Germany (BfN), set up under CAMI, the Government of Germany has provided funding to convene the meeting of the multi-stakeholder working group that met on the Isle of Vilm, Germany in June 2022.

The meeting brought together over 20 experts, including representatives from environmental and infrastructure related institutions of CMS Parties from Africa, Asia, Latin America and Europe, international financial institutions, scientific and impact assessment communities, and NGOs, to discuss the impact of infrastructure on migratory species and their habitats.

Next steps

The recommendations developed by the working group will be submitted to ScC-SC6.

Unsustainable Use and Trade in Wild Meat of Terrestrial and Avian Species

Status and Achievements

With funding received from the Government of Germany and Norway, the Secretariat commissioned CIFOR to prepare an analysis on the direct and indirect impacts of wild meat taking, trade and consumption of terrestrial species listed on CMS Appendices I and II. The report "Impacts of Taking, Trade and Consumption of Terrestrial Migratory Species for Wild Meat" was published in September 2021.

Challenges

In terms of financial resourcing, the main challenge is raising of sufficient funds to implement the avian species component of Decision 13.109. Regarding the substance matter, significant information and data gaps on the impacts of wild meat taking, trade and consumption, also due to inaccessibility of some relevant databases impede the formulation of policy recommendations. Insufficient enforcement against illegal and/or unsustainable wild meat taking of CMS-listed species is indicated to be a key issue in many countries.

Next steps

The Secretariat will continue, in cooperation with Parties and partners, endeavour to raise additional resources for tackling the issue through addressing information gaps, the formulation of policy recommendations and their coordination on the international level, and concepts for strengthening awareness raising on the issue on different levels, as well as to support implementing projects and measures against illegal and unsustainable taking, trade and consumption of CMS-listed species. The Secretariat will also cooperate with Parties regarding the access to national data on the issue contained in currently inaccessible databases, in line with Decision 13.110

Transfrontier Conservation Areas

Status and Achievements

The Secretariat has significantly advanced the support for strengthening Transfrontier.

Conservation Areas (TFCAs). Site specific support has been provided, through a partnership with WWF-Tanzania, to develop the integrated management plan for the Niassa-Selous (Mozambique and Tanzania) TFCA, which was completed in the second quarter of 2022. The legal and policy aspects of TFCA creation and management have also been strengthened. The Secretariat completed a partnership agreement with the Cheetah Conservation Foundation and Legal Atlas which supports the review of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) Member State's wildlife and protected areas legislation as it relates to the establishment of TFCAs. In response to this review, and the resulting recommendations, the IGAD countries have requested assistance with the development of an IGAD TFCA protocol in 2023. A further key achievement has been the on-going support for the East African Community Transfrontier Conservation Area (EAC TFCA) working group. The Secretariat has provided significant capacity development support to the working group and the working group developed a concept note and TOR for an even more inclusive TFCA Network in East Africa. The network will bring together conservation policy makers and practitioners from around the region, it has been established through the approval of the East African Community (EAC) Secretariat's Sectoral Council on Tourism and Wildlife Management. The network was launched at the African Protected Areas Congress in July 2022. In addition to help decision makers in Africa, and globally, identify new potential TFCAs and prioritise connected areas for conservation the Secretariat partnered with UNEP-WCMC to create a methodology for identifying potential TFCAs and an App to allow decision makers to visualise and map potential TFCAs easily. This tool will provide the basis for new negotiations on TFCA establishment.

Next steps

The current work in East and Southern Africa and the Horn of Africa will be continued in 2023. The work on the IGAD protocol will be completed and more capacity support will be provided to the EAC TFCA working group and network. In addition, in partnership with UNEP-WCMC further funding is being sought to expand the App to provide global coverage for TFCA identification and mapping.

