



CMS Bulletin



Bulletin of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS)

January 1997

No. 6

This is the first bulletin of the New Year, which promises to be a busy one for CMS. As reported below, the Secretariat is adjusting to new surroundings following its recent relocation to a new premises in Bonn. The move comes amidst intensive preparations for meetings of the Standing Committee (January 1997) and the Conference of the Parties (April 1997), among others.

There have been a number of important substantive developments since the last issue of the CMS Bulletin - notably the formal adoption of an agreement for the conservation of cetaceans of the Mediterranean and Black Seas, the opening for signature of the African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement, as well as some positive news for Siberian crane conservation efforts.

For further information on any of the subjects covered in this issue of the CMS Bulletin, readers are invited to contact the CMS Secretariat at the address given below. Those with access to the INTERNET may also examine our World Wide Web site: <http://www.wcmc.org.uk/cms>. This site - the product of a fruitful collaboration between the CMS Secretariat and the World Conservation Monitoring Centre (Cambridge, UK) - makes available a wide range of information on CMS in English, French and Spanish.

An entry on CMS appears also in the Green Globe Yearbook of International Co-operation and Environment and Development, a publication of the Fridtjof Nansen Institute, Norway (Oxford University Press, New York, 1996: pages 170-171 in the 1996 edition).

Contents:

Secretariat news	1
CMS membership	2
Agreement update	3
Agreements under development	5
Conference of the Parties	6
Standing Committee	6
Scientific Council	7
Ongoing projects	7
Linkage with other conventions	7

Secretariat news

The CMS Secretariat has a new home! As of 9 December 1996, the Secretariat has a new domicile within the United Nations Premises at Haus Carstanjen in Bonn. This is the building that the German Government has put at the disposal of U.N. organisations in its effort to give the city a new international stature.

One of the oldest U.N. based offices operating in Bonn (since early 1985), the UNEP/CMS Secretariat now shares a building with the United Nations Volunteers Organization (UNV), the Secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the United Nations Information Centre (UNIC). The secretariat of the European Bats Agreement is also co-located with CMS, and will be

Produced by the Secretariat of the Convention. For more information, please contact:

UNEP/CMS Secretariat
United Nations Premises in Bonn
Martin-Luther-King-Str. 8
D-53175 Bonn, Germany

Telephone: (+49 228) 815 2401 / 2
Telefax: (+49 228) 815 2449
E-mail: cms@unep.de
Web site: www.wcmc.org.uk/cms

Egalement disponible en français. Disponible también en español.

joined by the secretariats of some other CMS Agreements in the next few years.

Please take note of the Secretariat's new postal address and telecommunication numbers, given on the first page, as well as our new general e-mail address: cms@unep.de.

There have been a number of additions to the Secretariat's staff in recent months. Mr. Hubert-Marie Cuvelier was recruited in August as an Associate Programme Officer, while Ms. Hilda Lunscken has been engaged as an Information Consultant in preparation for the forthcoming meeting of the Conference of the Parties. Finally, Ms. Christina Heuft has recently taken up her post as Administrative Assistant, replacing Ms. Eva-Maria Tomczak who left at the end of September after over four years of service with the Secretariat. We wish her well in her new endeavours.

CMS membership

The number of Parties to CMS currently stands at 49. Although there have been no additions to the CMS family since the accession of Poland in May 1996, several States are reported to be preparing to deposit their instruments of accession during the course of 1997. Further targeted recruitment efforts will be facilitated by a series of profiles of key non-Party States prepared by the World Conservation Monitoring Centre.

