



Vulture MsAP

Multi-species Action Plan to Conserve African-Eurasian Vultures

Overarching Workshop Report

16 – 19 February 2017

Toledo, Spain



Organised by:

SEO/BirdLife (Sociedad Española de Ornitología, BirdLife International Partner in Spain), with special thanks to David de la Bodega, Juan Carlos Atienza, Jorge Fernández Orueta and Sara Cabezas; and the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) Coordinating Unit of the Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of Migratory Birds of Prey in Africa and Eurasia (Raptors MOU)–

Held at the kind invitation of:

The Regional Government of Castilla-La Mancha, Spain

Vulture MsAP Coordination Team members:

- Nick P. Williams, Head of the Coordinating Unit, CMS Raptors MOU
- Jenny Renell, Associate Programme Officer, CMS Raptors MOU
- André Botha, Endangered Wildlife Trust—Overarching Coordinator, Vulture MsAP
- Jovan Andevski, Vulture Conservation Foundation—European Regional Coordinator, Vulture MsAP
- Chris Bowden, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds—Asian Regional Coordinator, Vulture MsAP
- Masumi Gudka, BirdLife International—African Regional Coordinator, Vulture MsAP
- Roger Safford, Senior Programme Manager: Preventing Extinctions, BirdLife International
- José Tavares, Director, Vulture Conservation Foundation

Workshop Chairman:

Fernando Spina, Chair, CMS Scientific Council

Supported by:

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Dates and venue:

16–19 February 2017, University of Castilla-La Mancha and San Servando Castle, Toledo, Spain.



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Purpose of the Overarching Workshop

Introduction

In November 2014, Parties to the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) adopted [Resolution 11.14](#) 'Programme of Work on Migratory Birds and Flyways', which established the mandate to develop a Multi-species Action Plan to Conserve African-Eurasian Vultures (Vulture MsAP), under the auspices of the Coordinating Unit of the Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of Migratory Birds of Prey in Africa and Eurasia (Raptors MOU). Following consultation with the IUCN SSC Vulture Specialist Group, BirdLife International, Vulture Conservation Foundation and other specialists, the Coordinating Unit of the Raptors MOU drafted a Project Charter¹ in early 2016 for the development of the Vulture MsAP.

Conservation actions for such mobile and wide-ranging species as vultures can only be effective if implemented across international political boundaries at the flyway-scale, which requires a broad collaborative approach and the engagement of all Range States. From the outset, the Coordinating Unit committed to ensuring that the Vulture MsAP would be developed based on genuine consultations with representatives of Range States, partners, key stakeholders and the general public.

The overall aim of the Vulture MsAP is to develop a comprehensive strategic Action Plan covering the whole geographic ranges (at least 124 countries) across Africa, Asia, and Europe of 15 species of Old World vultures to promote concerted, collaborative and coordinated international conservation actions.

The objectives of the Vulture MsAP are:

1. To rapidly halt current population declines in all species covered by the Vulture MsAP;
2. To reverse recent population trends to bring the conservation status of each species back to a favourable level; and,
3. To provide conservation management guidelines applicable to all Range States covered by the Vulture MsAP.

Aim and Objectives of the Overarching Workshop

The aims of the Workshop were to:

- Review the first consolidated draft of the Vulture MsAP, incorporating the four regional components from Africa, Asia, Europe and the Middle East, and other inputs;
- Elaborate certain key strategic components of the Vulture MsAP which will not have been collectively considered at the four Regional Workshops; and
- Engender and develop multi-lateral support, including identifying 'Vulture Champions'.

The species concerned are all those covered by the MsAP, namely:

- Bearded Vulture *Gypaetus barbatus*
- Egyptian Vulture *Neophron percnopterus*
- Red-headed Vulture *Sarcogyps calvus*
- White-headed Vulture *Trionoceph occipitalis*
- Hooded Vulture *Necrosyrtes monachus*
- Himalayan Griffon *Gyps himalayensis*

¹ http://www.cms.int/sites/default/files/document/vulture-msap_project-charter_feb2016_e.pdf

- White-rumped Vulture *Gyps bengalensis*
- White-backed Vulture *Gyps africanus*
- Indian Vulture *Gyps indicus*
- Slender-billed Vulture *Gyps tenuirostris*
- Cape Vulture *Gyps coprotheres*
- Rüppell's Vulture *Gyps rueppelli*
- Griffon Vulture *Gyps fulvus*
- Cinereous Vulture *Aegypius monachus*
- Lappet-faced Vulture *Torgos tracheliotos*

The workshop was held back-to-back with the 2nd Meeting of the CMS Preventing Poisoning Working Group (PPWG)² from 20 to 21 February 2017. Poisoning, in a range of forms, is the main threat to vultures worldwide, so the linkage between the two meetings was very strong, and emphasised by the large proportion of delegates who attended both: 45 per cent of the Vulture MsAP Workshop participants also attended the PPWG meeting. A field trip available to delegates of both events on 19 February 2017 gave the opportunity for informal discussions on cross-cutting issues and synergies.