African Wild Ass

Status and Achievements

The *Roadmap for the Conservation of the African Wild Ass* provides key conservation guidelines for the African Wild Ass. Three small-scale funding agreements (SSFAs), with funding from Germany, were set up to implement activities from the Roadmap. One of these has been completed (assessment of habitat suitability in Eritrea & Ethiopia), another has been partially completed (DNA & diet assessments of AWA in Eritrea & Ethiopia). A third activity is pending (see below). At a session organized by the Secretariat at the recent IUCN Africa Protected Areas Congress (APAC, Rwanda, July 2022), experts from Eritrea and Ethiopia gave remote presentations on the situation of the African Wild Ass in their respective countries.

Challenges

One important activity, the assessment of African Wild Ass presence in Elba National Park in Egypt, is still pending. The project has been hampered by COVID-19 related travel restrictions as well as permit restrictions for an international expert to travel to Egypt. The Secretariat is in contact with the Government of Egypt to straighten out the challenges. The finalization of another SSFA, to verify whether the equids in Egypt are African Wild Ass based on DNA analyses, is dependent on the completion of the sampling in Egypt.

Next steps

The outstanding sampling activity in Egypt shall be concluded during the course of August 2022. This will allow the verification of the status of the equids in Elba National Park (African Wild Ass, or feral domestic donkeys, or hybrids) based on genetic analyses.

The Secretariat is planning to recruit a volunteer to produce an awareness-raising video about the plight of the African Wild Ass and the importance of conserving the species in Ethiopia and Eritrea (in collaboration with NFPs, IUCN expert(s), researchers, rangers on site, and possibly others), to be broadcasted at schools, universities and museums in the Range States.

Community Participation and Livelihoods

Status and Achievements

Initial work has been completed to determine the scope for a review and case study collection on initiatives related to community involvement in the conservation and management of CMS-listed species as part of the implementation of Decision 13.119. Recruitment of two interns has been completed to undertake the review and case study collection.

Next steps

Two interns will collect the case studies and prepare the compilation of the case studies between August and December 2022.

Wildlife Crime and Offences

Status and Achievements

The Secretariat liaises with organizations working on the matter such as CITES and the members of the Collaborative Partnership on Sustainable Wildlife Trade (CPW).

Next steps

The Secretariat continues liaison with relevant partners.

Tigers and Other Asian Big Cats

Status and Achievements

The Secretariat engages with the Global Snow Leopard Partnership on identifying joint work. It is engaging with the Secretariat of the Bern Convention to explore opportunities for endorsement of the Persian Leopard Strategy that is currently being developed by the Bern Convention Standing Committee. Under the CAMI POW, the Secretariat is exploring opportunities for establishing emergency support to the last remaining Asiatic Cheetah in Iran and the organization of an international conference to raise awareness and funds.

Conservation of the Jaguar

Status and Achievements

Upon the request of the Government of Costa Rica, leading the CMS Subgroup on Jaguar, the Secretariat guided the Range States in implementing their obligations related to the listing of Jaguar on Appendix I of CMS as well as their options for complying with their obligation to enter into agreements related to the listing of Jaguar on Appendix II of CMS. With the support of a consultant, all CMS Jaguar Range State Parties were individually consulted on the priorities for and needs in Jaguar conservation. A compilation of the consultations was submitted as Information Document to the 73rd Meeting of the CITES Standing Committee in March 2022. The CMS Secretariat also liaised with the CITES Secretariat in joining forces on Jaguar conservation and is a member of the UNDP-led Jaguar Coordination Committee promoting the implementation of the Jaguar 2030 Roadmap. A draft decision has been submitted to CITES COP19 calling for the organization of a joint Range State meeting, which should also agree on an intergovernmental platform for cooperation.

Challenges

Several initiatives are ongoing to support the conservation of Jaguar across its range. Range States have expressed the desire to streamline those initiatives and join forces to bring more coherence and efficiency into these efforts, while working with local organizations on the ground.

Next steps

The Secretariat will continue its efforts to bring partners together and fundraise for the organization of the planned Range State meeting.