Europe

An important breakthrough for the conservation of cetaceans of the Mediterranean and Black Seas was achieved in Monaco from 19-24 November 1996 with the conclusion of an intergovernmental agreement aimed at reducing threats to cetaceans in these waters. Among other things, the Agreement will require signatories to protect dolphins, porpoises and other whales, and to establish a network of protected areas important for their feeding, breeding and calving. Representatives of over 20 Mediterranean and Black Sea countries participated in the meeting, and observers from numerous intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations also attended. Mr. Patrick Van Klaveren, head of Monaco's Environment Service, chaired the proceedings,

while the Deputy Co-ordinator of the CMS Secretariat acted as Secretary-General of the meeting. The Secretariat thanks all those who contributed to the elaboration of the Agreement and the organization of the negotiation meetings which led to its conclusion.

The Agreement – known by its acronym “ACCOBAMS” – is the first of its kind to bind the countries of the two subregions to work together on a problem of common concern. The Agreement calls on its members to implement a comprehensive Conservation Plan and to enforce legislation to prevent the deliberate taking of cetaceans in fisheries by vessels under their flag or within their jurisdiction, and to minimize incidental catches. Governments also undertake to assess and manage human-cetacean interactions; to carry out research and monitoring; to develop information, training and public education programmes; and to put in place emergency response measures.

Officials of eleven governments signed the Agreement already in the closing session of the meeting. The accord is expected to enter into force in 1997, once it has passed the necessary parliamentary review in the countries concerned. Significantly, it is also open to membership of non-coastal States (“third countries”) whose vessels are engaged in activities which may affect cetaceans.

The Government of the Principality of Monaco acts as Depositary for the Agreement, the official text of which will be made available in due course in the Arabic, English, French, Russian and Spanish languages. Meanwhile, the Final Act of the conference to conclude the Agreement (including the text of the Agreement itself), as well as the report of the negotiation meeting in the English and French languages may be obtained by writing to the UNEP/CMS Secretariat.

Africa

Experts attending the ninth Pan-African Ornithological Congress (Accra, Ghana, 1-8 December 1996) were given an overview of the African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement and its aims. Mr. Bert Lenten participated on behalf of the interim AEWA secretariat with a view to promoting the Agreement and CMS among African states. The presentation of a paper by Mr. Seydina Issa Sylla in the symposium on African wetlands also helped to broaden knowledge of the AEWA and the Convention, and to explain their role in meeting present conservation needs.

See also “Agreement Update” for developments related to this particular Agreement.

Asia-Oceania

The second workshop of Siberian crane Range States was held in Bharatpur, India, from 5-7 November 1996. The meeting began with welcoming remarks from Mr. S.C. Dey (Ministry of Environment and Forests), Mr. R.G. Soni (Chief Wildlife Warden, Rajasthan State), Dr. George Archibald (Director, International Crane Foundation), Ms. Shruti Sharma (Director, Keoladeo National Park) and Mr. Douglas Hykle (UNEP/CMS Secretariat). Attendance was excellent, with participation of about 30-35 foreign delegates from 8 of the 9 Range States concerned, as well as about 10 participants from the host country.

The first day's sessions were reserved for progress reports on implementation of conservation measures for the endangered western and central Asian populations: it was evident that a number of the Range States had made considerable progress in 1996 despite limited resources. The activities undertaken in the Russian Federation, and the successful monitoring of a crane fitted with a satellite transmitter in the Islamic Republic of Iran were particularly noteworthy. During the meeting, excellent news was received from Tehran: 10 birds had just arrived at their traditional wintering grounds by the Caspian Sea, including 3 young and one bearing a satellite transmitter (presumably the bird which was monitored on its northward migration earlier in the spring).

Technical discussions were facilitated by Dr. Alexander Sorokin (Crane releases), Ms. Mini Nagendran (Migration studies), and Mr. Dave Ferguson (Education programmes). Much good information was presented, but time did not allow for as much discussion as might have been desired. Separate working groups met in the evening to develop a detailed work plan for 1997-99 for the western (Russia, Kazakstan, Azerbaijan, and Iran) and central (Russia, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Pakistan and India) flyways. The objective-oriented plans which had been prepared by the International Crane Foundation before the meeting were used as a basis for the discussion.