Both meetings were held at the kind invitation of the Regional Government of Castilla-La Mancha.

Approach, methods and participation

Preparatory work

The Overarching Workshop was the last in the series of workshops that provided the basis for development of the Vulture MsAP. The four earlier workshops each related to a significant part of the range of African-Eurasian vultures (Table 1), and aimed to gather the information necessary to develop the regional components of the Vulture MsAP, including all vulture species that occur in the region covered by the Plan. Special attention was given to species' status, distribution, threats and priority conservation actions.

The regional workshops were held between October 2016 and February 2017 within the Vulture MsAP range; a total of 212 delegates attended. All of the workshops followed a similar agenda and were conducted with facilitation provided by a range of experienced participants who were briefed on the methods to be followed. Each resulted in the development of a draft regional component of the Vulture MsAP, apart from the Middle East, where the workshop took place some weeks after the rest, and instead validated existing material as well as gathering some new information to add directly to the draft consolidated MsAP, which had already been drafted by the time of that workshop. In addition, a short³ report on each workshop was produced³.

Table 1. Vulture MsAP Regional Workshops

Region	Date	Location	Number of Delegates (Total = 212)	Questionnaire Responses (Total = 208)
Africa	18–21 October 2016	Dakar, Senegal	54	62
Europe	26–29 October 2016	Extremadura, Spain	79	89
Asia	29–30 November 2016	Mumbai, India	37	44
Middle East	6–9 February 2017	Sharjah, United Arab Emirates	42	13

² <http://www.cms.int/en/meeting/2nd-meeting-cms-preventing-poisoning-working-group-ppwg2>

³ <http://www.cms.int/raptors/en/document/reports-vulture-msap-regional-workshops>

In January 2017 (following the African, Asian and European workshops), a preliminary draft of the Vulture MsAP was developed. This included components not specific to any particular region (for example, international policies and legislation relevant for management), which were drafted by members of the Vulture MsAP Coordination Team (see p. 2) based on consultations and their own experience. This draft was circulated for initial review to 50 specialists involved in the Vulture MsAP Steering Group, the Technical Advisory Group to the Raptors MOU and pre-registered participants for the Overarching Workshop. A revised version, which incorporated the comments received from the initial review process coupled with the key outcomes of the Middle East Regional Workshop, was posted online⁴ as a meeting document for consideration at the Overarching Workshop in mid-February 2017. This draft was therefore available to the Overarching Workshop participants as the main focus for discussion and refinement.

Workshop Participants

A total of 40 participants attended from 18 countries (Annex 1). Invitations had been sent to the Vulture MsAP Steering Group members, sponsors, potential proponents of CMS Appendix I species listing proposals, and critical Range States (the latter based on suggestions obtained from the Vulture MsAP Coordinators). All the Regions were represented.



Participants of Vulture MsAP Overarching Workshop. Photo by Andre Botha.

Organisation and Facilitation

The Workshop, together with the CMS Preventing Poisoning Working Group meeting and the field trip, was co-organised by SEO/BirdLife, the BirdLife International Partner in Spain. The technical agenda was developed by the Vulture MsAP Coordination Team (see p. 2). The workshop was chaired by Fernando Spina, who also acts as the Chair of the CMS Scientific Council. Facilitation roles for working sessions and plenary discussions

⁴ <http://www.cms.int/raptors/en/meeting/overarching-workshop-develop-multi-species-action-plan-protect-african-eurasian-vultures>

were shared among five members of the Vulture MsAP Coordination Team (Jovan Andevski, Andre Botha, Roger Safford, José Tavares and Nick P. Williams) and in addition Nicola Crockford of RSPB (BirdLife, UK).

Venue and logistics

The Vulture MsAP Overarching Workshop was held in Toledo, Spain, at Universidad de la Castilla-la Mancha and San Servando Castle from 16–18 February 2017, with a field trip to Cabañeros National Park on 19 February.