INFORMATION, COMMUNICATION AND OUTREACH

The new coordinator of the Joint CMS and AEWA Information Management, Communications and Awareness Raising Unit (IMCA) was appointed on 15 February 2022.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

Status and Achievements

IMCA has been providing ongoing operational service on the critical information management infrastructure of the Convention and the CMS Family at large, including the regular maintenance, and security updates to CMS Family websites and workspaces, bug fixing, technical support on the online reporting system and meeting registration tool.

User access to packaged information has improved with the development of a new information hub on all CMS guidelines.

The major upgrade of the CMS Family website from Drupal 7 to Drupal 9 and migration of all content and data has been successfully completed and final preparative work is underway for the official launch of the new websites. This final phase of the upgrade includes the quality assurance process in order to verify and address any missing or misplaced content during the migration.

The process of migration of all CMS documents from a shared folder system to a professional document management system (MS Teams/SharePoint) has been initiated for a better internal workflow of the Secretariat. An expert from the UNEP IT Enterprise Solutions was invited to provide guidance on UN standards on file management as well as consultations for the migration strategy of the CMS Secretariat.

The newsletter system has been upgraded, using a professional tool that provides analytical data on the dissemination to the recipients. An improved intelligence on who receives newsletters and how they interact with the content will help a more efficient communication process.

Challenges

The main challenge of the IMCA unit in information management is the lack of financial resources as well as the lack of personnel in delivering the programme of work. As a temporary solution to address the shortage of qualified IT capacity in the unit, an Individual Contractor has recently been hired for 6 months.

In addition to be a complex project to manage, the upgrade of the CMS Family websites has consumed a significant amount of the unit's capacity. The File migration process to the cloud is very challenging due to the number of obsolete files and folders that need to be classified or cleaned.

Next Steps

The next steps include the finalization of the quality assurance process of the website upgrade and the official launch. The continuation of the file management migration is foreseen to be implemented in a unit-per-unit approach.

COMMUNICATIONS

Status and Achievements

The IMCA Unit is currently leading the development of a communications strategy for CMS to increase the effectiveness and impact of its outreach and communications objectives. A senior consultant has been hired and two communications workshops with all CMS staff were organised. A strategy document was also produced by the consultant as a guidance for the IMCA Unit and the wider Secretariat.

IMCA has provided continuous communications and outreach services to raise awareness on the work of CMS and the issues related to the conservation of migratory species, through global media coverage, interviews, social media and the production of short videos.

Next Steps

IMCA will focus on the development of a communications plan in preparation for COP14.

OUTREACH

Status and Achievements

As one of the primary awareness-raising global campaigns being jointly organised by CMS and the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement (AEWA), World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD) has continued to grow over the years. It generates hundreds of registered events around the world at each peak day of the year (second Saturday in May and October) and has a potential reach of over 200 million people via social media alone.

As per Decision 13.138, the Secretariat worked with its partners so that light pollution was adopted as the theme for the World Migratory Bird Day 2022 campaign. The first peak day of World Migratory Bird Day this year took place on the 14th of May 2022 and helped to raise global awareness of the issue of light pollution and its negative impacts on migratory birds. Over 400 registered events took place in over 60 different countries to mark the first peak day and the campaign was again featured prominently on the UN Website in all UN languages.

The second peak day will take place on 8 October 2022 and will further highlight the development of the CMS Guidelines on Light Pollution as well as existing best-practices to address light pollution.

Challenges

Although the campaign continues to be a great asset for CMS and AEWA to engage with the general public and help raise awareness of migratory birds and issues related to their conservation, sustainable funding for World Migratory Bird Day would allow the Secretariat to further strengthen its ability to successfully run the global campaign twice each year.

Next Steps

Efforts by the Secretariats of CMS and AEWA, and Environment for the Americas (EFTA) are underway to solidify and widen the core partnership behind the global campaign further in order to strengthen World Migratory Bird Day along all the key flyways of the world. The Secretariat will also increase its fundraising efforts for the campaign.