Detailed plans were then drawn up for each of the Range States with inputs from all of the participants, and were presented in the form of a comprehensive Conservation Plan. The CMS

Secretariat is currently preparing the plan for publication early in the new year. During the meeting, the first draft of an educational video prepared by the International Crane Foundation with funding from CMS was screened. Although more editing is needed in the weeks ahead, it appeared to have been well-received.

See also "Agreement Update" for other developments related to this particular Agreement.

The Americas

With the aim of disseminating information on CMS and in particular, of developing a conservation strategy for migratory species in the southern cone of South America, the Secretariat organised a meeting in Chile in collaboration with the Universidad Austral and Uruguay's Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries. The meeting was held in Valdivia, Chile from 1-3 December 1996. Experts from Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay discussed the most effective means of defending their common natural heritage. Animal migration, especially that of birds, is particularly extensive in this region of the world, requiring the countries concerned to share responsibility for their conservation.

The meeting's success was reflected in the participants' desire to come together more regularly, since it presented an ideal forum in which to work together on species which are part of the common heritage. The participants from countries which are not yet Parties to CMS informed the Secretariat's representative, Pablo Canevari, that they were now very interested to pursue their accession to CMS and to other regional agreements, leading to collaboration in these areas.

Agreement Update

Small Cetaceans of the Baltic and North Seas (ASCOBANS)

The membership of ASCOBANS remains at seven Parties. The first compilation of national reports from Parties to the Agreement, covering the full period for which the Agreement has been in force, was published in September 1996. The Advisory Committee met in Copenhagen on 13-14 November 1996, and addressed the following concerns: implementation of the management plan, pollution, by-catch, disturbance

reduction, stranding schemes, status of cetaceans in the Baltic Sea, protected areas, and the potential extension of the geographical area of ASCOBANS. The next meeting of the Advisory Committee is to be held in June 1997 in Texel, Holland.

Ms. Jette Jensen took over the helm of the ASCOBANS secretariat in October 1996. She will soon be busy with the organization of the second session of the Meeting of the Parties, tentatively scheduled to be held in Bonn in November or December 1997, probably under the auspices of the German Government.

The secretariat's address is:

ASCOBANS Secretariat
c/o Sea Mammal Research Unit
High Cross
Cambridge CB3 0ET
United Kingdom

Tel/Fax: (+44 1223) 30 12 82
E-mail: ascobans@smru.ac.uk

European Bats Agreement

Threats to 30 bat species throughout Europe arising from habitat degradation, disturbance of roost sites and harmful pesticides are the concern of this Agreement, which has to date twelve country members.

Progress made at the first Advisory Committee meeting held in Germany last April will be followed up at its next session which is scheduled for 28-29 January 1997 in Krakow, Poland. The Executive Secretary, Mr. Eric Blencowe, and members of the Committee have been busy preparing analyses for consideration on this occasion. It is expected that the central European venue will allow a greater number and diversity of Range States to attend. The meeting will also be important in preparing for the second session of the Meeting of the Parties, provisionally scheduled for Autumn 1998.

The Secretariat has also been assisting bat experts in Hungary on the elaboration of a comprehensive, trans-boundary project to address the declining status of *Miniopterus schreibersi* populations in this region. The project would require the involvement of experts

in Austria, Croatia, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Ukraine and Yugoslavia, in addition to those of Hungary.