Most of the workshop costs were met by the Coordinating Unit of the CMS Raptors MOU, under Small-scale Funding Agreements with BirdLife International and SEO/BirdLife. However, the organization of the workshop would not have been possible without the in-kind and voluntary contribution provided by the Regional Government of Castilla-La Mancha in Spain, and the in-kind and organizational support received from SEO/BirdLife and BirdLife International.

Considerable cost savings were made by the organisation of the Vulture MsAP Overarching Workshop back to back with the Preventing Poisoning Working Group meeting.

Approach and methodology

Following the opening remarks, the workshop began with the appointment of Dr Fernando Spina as Chair. A short series of introductory scene-setting talks (see Workshop Agenda in Annex 2) introduced the participants to vulture conservation in Spain, to the Vulture MsAP and its importance for international vulture conservation. The background information was completed with a summary of relevant conservation initiatives for other taxa under CMS, and a review of vulture conservation initiatives across the Vulture MsAP range.

This led to the detailed review of the draft MsAP, a process divided into two main components. The first, in plenary, focused on the species and threats they face. The second began with a plenary presentation on the priority conservation actions, and then, in breakout groups, examined in detail the proposed activities to tackle the threats and conserve the species.

The participants then examined overarching issues concerned with the implementation of the Vulture MsAP, as distinct from its technical content: coordination framework, fundraising and communications, and preparations for CMS COP12 at which the Vulture MsAP will be presented for adoption by the Parties. Each topic was presented via a plenary presentation followed by open discussion. Finally, conclusions and next steps were agreed.

Proceedings of the Overarching Workshop

A brief, day-by-day summary of the proceedings is presented below. See Annex 2 for the Workshop Outline Agenda.

Day 1. Welcome, context and setting the scene

After the opening remarks, which included a welcome from the Regional Government of Castilla-La Mancha, and introductory scene-setting talks (see Approach and methodology, above), vulture species distribution and status was reviewed through a presentation showing the current range of each species as mapped in the BirdLife/IUCN Red List, and indicating general and regional trends and uncertainties, with an invitation to participants to add, remove or correct the information presented. Many constructive comments were received, resulting in major improvements to the maps and knowledge of status within the known range; as a follow-up measure, printouts of the maps were provided on request, allowing participants to contribute

detailed revisions to species. This information was included in the final version of the Vulture MsAP, as well as on the Red List website.

A review of the many threats to vultures, identified, categorised and prioritised through the regional workshops, was then presented and discussed. This helped to build consensus on the key threats and associated drivers, including regional and species differences and knowledge gaps. Moving to the actions needed to address the threats, an overview of the consolidated priority actions required for vulture conservation was presented in plenary, including regional and species differences. This provided an entry point to the following day's more detailed group activities.

Day 2. Review of the Implementation Plan

The main purpose of the day's work was to review in detail the Implementation Plan consisting of the objectives, indicators, results and actions proposed in the draft Vulture MsAP. An introductory presentation ensured that participants were aware of the scope and purpose of the Implementation Plan, and the approach and outputs required. The participants were each allocated to one of three break-out groups, each of which was supported by a facilitator and a rapporteur, who took notes electronically and captured the amendments to the action planning table as the discussions proceeded. Each group introduced an agreed set of objectives and were charged to assess, assign and validate them and their components; to identify synergies and overlaps with other initiatives; and to identify gaps. For each activity, the following information was recorded in tabular form:

- Revisions to wording
- Comments on the action
- Existing initiatives underway
- Gaps (geographical or thematic) in relation to the action
- How Governments could be engaged in the activity, if necessary
- Any other notes

The first group, facilitated by José Tavares, covered poisoning, for which the draft MsAP contained four objectives. The second, facilitated by Andre Botha, covered energy, research and monitoring (three MsAP objectives); the third, facilitated by Jovan Andevski, covered food availability and other threats (three MsAP objectives). Participants wishing to cover activities outside their assigned group had the option of moving between groups.

All groups were highly animated and constructive, with good participation. Each group provided a short summary. A frequent outcome was the consolidation of activities, in other words combination of several actions into one simplified action; however, some missing activities, and numerous reformulations, were also proposed. In sum, this exercised reduced the total number of actions significantly, without loss of essential information, and was generally agreed to have improved the Implementation Plan significantly. However, it was also noted that indicators (one per objective) were neglected in discussions and would need further consideration.