RESOURCE MOBILIZATION AND INTERAGENCY AFFAIRS

RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

Status and Achievements

Significant progress has been made by the Secretariat to raise funds for the implementation of priority activities of the Programme of Work for 2020-2023. Details are included in the table of the present document as well as in document UNEP/CMS/StC53/Doc.10.2 *Resource Mobilization*.

Challenges

The Programme of Work for 2020-2023 is very ambitious as it includes all the mandates under the responsibility of the Secretariat as well as those directed to the Standing Committee and Scientific Council which require the support of the Secretariat. Despite the very positive and generous contributions described above, a significant number of areas of work under the POW are currently unfunded.

Next Steps

The Secretariat will continue identifying funding opportunities and approaching potential donors.

SYNERGIES AND PARTNERSHIPS

Status and Achievements

Promote CMS Issues in UN system

The Secretariat engaged in events and processes of UNEP and the broader UN system including the thematic dialogues convened in the context of the Environment Management Group and consultations around the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration.

2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development

With regard to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Goals (SDGs), the Secretariat explored opportunities to get involved in and contribute to the reform of the UN development system (UNDS) and the work of the UN Country Teams, led by Resident Coordinators, who deliver support and collaboration between agencies, funds and programmes for the achievement of development priorities and SDGs at national level.

In 2020, the UN General Assembly adopted a Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review, providing guidance to countries to implement the 2030 Agenda and respond to COVID-19 and calling for the inclusion of relevant MEAs provisions and obligations in the national cooperation frameworks, which provide the primary tool for action.

The Secretariat had consultations with the Policy and Programme Division of UNEP, which is supporting this process, as well as with Secretariats of the other biodiversity related conventions to discuss a coherent approach in promoting a systemic understanding of MEAs mandate and their significance for SDG implementation at national level.

An initial webinar was convened by the UN Development Cooperation Office with Resident Coordinators and MEA Secretariats to exchange views and expectations on how best to cooperate in strategically advancing the achievement of SDGs through the integrated implementation of MEAs.

The Secretariat has continued to take part in the UN Oceans process, a forum of UN entities working on ocean issues. In the past this group has most often met in the margins of relevant UN conferences. However, with the pandemic preventing such meetings taking place, the forum moved online, which has proved more effective and inclusive. CMS has been involved in devising statements and side events at other fora, such as UNFCCC COPs, the UN Oceans conference in Lisbon 2022 and also in briefing other UN agencies on our ongoing work.

UNEP Processes including UNEA Meetings

Following the first online session of the 5th meeting of the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA5.1), which was held on 22-23 February 2021, the Secretariat attended the resumed in-person session of UNEA-5.2 on 28 February–2 March 2022 followed by a Special Session (UNEP@50) (3-4 March 2022).

In the run up to and during UNEA 5.2, the Secretariat actively engaged in the development of its Ministerial Declaration as well as of relevant Resolutions especially Res. 9 on Sustainable and Resilient Infrastructure. Details about key results of UNEA 5.2 are provided in the Implementation Support - Scientific Advisory Services section under “*Connectivity*”.

In addition, the Secretariat took part in all consultations including three meetings held from October 2021 to February 2022 on the follow-up on UN General Assembly resolution 73/333, reading the implementation of international environmental law and international environmental governance. The process finally resulted in the adoption of a [Political Declaration](#) at UNEP@50, which reaffirms the need to strengthen collaboration and cooperation between UNEP and the MEAs while respecting their independence and respective mandate.

Also, the Secretariat strengthened collaboration with UNEP in the framework of various initiatives including through contributing to the development of a Strategic document for the Law Division, providing inputs to a UNEP Pollution Report to inform on the state of the implementation of the UNEP plan “Towards a Pollution-Free Planet and to a background documentation for Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) on plastic pollution. Details about CMS engagement in the UNEP Montevideo Programme are provided in the Capacity Building section under “*Review Mechanism and National Legislation Programme*”. CMS takes part in the internal UNEP Polar Group discussions.