The EUROBATS Secretariat, can now be reached at the following address:

Martin-Luther-King-Str. 8
D-53175 Bonn
Germany

Tel: (+49 228) 815 2420/1
Fax: (+49 228) 815 2445

African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement (AEWA)

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands opened the Agreement for signature on 15 August 1996 after having provided the Agreement text in all four official languages of the Agreement (English, French, Arabic and Russian). So far the Agreement has been signed by Germany, Guinea, Ireland, Netherlands, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

The AEWA Interim Secretariat can be reached at the following address:

Mr. Bert Lenten,
AEWA Interim Secretariat
c/o Ministry of Agriculture, Nature Management
and Fisheries
Directorate for Nature Conservation
Division of International Affairs
P.O. Box 20401
NL-2500 EK The Hague
The Netherlands

Tel: (+31 70) 379 2982/3591
Fax: (+31 70) 379 3751.
Email: b.lenten@n.agro.nl

Wadden Sea Seals Agreement

This agreement between Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands was the first regional agreement under the Bonn Convention. It has now been in force for five years. Its aim is to achieve a favourable conservation status for seals, whose population had been reduced in 1988 to about 60% as a result of an epidemic. According to surveys made in 1996, the seal population is now at a level of about 10,000 individuals, which corresponds to the number before the outbreak of disease in the 1980s.

In 1996, the contracting Parties adopted a revised Management Plan, detailing the activities which will be undertaken between 1996 and 2000. It takes account of the results of scientific research in the past period and translates political decisions and targets into management actions. Among other things, the geographical scope of the agreement has been extended to encompass the adjacent off-shore area within the 3-nautical mile zone. The exemptions for taking have been limited and common criteria to release seals into the wild have been drawn up. Also, the coordinated monitoring of seals has been harmonized and improved to enable a better estimation of population size and trends.

Siberian Crane Memorandum of Understanding

As reported above, a successful meeting of Siberian crane Range States was held in India in November 1996. On that occasion, representatives of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan formally signed the Memorandum of Understanding concerning Conservation Measures for the Siberian Crane on behalf of their governments. This brings to seven the number of participating Range States; signatures from Afghanistan and Azerbaijan are still awaited. In addition, the meeting recommended that the Secretariat approach the Chinese authorities about the possible involvement of that country, which is important for the eastern population of Siberian cranes.

The Secretariat plans to circulate early in the New Year the Memorandum of Understanding, including the revised Action Plans for each of the Range States and participating organisations.

Slender-billed Curlew Memorandum of Understanding

To date, the competent authorities of 15 Range States have signed the MoU, and more signatures are anticipated very soon (e.g. Greece, Italy, and Yemen). The Secretariat produced and distributed, in early 1996, a status report on this endangered species. Within the framework of the MoU and the Action Plan, the CMS Secretariat is planning to hold, in autumn 1997, a symposium of country representatives and experts. Its aim is to facilitate international co-

ordination of monitoring efforts and to intensify ongoing protection measures.

Under its so-called "Life Programme", the European Union is financing a protection and monitoring project in southern Europe, with a particular emphasis on Greece. Considerable efforts have been undertaken to discover the breeding area of the Slender-billed curlew. In 1996 the Russian Conservation Union sent an expedition to the steppes area of southwest Siberia; and a second expedition was organised in the moor region of the taiga. Although the breeding areas still have not been found, good news has been received from Iran, where the Persian Gulf wintering areas of the bird (up to 50 individuals) were discovered.

Agreements under development

Houbara Bustard (Chlamydotis undulata macqueenii)

During the IUCN World Conservation Congress (Montreal, 14-23 October 1996) the head of the Saudi Arabian delegation convened an ad-hoc meeting of the Range States for the Houbara bustard. It became evident that not all governmental institutions of those countries identified to be Range States of the migratory populations of the Asian subspecies had received the proposal for the Agreement under CMS which was distributed through diplomatic channels by the Saudi Arabian authorities a couple of months ago. It was, *inter alia*, agreed that the Secretariat and the National Avian Research Centre of the United Arab Emirates should work together in order to finalise a mailing list and to distribute the proposal to the responsible ministries and experts.

Those governmental institutions and experts who have received the proposal are kindly requested to prepare, and to send by mid-January 1997, their comments and amendment proposals to the UNEP/CMS Secretariat. The IUCN Environmental Law Centre will be requested to prepare a revised draft, on behalf of and with the assistance of the Saudi Arabian National Commission for Wildlife Conservation and Development (NCWCD) and the UNEP/CMS Secretariat.

