



A Special Report on Selected Side Events at the Tenth Conference of the Parties (COP 10) of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS)

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Events convened on Thursday, 24 November 2011

Challenges in Mitigating Bird Electrocution

Presented by the Norwegian Institute for Nature Research (NINA) and RWE



Heidi Sørensen, State Secretary of the Ministry of Environment, Norway, highlighted the case of the Eurasian eagle owl and said the Norwegian Government has set aside Kr30 million to reduce the threat from electrocution to this species.

Heidi Sørensen, State Secretary for the Ministry of the Environment, Norway, underscored the threat electrocution poses to birds noting that in Norway it kills more than 100,000 migratory and stationary birds. She said that one measure to reduce risk is to use underground cables, which has been effective in Norway, UK and Denmark. She emphasized the magnitude of the work still to be done to find additional solutions.

Kjetil Bevanger, Norwegian Institute for Nature Research, introduced work under the 'Optimal design and routing of power lines; ecological, technical and economic perspectives' (OPTIPOL) project. On collision, he said that the problem is site, species and season specific and that gallinaceous birds, like black grouse and capercaillie, are most at risk. On electrocution, he described work looking at alternative designs to mitigate electrocution in eagle owl populations, using anti-perch devices and alternative elevated perches. He said future work should: look at which structures are the most dangerous to birds; conduct large scale mapping of "killer poles"; and finding alternative electrocution-safe design for power lines.

Stefan Klüppers, RWE, presented on his company's efforts to decrease bird deaths due to collision or electrocution. He noted that on electrocution, RWE has a fitting programme underway to ensure that birds do not get electrocuted when perching. On collisions, he said that RWE had to develop hanging markers to discourage birds from flying near the wires. He remarked that developing low-cost methods to fit these markers had led to additional savings for repairing and fitting transmission lines across the company.

Markus Nipkow, Birdlife Germany, outlined steps taken in Germany to prevent bird electrocutions and collisions, saying that in 2002 legislation was passed mandating steps to avoid this problem. He said that a "technical rule book" negotiated between stakeholders stipulates measures to avoid electrocution but lamented that such steps also need to be taken for addressing bird collisions.

In the discussion, participants highlighted: support from the private sector for funding mitigation efforts; the possibility of EU directives; incentives to ensure proper design of poles and pylons; and steps needed to ensure protection along the migratory corridor.

More information:

<http://www.buwa.nl/en/aewareviewproject.html>

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Reflections on the Year of the Gorilla

Presented by the the CMS Secretariat

This side event provided an overview of the activities undertaken during the Year of the Gorilla (YoG) in 2009, as well as reflections on the success of the Year.

Ian Redmond, YoG Ambassador, introduced the event noting that the YoG was held to help raise the profile and plight of the gorilla. Showing a video of the UK launch of the YoG, he underscored the interconnectivity of gorillas, their habitats and people's livelihoods. Redmond outlined a trip undertaken during the YoG, in which he planned to visit the ten range states. Showing a short video, he said that during the expedition he interviewed over 100 people, noting that many highlighted: the importance of gorillas for the environment; the need for collaboration between countries due to the transboundary nature of the species; and the impact humans have on the health of gorillas.

He further underscored the negative impact that war and poaching has on gorillas, saying this has led to a decline in species numbers. Noting that retraining militia, poachers and hunters is imperative for preserving gorilla numbers, he said there has been success in non-governmental organization programmes that assist in training and reinforcing law enforcement and that these programmes are being replicated in other states. He highlighted another benefit of the YoG was to educate the general public, particularly in the range states, about the gorilla and its plight.

Going forward, he said payments for ecosystem services will be crucial for preserving gorillas and their habitats, as well as providing alternate income streams for local communities. He suggested that as hunting is a form of forest degradation, money given to operationalize Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries (REDD) programmes should be used to combat the hunting and poaching of gorillas.



Ian Redmond, Year of the Gorilla Ambassador, provided highlights of the activities that took place during the Year of the Gorilla in 2009.

More information:

<http://www.cms.int/species/gorillas/index.htm>
<http://www.yog2009.org/>

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20th Anniversary of EUROBATS: Year of the Bat 2011-2012

Organized by the EUROBATS Secretariat

This meeting covered the work of EUROBATS and presented an overview of bat characteristics, achievements of EUROBATS and plans for the upcoming Year of the Bat 2011-2012.

Michel Perret, Chair of the EUROBATS Standing Committee, introduced the meeting, explaining that through EUROBATS a lot has been done to enhance our knowledge of the species. He emphasized that advances made in other biodiversity-related fields can be applied to bat conservation. Looking forward, he said they were following the recommendations of the CMS Secretariat to make EUROBATS experiences available to the global community, taking the focus beyond Europe.

Peter Lina, Chair of the EUROBATS Advisory Committee, listed some common questions asked about bats, are they: advantageous; dangerous; beautiful; ugly; funny; or harmful? To each of these he answered yes. He said bats are advantageous, because through eating fruit they pollinate and disperse seeds, critical to natural and human systems. He explained that some bats are dangerous, they can carry disease and can bite cattle and humans; however incidence is low and most are not a public health problem. He used photographs to show that bats can be beautiful, ugly and funny. He finished by describing that because bats eat ripe fruit, they can be harmful to local populations, competing for sources of food.

Andreas Streit, Executive Secretary of EUROBATS, said that the launch of Year of the Bat 2011-2012 has received global support from groups involved in bat conservation, including in regions where there had been no previous knowledge of activity. He explained that their campaign aims to change the image and raise the profile of bats and demonstrate their importance to terrestrial ecosystems. Streit provided an overview of some of EUROBATS's promotional activities, which included: online platforms; producing campaign materials; and organizing events. He concluded that the Bats Agreement has created a real impact in the field for conservation, research and monitoring.



Andreas Streit, Executive Secretary of EUROBATS, described what was in store for the 2011-2012 Year of the Bat.

More information:

<http://www.eurobats.org>

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Joint International Efforts to Save the Globally Threatened Aquatic Warbler: Positive changes and pending issues

Organized by the the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection, Belarus, and BirdLife Belarus



Olivier Biber, Switzerland, moderated the side event on the Aquatic Warbler.



Uladzimir Malashevich, BirdLife, Belarus, informed participants on the migration patterns of the Aquatic Warbler.

Conserving the West African Manatee

Presented by Wetlands International



View of the side event on the conservation of West African manatee.



Momar Sow, Wetlands International, presented a film which highlighted the conservation challenges of the West African manatee in Sierra Leone.



Taej Mundkur, Wetlands International, moderated the side on the conservation efforts on the West African manatee.

MoU on the Conservation of Southern South American Migratory Grassland Bird Species and their Habitats

Presented by the Ministry of Environment, Paraguay



View of the side event on the MoU on the Conservation of Southern South American Migratory Grassland Bird Species and their Habitats.

National and International Action Plan for the Lesser White-fronted Goose

Organized by the Norwegian Ornithological Society



L-R: Elizabeth Mrema, CMS Executive Secretary, and Heidi Sørensen, State Secretary of the Ministry of Environment, Norway



Top photo: Participants watching a video presentation of the Lesser White-Fronted Goose.

Bottom photo:

L-R: Sergey Dereliev, AEW Secretariat; Jo Anders Auran, The Norwegian Directorate for Nature Management; Heidi Sørensen, State Secretary of the Ministry of Environment, Norway, Elizabeth Mrema, CMS Executive Secretary; Ingar Jostein Øien, Norwegian Ornithological Society; and Peter Schei, Fridtjof Nansen Institute