Strengthen Existing Collaboration with MEAs

Liaison Group of Biodiversity-related Conventions - BLG

Collaboration with the Secretariats of the other seven biodiversity-related conventions (Liaison Group of Biodiversity-related Conventions - BLG) increased significantly in the last year particularly in relation to the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) and resulted in various consultations and joint statements in different fora. The Secretariats also convened a joint side event in the margins of the CBD meetings held in Geneva in March 2022 with a view to highlight the contributions of these conventions to the implementation of the GBF. Further details are included in document UNEP/CMS/StC53/Doc.17 *Migratory Species in the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework*.

Another side event was organized with the Secretariats of CITES, the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands and the World Heritage Centre (WHC) at Stockholm +50 to commemorate the birth and achievements of four key biodiversity-related Conventions which originated from the United Nations Conference and were adopted.

Cooperation with Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs)

Meanwhile, bilateral cooperation with BLG members and other MEAs continued through the implementation of joint work plans and enhancing synergies when possible.

The Secretariat collaborated with the Secretariats of the MEAs administered by UNEP on the organization of a side event at UNEP@50 to celebrate 35 years of implementation and compliance mechanisms established under these MEAs. At the event, the Secretariat had the opportunity to present the CMS Review Mechanism and associated National Legislation Programme.

Through the second-year of a joint consultancy, the Secretariat worked closely with the Secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) on matters of common interest with a special focus on ecological connectivity including on:

- Production of a working paper and policy brief on ecological connectivity (to be launched in September 2022) to inform the Second edition of the Global Land Outlook and inputs to the Global Land Outlook;
- Organization of a side event on ecological connectivity at the UNCCD COP15 (9-20 May 2022);
- Supporting a request for an assessment on ecological connectivity by IPBES at its 9th Plenary session (3-9 July 2022).

Following the endorsement of the Joint Work Programme between CMS and CITES in 2021, the Secretariat is now in process of developing similar tools with the Secretariats of CBD and Ramsar which would take into account outcomes of their respective COPs in 2022 and contributions to the implementation of the GBF.

Engage in and pursue strategic cooperation

Joint work is underway with various entities including UNDP and the World Bank on matters related to implementation of activities of common interest. Further details are provided in other sections.

The CMS Secretariat continued to engage in IPBES processes; participated in its meetings, including the 9th Plenary session. Details are contained in Document UNEP/CMS/StC53/Doc.13 *Cooperation between the Intergovernmental Science Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) and CMS*.

Next Steps

The Secretariat will continue engage with these key organizations to advance the implementation of CMS.

The Secretariat will also explore ways to establishing a dialogue with other key sectoral groups including indigenous peoples, local communities and youth groups as well as to increasing the engagement and recognition of those NGO partners whose activities make a significant contribution to CMS.

STRENGTHENING REGIONAL PRESENCE

Status and Achievements

The Secretariat continued striving to strengthen collaboration with the UNEP Regional Offices on areas of possible joint work. During the last year, the Secretariat mainly advanced synergies with:

- North America Office on issues related to ecological connectivity in the framework of the North America Marine Protected Areas Network (NAMPAN). The Office is a member of the ScC WG on Connectivity on behalf of NAMPAM. Details about the WG are contained in the Implementation Support - Scientific Advisory Services section under “*Connectivity*”.
- Regional Office for West Asia (ROWA), in collaboration with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), and the Kuwait Environment Public Authority (EPA) for the organization of a capacity-building workshop on environmental diplomacy and negotiations focusing on biodiversity-related Multilateral Environmental Agreements namely CMS, CBD and CITES. The workshop took place on 30- 31 May 2022 in Kuwait and brought together 25 government representatives from the Gulf region and experts from the Conventions’ Secretariats.
- India Office to support collaboration with the Indian Government and the delivery of priority commitments and actions during India’s CMS COP Presidency (2020-2023) to provide leadership and support to the implementation of CMS. Details are contained in Document UNEP/CMS/StC53/Doc.6.