Great Bustard (Otis tarda) in Central Europe

The Great bustard is one of the most endangered birds in Europe. In one part of its traditional European range the species has already vanished. Without active protection measures, the species is doomed to disappear. The remaining population is dispersed in several small populations and many animals migrate. While migrations during the cold winter seasons occur over a large area, many of these birds are not able to find their breeding area again.

Hungary has drafted a Memorandum of Understanding aimed at conserving the middle European population of this species. This draft, which is receiving legal input from the IUCN Environmental Law Centre, will soon be submitted for discussion to the authorities of the Range States and the relevant international governmental and non-governmental organizations. The CMS Scientific Council will also examine the draft before it is presented at the fifth meeting of the COP in Geneva in April 1997.

Great Cormorant (Western European population)

The European population of the Great cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*) is enjoying once more a favourable conservation status. In fact, its numbers have increased to such an extent that other problems are now surfacing: complaints have been raised that the birds are causing severe damage to fish ponds and to the environment. There are, however, two other cormorant species which are endangered and which need protection. The Pygmy cormorant (*Phalacrocorax pygmaeus*) and Socotra cormorant (*Phalacrocorax nigrogularis*) potentially share a certain part of their migration range with that of the Great cormorant.

Following Recommendation 4.1 (Nairobi, 1994) of the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CMS, an open Working Group chaired by Dr. Sten Asbirk (Denmark) and assisted by the Netherlands met twice in order to further the elaboration of an International Conservation and Management Plan for those three cormorant populations. In its second meeting (Lelystad, Netherlands, 3-4 October 1996) the Working group expressed the desire that the Plan be finalised soon and submitted to the fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties for adoption.

The Co-ordinator explained at that meeting *inter alia* the linkage between CMS and the Convention on Biological Diversity and emphasised that the term "management" used in the CMS text in several instances includes both the sustainable (or "wise") use and the control of the population numbers of the species whose abundance is causing economic problems.

The Secretariats hopes that the Conservation and Management Plan will serve as a model for other actions of this kind undertaken in favour of cormorants in other regions.

Conference of the Parties

Preparations are under way for the fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, which will take place from 10-16 April 1997 at the United Nations Office at Geneva, Switzerland. During a week-end break, it is planned to hold a symposium on animal migration at the IUCN headquarters in Gland. Further details of the meeting and symposium will be announced by the CMS Secretariat in due course. The main conference will be preceded by meetings of the Scientific Council (7-8 April) and the Standing Committee (9 April). The Secretariat is continuing to receive advance registrations for these meetings, and will respond soon to requests from developing countries for support to attend, and will circulate detailed information on hotel accommodation arrangements.

The deadline for submission of proposals to amend the Appendices of the Convention expired on 11 November 1996. Proposals for listing a wide variety of species – 40 in all – in Appendices I and II were received, and were circulated in their original form to all Parties. They include 13 albatrosses (mostly from the southern hemisphere), about a dozen European migratory birds, various neotropical species (small cetaceans, otters, migratory birds and the Andean deer), as well as three migratory birds from southern Africa.

Standing Committee

The 14th meeting of the Standing Committee is scheduled to take place from 23-24 January 1997 in Bonn. Among other things, the Committee will consider a draft budget for the next triennium, a plan for integrating certain Agreement secretariats with that

of the parent Convention, and a revision of the *Strategy for the Future Development of the Convention*.

Scientific Council

The Scientific Council's next meeting will be held in Geneva on 7-8 April 1997, within the framework of COP 5.

Ongoing projects

Marine turtles

A CMS-sponsored workshop bringing together marine turtle specialists, conservationists and government administrators from northern Indian Ocean Range States will take place in Bhubaneswar, India, from 13-18 January 1997. A key output of the workshop, a regional marine turtle action plan, will provide a framework and overall strategy for future national and international conservation efforts. The workshop may also lay the groundwork for the eventual development of a more formal regional CMS Agreement for marine turtles in the northern Indian Ocean.

