Events convened on Monday, 21 November 2011

Ecological Networks as a Tool for Migratory Species Conservation

Presented by CMS Secretariat, UNEP/GRID-Arendal, MoveBank and Princeton University

Peter Prokosch, UNEP/Grid-Arendal, stressed the importance of marine migratory corridors noting that the Beluga Whale is extremely sensitive to shipping and other underwater noise.

More information:

http://www.grida.no/publications/rr/living-planet/
http:// www.movebank.org/index.html

Contacts:

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Martin Wikelski <martin@orn.mpg.de>

This event launched the *Living Planet: Connected Planet* publication and introduced MoveBank, a platform that allows easy access to data on animal movements.

Elizabeth Mrema, CMS Executive Secretary, lauding the publication of the Living Planet: Connected Planet, noted that ecological networks are vital to animals for, *inter alia*, feeding and breeding, equating their importance to the transport networks of humans.

Peter Prokosch, Managing Director, UNEP/GRID-Arendal, provided an overview of and the steps needed to protect the ecological networks of "flying and swimming animals." On "flying" animals, he called for the protection of flyways through encouraging engagement with non-CMS party countries and prioritizing critical sites along flyways. On "swimming" animals, Prokosch said steps for their protection should include identifying the 30 most threatened migration sites and corridors worldwide, creating incentives to reduce unsustainable natural resource use and developing an international alert system.

Aline Kühl, CMS, said that "running" animals' migratory corridors are more easily affected by barriers. She called for independent studies when infrastructure developments are proposed and highlighted the importance of planning for protecting ecological networks.

Martin Wikelski, Max Planck Institute for Ornithology, providing an overview of the Movebank project, highlighted the International Cooperation for Animal Research Using Space (ICARUS) project, which will see the launch of an antenna on the International Space Station by the European Space Agency to track animals on a more global scale.

Roland Kays, New York State Museum, noted that data in Movebank can be viewed at multiple scales and that users can stream live data. Sarah Davidson, Max Planck Institute for Ornithology, noted that tools to elaborate on population density, land use and vegetation exist within the platform.

InforMEA - The United Nations Information Portal on Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs)

Presented by UNEP - Division of Environmental Law and Conventions (DELC), CMS and CITES Secretariats

This event introduced InforMEA, a project of the MEA Information and Knowledge Management (IKM) Initiative, supported by UNEP. It provides an online site for harvesting and organizing the outcomes of work conducted under multiple MEAs.

Bakary Kante, UNEP DELC, introduced the InforMEA project, noting its role in helping Parties rationalize and coordinate decisions; and creating a site to support the focal points, calendars, news, international reports in implementation plans of listed MEAs. He described InforMEA as "international law in the making".

Eva Duer, UNEP DELC, highlighted key benefits of InforMEA, including that Parties can: improve the harmonizaation of datat satndards across secretariats; keep track of decision-making; share lessons learned in developing Online Reporting Systems; and enhance technical expertise across MEA Secretariats.

Florian Keil, African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement (AEWA), expressed support from both CMS and AEWA for InforMEA. He described work between UNEP-World Conservation Monitoring Centre (WCMC), CMS, AEWA and CITES on the recent launch of their online reporting initiative, underscoring the value of strengthening Information and Communications Technology (ICT) capacity.

John Scanlon, CITES Secretary-General, described InforMEA as a practical solution, responding to calls for synergies between Conference of the Parties (COPs) and Parties. He underscored its importance for connecting MEAs outside the "biodiversity circle." He supported Bakary Kante's notion that InforMEA is a central site for showing that there is one body of international environmental law.

Nick Davidson, Deputy Secretary-General of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, said that Ramsar is facing challenges to meet ICT requirements, highlighting that the new Ramsar website is not compatible with InforMEA but it is an area currently being addressed. Supporting John Scanlon, he described how biodiversity MEAs are coming out of their "biodiversity silo" and are taking stock of the activities taking place around them.

In the ensuing discussion, participants largely supported InforMEA. One participant queried the limited scope of InforMEA, as it only covers 18 global conventions but few regional agreements. Chair Francisco Rilla Manta, CMS Secretariat, responded that InforMEA is part of a long process of integration and is not yet a final tool.

John Scanlon, CITES Secretary-General, highlighted how InforMEA allows you to see linkages between member states' responses to environmental challenges.

Bakary Kante, Director, UNEP DELC, described InformMEA as a "wonderful" opportunity to see collaboration and cooperation among MEAs.

More information:

http://informea.org/

Contacts:

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L-R: John Scanlon, CITES Secretary-General; Bakary Kante, UNEP DELC; Nick Davidson, Ramsar, Deputy Secretary-General; and Francisco Rilla Manta, CMS Secretariat.

Civil Society Dialogue: Building critical capacity

Organized by the CMS Secretariat

This session was introduced with the purpose of increasing communication between civil society actors and CMS. Selected civil society organizations were given the opportunity to present the work they have been doing in relation to CMS.

Bert Lenten, CMS Deputy Executive Secretary, introduced the meeting and drew on the Friends of CMS network as an example for demonstrating new opportunities for continued collaboration between the civil society and CMS.

Manfred Niekisch, Director of the Frankfurt Zoological Garden, provided background to the Friends of CMS, stressing its target of engaging the public in conservation.

Margi Prideaux, Policy and Negotiations Director, Migratory Wildlife Network, described the work of Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society in negotiating the Pacific Cetacean Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), using it to highlight the trust built between the NGO community and Pacific Island states.

Taej Mundkur, Wetlands International, stressed the role of civil society in making a difference on the ground and the importance of engaging with the corporate sector.

Olga Pereladova, Head of WWF Central Asia, provided a history of the MoU on the Bukhara deer, highlighting the importance of CMS as an international instrument for supporting and helping mobilize resources.

Nicola Crockford, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds/BirdLife, said that CMS was the only convention for people to engage on an intergovernmental level on species conservation, stressing that civil society needs to show governments that CMS is important. Claire Mirande, Director of the International Crane Foundation, introduced the Siberian Crane MoU and used this as a case study to demonstrate the importance of CMS in providing official links between national governments, as well as between governments and NGOs.

Liz Macfie, Gorilla Coordinator, Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), called for, *inter alia*: greater involvement of practitioners to ensure the effectiveness of the Gorilla Agreement; preventing duplication of efforts; increased funding at the ground level; and the enforcement of wildlife laws.

Participants discussed further ways in which civil society could engage with CMS.

Liz Macfie, WCS, described how WCS would like to have a stronger voice in how the Gorilla Agreement is implemented.

More information:

http://wildmigration.org/

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Taej Mundkur, Wetlands International, described the importance of Wetlands International as an NGO with a technical focus, bringing information together for both the public and national governments.

L-R: Manfred Niekisch, Frankfurt Zoological Garden; and Margi Prideaux, Migratory Wildlife Network

Guidelines on the Integration of Migratory Species into National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs)

Presented by the CMS Secretariat

View of the NBSAPs side event in session.

Crane Calling: Regional Cooperation for the Conservation of the Black-necked crane

Organized by the Ministry of Environment and Forests, India

View of the side event on the Black-necked Crane.