The Secretariat also takes part in the implementation of the third phase of the Capacity Building Project for the implementation of Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) in the African, Caribbean and Pacific regions (ACP MEAs III). The project is funded by the European Union and led by UNEP. This phase of the project aims to support ACP countries to enforce and comply with MEAs including CMS. Programme partners include the regional Hubs being the African Union, the Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM) and the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), through which most of the activities are implemented.

The CMS Secretariat collaborates with UNEP and the regional hubs in the implementation of activities that cut across the three regions and aim at promoting country accession or building national and institutional capacity and influencing policies and legislative frameworks for effective implementation of CMS obligations. Additional activities of specific relevance to the regions are also envisaged. For instance, SPREP supported the organization of the Fourth Meeting of the CMS Pacific Islands Cetacean MOU in August 2021.

Next Steps

The Secretariat will continue engage in the implementation of the ACP project, as appropriate, and continue reaching out the UNEP Regional Offices and exploring opportunities to collaborate.

AMBASSADORS FOR MIGRATORY SPECIES

Status and Achievements

Following the launch of the revamped Programme and the official designations which took place in the margins of COP13, the Secretariat supported Ambassadors for Migratory Species and provided guidance on their role as well as the priority issues, species, and dates of interest of most relevance to their work.

Ambassadors engaged in social media messaging and several other outreach activities.

Ambassador for Terrestrial Species, Ian Redmond, supported several CMS endeavours including the [virtual launch](#) of the CMS Report on “*Addressing Unsustainable Use of Terrestrial and Avian Wild Meat of Migratory Species of Wild Animals*” which he moderated.

Ambassador for Avian Species, Sacha Dench embarked on [Round Britain Climate Challenge](#) expedition to raise climate awareness. The expedition also garnered attention for migratory birds and the threats they face such as habitat loss and degradation, lead poisoning and collision with windfarms and powerlines. Another expedition, [Flight of the Osprey](#), as part of Ms. Dench 2030 Global Challenge series of expedition-led global campaigns, will start in August 2022. It focuses on the Osprey as a flagship species to highlight the drivers of migratory birds decline along a flyway and the actions needed to conserve them within the framework of CMS and the Raptors MOU.

Challenges

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, Ambassadors’ engagement was largely limited to social media messaging and other outreach activities.

Next Steps

The Secretariat will continue fostering the relationship with the Ambassadors for Migratory Species and jointly explore ways to elevate the profile of CMS and mobilize attention for specific issues or species.

CAPACITY-BUILDING

RECRUITMENT OF PARTIES

Status and Achievements

CMS membership has continued to grow and now numbers 133 Parties. Since StC52, the Kingdom of Bahrain has joined the Convention. Several other countries have expressed interest to do it in the near future. However, the membership to the CMS remains geographically unbalanced: while regions such as Europe, Africa and South America are well represented, large gaps can still be found in North and Central America, the Caribbean, Asia, and the Pacific.

To promote accession to the CMS, the Secretariat prepared information materials and held bilateral meetings. A number of governments, including the Indian Government, as well as key partner organizations such as UNEP have supported CMS efforts through their bilateral relationships with a number of countries. With the financial support of European Union, through the Global Public Goods and Challenges (GPGC Programme) Cooperation Agreements with UNEP, the Secretariat is preparing a strategy to promote accession to CMS.

Next Steps

The Secretariat will continue promoting country accession.

STRENGTHENING INSTITUTIONAL AND NATIONAL CAPACITY

Details on progress in the implementation of activities under this item are provided in the Resource Mobilization and Inter-Agency Affairs section under “*Strengthening Regional Presence*”.

COP PREPARATION

Status and Achievements

The Secretariat secured most of the funding needed to organize regional workshops for Parties in the African, Caribbean and Pacific regions, to be held in 2023 in preparation of COP14 (Pre-COPs), within the framework of the ACP MEAs III project. Additional funding is needed for convening Pre-COPs for other regions.

