



2 August 2016

Dear Colleague,

### **CMS Multi-species Action Plan to conserve African-Eurasian Vultures (Vulture MsAP)**

On behalf of the Coordinating Unit of the UNEP/CMS Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of Migratory Birds of Prey in Africa and Eurasia (Raptors MoU), it is my pleasure to be writing to invite you to contribute to the development of the Vulture MsAP.

Vultures provide critically important ecosystem services by cleaning up carcasses and other organic waste in the environment: they are nature's garbage collectors and this translates into significant economic and human health benefits. Vulture populations in Africa and Asia have drastically declined in recent years, so much so that conservationists speak of a 'Vulture Crisis'. This worrying situation has catalyzed swift international agreement of the urgent need to develop a Vulture MsAP covering 15 species of Old World vultures.

The objectives of the Vulture MsAP are to: (1) rapidly halt current population declines in all species covered by the plan; (2) reverse recent population trends to bring the conservation status of each species back to a favourable level; and, (3) provide conservation management guidelines applicable to all Range States covered by the Vulture MsAP. The Coordinating Unit will provide secretariat support and oversee the development of the Vulture MsAP for submission to the 12<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the CMS Conference of the Parties (COP12), scheduled to be held in October 2017.

**Approach** - Working with three key partners - IUCN Vulture Specialist Group, BirdLife International and the Vulture Conservation Foundation, we have established three Regional Coordinators to lead development of the Vulture MsAP in Africa, Asia and Europe (including the Middle East). Three corresponding Regional Action Planning Workshops are scheduled to be held in Senegal, India and Spain, respectively. Details of the Workshops are set out below. In addition, an Overarching Coordinator has been identified and should be in place very soon. Their role will be to ensure that the three regional components are developed in such a way that they can be incorporated into a single Vulture MsAP. An additional Action Planning Workshop is envisaged to be held early next year to consolidate this process.



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

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**Questionnaire** - An online Questionnaire will be circulated in mid-August 2016. It will seek to gather information about the biology, status and threats of each of the 15 species covered by the MsAP. You'll be asked to complete the Questionnaire promptly so that your inputs can be incorporated into the first draft of the appropriate regional component of the Vulture MsAP, which will form the basis for discussions at the corresponding Regional Workshop.

**Regional Action Planning Workshops** - These three events are scheduled, as follows: The African Regional MsAP Workshop will be held as part of the Pan-African Vulture Summit from 16 – 21 October 2016 in Dakar, Senegal; The European (including the Middle East) MsAP Workshop will be held alongside a Flyway Action Planning Meeting for the Cinereous Vulture from 25 – 29 October 2016 in Monfrague, Spain; and the Asian MsAP Workshop will be held as part of the Saving Asia's Vultures from Extinction (SAVE) meeting, from 27 - 28 November 2016 in Pinjore, Haryana, India.

If you wish to attend any of the Regional Workshops, please complete the attached Registration Form and submit it to the corresponding Regional Coordinator (details on the Form), and copied to us here at the Coordinating Unit. Participants are encouraged to seek funding support from their own institutions but limited sponsorship is available to support a modest number of delegates. If you wish to apply to be sponsored, please tick the relevant box on the Registration Form. Please note that due to resource constraints all the Workshops will be conducted in English, with the exception of the African Regional Workshop that will also offer French translation, due to additional resources donated.

Developing the Vulture MsAP is a challenging but critically important task if we are to halt and reverse the serious decline in the populations of these charismatic birds. It can only succeed with the engagement and support of all 124 Range States that host one or more Old World vulture species.

We are looking forward to working with you.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nick P. Williams". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a horizontal line underneath it.

Nick P. Williams  
Head of the Coordinating Unit