Day 3. Coordination framework, fundraising and communications, and draft Resolution for CMS COP12

Coordination framework

The day began with a presentation in plenary, reviewing options for an appropriate framework to coordinate implementation of the Vulture MsAP; and exploring the most appropriate mechanisms, tools and processes to adopt for monitoring, evaluation and reporting. This was followed by a plenary discussion facilitated by

Nicola Crockford, focused on the Coordination Framework as this was considered to be the highest priority for discussion in the limited time available, but also included elements of reporting.

A draft structure was developed, involving the Coordinating Unit of the Raptors MOU, Coordinators (one overarching and three to four regional), a Steering Group with regular virtual meetings, three or more Regional Committees (meeting annually), triennial MsAP meetings, a Working Group (with most members to meet annually at regional gatherings), and National Vulture MsAP Implementation Task Forces. The Working Group and Steering Group are defined in the original [Project Charter](#); Regional Committees and National Task Forces were important innovations proposed at the Overarching Workshop. It was agreed that further work would be needed to develop a less hierarchical structure, but that these should be the major components.

The participants also reviewed and endorsed the importance of other relevant CMS-led initiatives in implementation of the Vulture MsAP in relation to specific threats, in particular the Preventing Poisoning Working Group; proposed Lead Task Force; Intergovernmental Task Force on Illegal Killing, Taking and Trade of Migratory Birds in the Mediterranean; Energy Task Force; and Africa-Eurasia Migratory Landbird Action Plan (in relation to sustainable land use and hence food availability).

Communications

This short session aimed to reach consensus on the key phases, approaches, target audiences and outputs to promote awareness-raising and implementation of the Vulture MsAP. The session consisted of a presentation, which included some examples of recent outputs from several organisations, followed by open discussion facilitated by Roger Safford. Actions for the period leading up to and including CMS COP12 will be summarised in a Communications Plan; those forming part of the strategy for supporting implementation of the actions set out in the MsAP will be distilled into a short section of the Vulture MsAP itself.

Budget, Fundraising and Resource Mobilisation

This section focused not only on finance *per se*, but also on how to mainstream vulture conservation into national, regional and sectoral policies, this being agreed to be the most effective, and perhaps only realistic way, to effect the substantial changes needed to halt and reverse vulture declines. This session was again launched with a presentation, followed by open discussion facilitated by Roger Safford. Consensus was reached on the fundraising mechanisms and opportunities identified, and suggestions captured on mainstreaming vulture conservation, all to be distilled into a short section of the MsAP.

Preparation for CMS COP12

A series of short but vitally important discussions covered the needs in the run-up to CMS COP12 to be held in eight months' time from the Workshop. The following topics were covered, with presentations and facilitation by Nick P. Williams and (for the third item below) Jenny Renell.

Review of Draft COP12 Resolution. A first draft of a suitable resolution, for consideration by CMS Parties to include adoption of the Vulture MsAP, was presented and key points discussed, facilitated by Nick P. Williams. Consensus was reached on the key content, statement and messages to be included in a revised draft Resolution.

CMS Appendix 1 – Species Listing Proposals. Proposals to list 10 species of Old World vultures on CMS Appendix 1 were reviewed, to ensure that participants were aware of progress, and to offer the opportunity for Range States to express interest in promoting specific proposals.

Process and Milestones towards COP12. An overview was presented including the opportunity to hold a side-event at the COP to promote awareness, adoption and implementation of the Vulture MsAP. Participants were

also made aware of other milestones to be met to present Vulture MsAP for adoption at CMS COP12 in October 2017, as well as the process, in particular the public consultation period (from mid-March for one month), the submission deadline to CMS Secretariat (late May) and review by CMS Scientific Council (July).

Nick P. Williams then gave some concluding remarks and votes of thanks before formally closing the Workshop.

Conclusions and outcomes

The Workshop achieved all of the desired outcomes, keeping the process on track towards the next deadline: the revision of the draft MsAP to be released in mid-March for public consultation⁵. The positive and collaborative spirit was affirmed and appreciated by those present. Holding the two meetings (Vulture MsAP and Preventing Poisoning Working Group) back-to-back presented certain organisational challenges but these were far outweighed by the unique opportunity to enhance the content of both meetings through added expertise. It is also certain that participation (in terms of both country representation and expertise) in both meetings was substantially enhanced.

⁵ This deadline was duly met, with a significantly improved draft, which was generally very positively received.

