



المركز الوطني
لتنمية الحياة الفطرية
National Center for Wildlife
المملكة العربية السعودية



1st MEETING OF THE SOUTH-WEST ASIA ILLEGAL TAKING OF MIGRATORY BIRDS INTERGOVERNMENTAL TASK FORCE

Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, 20-21 May 2025

UNEP/CMS/SWAITB1/Outcome 1

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR SOUTH-WEST ASIA ILLEGAL TAKING OF MIGRATORY BIRDS INTERGOVERNMENTAL TASK FORCE (SWAITB)

(As approved at the SWAITB 1st Meeting in May 2025)

Background and purpose

This Task Force is established in line with the mandate provided by CMS Resolution 11.16 (Rev.COP14) *The Prevention of Illegal Killing, Taking and Trade of Migratory Birds* to assist the Parties to the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) and its associated instruments, and other relevant MEAs to fulfil their obligations to protect migratory birds from illegal taking.

Goal

Aim to eradicate illegal hunting, taking and trade of migratory birds (ITB) in South-West Asia.

Role

To facilitate concerted efforts and procedures to combat ITB in South-West Asia.

Scope

The Task Force will be regional covering all range states in South-West Asia as follows: Bahrain, Iraq, Islamic Republic of Iran, Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Yemen.

The Task Force will cover all migratory bird taxa as identified by CMS and its relevant associated instruments, which regularly occur in the South-West Asian region.

Remit

The Task Force will:

- Support and guide a review on the status of national regulations related to the goal of this Task Force;

- Coordinate and support the implementation of the South-West Asia ITB Action Plan;
- Support and guide a situation analysis on ITB in the region, building on the existing work of CMS MIKT in the Mediterranean and of the CMS Asia Pacific Illegal Taking of Migratory Birds Intergovernmental Task Force (ITTEA);
- Ensure synergies with other relevant CMS Institutional Frameworks, instruments and plans, such as the African Eurasian Migratory Landbirds Action Plan (AEMLAP), the Raptors MOU and the Central Asian Flyway (CAF) Initiative.
- Promote and facilitate implementation of relevant decisions and plans adopted in the framework of MEAs or regional protocols and agreements (e.g. GCC, ROPME, PERSGA);
- Stimulate internal and external communication and exchange of information, experience, best practice and know-how;
- Assist in resource mobilization for priority actions identified in the action plan and capacity building for members and observers;
- Monitor the implementation of the relevant decisions and plans and their effectiveness and regularly submit progress reports to the governing bodies of participating MEAs, including via an intergovernmental 'scoreboard' to monitor and indicate progress in eliminating ITB;
- Strengthen regional and international networks with experience on ITB e.g., International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime (ICWC); and
- Liaise and share experience with both the CMS MIKT and the Asia-Pacific Task Force (ITTEA) and with any other working groups or task forces established under or outside the umbrella of the CMS.

Membership

The Task Force membership will be comprised of representatives of relevant government institutions in the field of environment, biodiversity conservation, game management, law enforcement and judiciary in the Parties to the participating MEAs in South-West Asia as follows: Bahrain, Iraq, Islamic Republic of Iran, Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Yemen.

It will also involve observers from the Secretariats of the participating MEAs and frameworks, as well as academic and other relevant institutions, the hunting and falconers' associations/clubs, NGOs, INGOs, GCC and other regional protocols, conventions and agreements (ROPME, PERSGA), development organizations, and other stakeholders, as appropriate.

In addition, the following representatives might be invited to contribute to the Task Force:

- Representatives of Parties from the East African East Asian Flyway and beyond that wish to support the work of the Task Force;
- Representatives of the CMS Scientific Council, Raptors MOU, CAF Initiative, CMS MIKT, CMS Asia-Pacific Task Force (ITTEA), AEW Technical Committee, CMS Preventing Poisoning Working Group, the African-Eurasian Migratory Landbirds Working Group, the Flyways Working Group, and other groups with relevant experience;
- Representatives from relevant IUCN specialist groups; and
- Relevant independent experts on ITB and on migratory bird ecology and policy.

Governance

The Task Force will elect a Chair and a Vice-Chair from amongst its members.

The Task Force will operate and will take decisions by seeking consensus, as much as possible among the members of the Task Force and in accordance with a *modus operandi* which shall be developed once the Task Force is convened.

Operation

Funding permitting, a coordinator will be appointed by the Task Force with the following functions:

- organizing the meetings of the Task Force and preparing the background documents;
- maintaining and moderating the Task Force`s communication platform (website and intranet);

- facilitating implementation of decisions of the Task Force;
- facilitating fundraising and resource mobilization; and
- facilitating engagement with stakeholders within and beyond the Task Force.

Meetings of the Task Force will be convened at appropriate intervals, as considered necessary and funding permitting. Between meetings, business will be conducted electronically through an online workspace within the Task Force`s website, which will provide the primary mode of communication.

In collaboration with Parties and relevant international organizations and subject to the availability of funds, the Task Force will organize regional workshops in trouble spot areas to assist in the development of appropriate local or regional solutions.