Next Steps

The Secretariat will soon start the preparations of the regional Pre-COP workshops and continue to seek additional funding as required.

REVIEW MECHANISM AND NATIONAL LEGISLATION PROGRAMME

Status and Achievements

In relation to the Review Mechanism, the Secretariat received a communication of a possible implementation matter in April 2021 and informed the Party concerned, giving them the opportunity to provide comments. After the screening of the information and consultations with the Scientific Council, the Secretariat decided to admit the information and opened a file. At the time of preparing this document, the Secretariat was planning a joint mission with the Secretariats of the Bern Convention and AEWA.

Concerning the National Legislation Programme, with funding from the European Union, through the GPGC Programme Cooperation Agreements with UNEP, the Secretariat continued with the implementation of Resolution 12.19 and associated relevant decisions.

A third call to participate in the National Legislation Programme was launched in May 2022. Legislative guidance materials are under preparation and the Secretariat is in contact with several countries to provide tailored technical assistance.

The Secretariat took steps to engage in the Montevideo Environmental Law Programme, led by the UNEP Law Division, which is based on a ten-year intergovernmental programme for promoting and implementing environmental rule of law, until December 2029.

In the framework of the biennial strategic priority setting for the Montevideo programme, synergies were established with the CMS National Legislation Programme especially with regard to providing technical legal assistance to countries as required.

Challenges

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, activities planned to be carried out in person had to be redesigned or postponed.

Next Steps

The Secretariat will continue to:

- prepare the national legislation profiles for new parties participating in the National Legislation Programme and inform all Parties concerned about the findings and recommended actions.
- implement Decision 13.20, providing technical assistance to Parties in addressing the recommendations in the national legislation profiles and drafting adequate national legislation to implement CMS Article III, paragraph 5.
- prepare guidance materials, model laws, technical guidance, and training related to Article III, paragraphs 4 a) and b) and 5.

SERVICING OF GOVERNING BODIES

Organize Standing Committee Meetings

Status and Achievements

Since COP13, the Executive Secretary has had regular contact with the Chair of the StC to keep him abreast of important developments. It was agreed that the 53rd meeting of the Standing Committee (StC53) will be held in Bonn in October 2022. [Notification 2022/007](#) was issued in May 2022 to inform StC members, Parties and observers about dates, arrangements and registration for the meeting. Simultaneous interpretation in English, French, Spanish and German will be provided for all plenary sessions thanks to support from the German Government. The meeting will be open to all members of the Standing Committee as well as observers.

StC53 will review the progress on a number of activities in preparation for COP14. As usual all staff are involved to varying degrees in drafting of the substantive documents for StC53 while the Conference Service Team are taking care of the logistical arrangements and document production.

Next steps

At the time of writing, the Secretariat was drafting all documents for the meeting to be made available on the website in the three official languages by early September.

Organize Meetings of the Sessional Committee of the Scientific Council

Status and Achievements

No full meeting of the Sessional Committee of the Scientific Council was scheduled since StC52. Activities of the Sessional Committee have been progressed mainly through Intersessional Working Groups (IWGs), a number of which were established by the 5th Meeting of the Sessional Committee (ScC-SC5). Many of these IWGs held meetings with support by the Secretariat. The outcomes of some of these meetings are referenced as appropriate in relation to specific activities reported in this document. The Secretariat and the chair of the Scientific Council are holding regular meetings to keep progress under review and address any challenges.

Next steps

In terms of future meetings, the convening of at least one more full meeting of the Sessional Committee is foreseen in the runup to COP14. The possibility of convening additional meetings in the intersessional period in an online format to review progress on specific items is being considered.

Organize COP14 and associated events

Status

Following [Notification 2022/001](#), which was issued in February 2022, the Secretariat continued to actively seek a host of COP14 and discussing the matter with a few countries considering putting a proposal forward, but no expression of interest was received as of mid-July 2022.

Next steps

The Secretariat will continue liaising with interested parties for the host of COP14.