Annex 1. List of Participants

Name	Affiliation	Country
Stoyan Nikolov	Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds	Bulgaria
Mashpal Kry	Department of Wildlife and Biodiversity	Cambodia
Phaerun Sum	BirdLife Cambodia	Cambodia
Roller Ma Ming	Xinjiang Institute of Ecology and Ecology, Chinese Academy of Sciences	China
Borja Heredia	CMS Secretariat	Germany
Tilman Schneider	CMS Secretariat	Germany
Kofi Adu-Nsiah	Ghana Wildlife Division	Ghana
Chris Bowden	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds	India
Hamid Amini	Department of the Environment	Iran
Mohammad Ashgari Tabari	Ornithology Unit, Wildlife Research Bureau, Department of Environment	Iran
Ohad Hatzofe	Israel Nature and Parks Authority	Israel
Fernando Spina	CMS Scientific Council	Italy
Charles Musyoki	Kenya Wildlife Service	Kenya
Masumi Gudka	Africa Partnership Secretariat, BirdLife International	Kenya
Batbayar Galtbalt	Wildlife Science and Conservation Center	Mongolia
Naeem Ashraf Raja	Biodiversity Programme	Pakistan
Sharif Baloch Uddin	Wildlife and National Parks, Balochistan	Pakistan
Hamad Alqahtani	Saudi Wildlife Authority	Saudi Arabia
Mohammed Shobrak	Taif University	Saudi Arabia
André Botha	Endangered Wildlife Trust	South Africa
Nicolas Lopez	Environmental Agency, Junta de Comunidades Castilla-la Mancha	Spain
Juan Pablo Castaño Lopez	Tecnico Media Ambiente, Junta de Comunidades Castilla-la Mancha	Spain
Ricardo Gómez Calmaestra	Spanish Ministry of Environment	Spain
Rubén Moreno Opo	Spanish Ministry of Environment	Spain
Juan Carlos Atienza	SEO/BirdLife	Spain
David de la Bodega Zugasti	SEO/BirdLife	Spain
Jorge Fernández-Orueta	SEO/BirdLife	Spain
Sara Cabezas-Díaz	SEO/BirdLife	Spain
Alvaro Camina	IFC-World Bank Group	Spain
Manuel Martín López	Fundación CBD-Habitat	Spain
Iván Ramírez Paredes	BirdLife International	Spain
Jovan Andevski	Vulture Conservation Foundation	Spain
Daniel Hegglin	Vulture Conservation Foundation	Switzerland
José Tavares	Vulture Conservation Foundation	Turkey
Nick P. Williams	Coordinating Unit, CMS Raptors MOU	UAE
Jenny Renell	Coordinating Unit, CMS Raptors MOU	UAE
Rhys Green	University of Cambridge	UK
Jemima Parry-Jones MBE	International Centre for Birds of Prey	UK
Roger Safford	BirdLife International	UK
Nicola Crockford	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds	UK

Annex 2: Vulture MsAP Overarching Workshop Agenda

OUTLINE AGENDA

The main objectives of the Overarching Workshop are to:

- Review the 1st consolidated draft of the Vulture MsAP, incorporating the four regional components from Africa, Asia, Europe and the Middle East, and other inputs;
- Elaborate certain key strategic components of the Vulture MsAP which will not have been collectively considered at the four Regional Workshops; and
- Engender and develop multi-lateral support, including identifying 'Vulture Champions'.

1. Welcome and Opening Remarks
2. Setting the Scene
 - 2.1. Vulture Conservation in Castilla-la Mancha
 - 2.2. Vultures in Spain – Successful Conservation in Action
 - 2.3. CMS Vulture MsAP – International Collaboration to Conserve Vultures
3. Summary of Existing Vulture Conservation Initiatives
 - 3.1. CMS Initiatives
 - 3.2. Vulture Conservation Initiatives
4. Review of Draft Vulture MsAP
 - 4.1. Species – Distribution and Status
 - 4.2. Threats – Categorisation and Prioritisation
 - 4.3. Conservation Actions
5. Action Planning
 - 5.1. Group 1 – Poisoning
 - 5.2. Group 2 – Energy, Research and Monitoring
 - 5.3. Group 3 – Food and Other Threats
 - 5.4. Group 4 – Coordination Framework
 - 5.5. Group 5 – Monitoring, Reporting and Evaluation
6. Budget, Fundraising and Resource Mobilisation
7. Communications
8. Review of Draft COP12 Resolution
9. CMS Appendix 1 – Species Listing Proposals
10. Process and Milestones towards COP12 (including Side-event)
11. Conclusions and Next Steps
12. Closing Remarks

Annex 3: Presentations

To access all presentations in PDF format please click [here](#) > Presentations.

Annex 4: Photos from the Workshop

To access photos from the workshop please click [here](#).