CMS was one of the major sponsors for a similar workshop of western Indian Ocean Range States, held in South Africa in November 1995, which has given an impetus for further initiatives. Numerous conservation activities are presently under way, such as the production of a national marine turtle plan in Kenya. Several proposals for priority actions identified in the regional action plan have been sent to donor organizations and other funders.

The objectives of the northern Indian Ocean workshop are to provide training in marine turtle conservation and management, to improve networking and communication, and to develop a *Marine Turtle Action Plan for the Northern Indian Ocean*. It will provide an opportunity for participants to begin to standardize regional research methodology, prioritize conservation and management activities, promote capacity building, and to foster collaboration and co-

operation among marine turtle conservationists and managers. Participants will identify national and regional priorities and make recommendations for future activities. Once elaborated into formal project proposals, some of these activities may warrant additional financial support from CMS.

The meeting will also serve to focus attention on the need to provide permanent protection of the world's most important olive ridley nesting beach at nearby Gahirmatha and provide international support for this effort. It is intended also to give encouragement to the Governments of India, Sri Lanka and Pakistan to meet their CMS obligations with respect to marine turtles: in particular, to protect habitat, control use, undertake cooperative research and monitoring, and promote educational activities.

Sahelo-Saharan ungulates

The Belgian Royal Institute of Natural Science (IRSNB) has been contracted by the Secretariat to develop a status report on a various endangered ungulates of the Sahelo-Saharan region, to update a draft action plan and to plan a meeting of representatives of the Range States and experts. The IRSNB is optimistic about being able to send invitations for the meeting soon and to finalize the papers on time. Once the plans are ready for distribution, the Secretariat and IRSNB will try to identify sponsors since the funds presently available are not sufficient.

Linkages with other conventions

Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

CMS was represented by the Co-ordinator at the third meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to CBD (Buenos Aires, 4-14 November 1996). The Chairmen of the CMS Standing Committee and the Scientific Council were also present, but not in their CMS capacities.

The Conference of the Parties adopted two decisions which have relevance for CMS and its related Agreements, as far as their Parties are eligible to receive GEF funds. First, a memorandum of understanding between the COP of CBD and the GEF Council was adopted by the Parties. It confirms that GEF will act as the funding mechanism on an interim

basis for CBD and other related organizations, and that the COP will determine the policy, strategy, programme priorities and eligibility criteria for access to and utilization of financial resources.

In the second decision, the COP reaffirmed the need to make mutually supportive activities under CBD and other conventions. In relation to CMS, it requests that an evaluation be made on "how this Convention can complement the implementation of the CBD through its transboundary coordinated and concerted action on a regional, continental and global scale".

It also calls on the national focal points of the CBD and the competent authorities of the Ramsar Convention, CMS and CITES to co-operate on the implementation of these conventions at the national level to avoid duplication of effort. In relation to all biodiversity-related conventions, it invites them to "explore opportunities for accessing funding through the GEF for relevant projects, *including projects involving a number of countries*", provided the relevant criteria are met.

The CMS Secretariat calls upon all Parties to relevant Agreements concluded under the auspices of CMS and international governmental institutions specialized in project work related to the conservation and management of migratory species – including research and monitoring – to strive to implement those Agreements *inter alia* through sound projects. The Secretariat will endeavour to clarify procedural and other open questions as soon as it has received some pilot projects which are at present under development.

Ramsar Convention on Wetlands

The heads of the CMS and the Ramsar Convention secretariats met during the third meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity and discussed how to improve their co-operation. Mr. Delmar Blasco advised that in October 1996 the Ramsar Standing Committee discussed and reacted favourably to the proposed conclusion of a memorandum of co-operation, a draft of which was already prepared in 1995. It was agreed that the secretariats meet as soon as time permits to finalize and sign the memorandum.