



THE SIXTH CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION ON MIGRATORY SPECIES OF WILD ANIMALS AND RELATED MEETINGS 4-16 NOVEMBER 1999

The sixth Conference of the Parties (COP-6) to the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) and related meetings will begin today in Cape Town, South Africa, and will continue through Tuesday, 16 November. Prior to the commencement of the COP on 10 November, the CMS Scientific Council will convene from 4-6 November for its ninth session and the African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement (AEWA) will hold its first Meeting of the Parties (MOP-1) from 7-9 November. Other meetings scheduled to take place include the 20th session of the CMS Standing Committee, a symposium on animal migration and thematic workshops.

The CMS Scientific Council will address actions for select species listed in Appendix I, cooperative actions for Appendix II species and other matters requiring Scientific Council advice. MOP-1 of the AEWA will establish a Technical Committee and a permanent Secretariat, evaluate the Conservation Guidelines detailed in the Agreement, consider proposals for amendment to the AEWA Action Plan, and review the conservation status for several species. The agenda for COP-6 includes consideration of, *inter alia*: measures to improve the conservation status of species listed in Appendix I; guidelines for the harmonization of future agreements; proposals for amendments to both Appendix I and II; a strategy for the future development of the Convention; and financial and administrative arrangements.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE CONVENTION ON MIGRATORY SPECIES

Migratory species are especially vulnerable to a wide range of threats, including habitat shrinkage in breeding areas, excessive hunting along migration routes and degradation of feeding grounds. In the early 1960s, organizations such as the World Conservation Union (IUCN) began to draw international attention to the problems associated with migratory species and called for a convention on migratory species.

In 1972, the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment recognized the need for countries to cooperate in the conservation of animals that migrate across national boundaries or between areas of national jurisdiction and the sea. The West German government took the lead and called for negotiation of a convention based on an IUCN draft which resulted in the CMS.

The CMS was negotiated with the intent of developing an agreement designed to allow expansion and revision of commitments, and it was envisioned that the CMS would provide a framework for the negotiation of species-specific subagreements that would address the problems unique to particular migratory species. The CMS, also known as the Bonn Convention, was adopted in 1979 in Bonn, Germany, and entered into force on 1 November 1983. There are currently 65 Parties to the Convention.

The CMS recognizes that States must be the protectors of migratory species that live within or pass through their national jurisdictional boundaries and aims to conserve terrestrial, marine and avian migratory species throughout their range. The Convention constitutes a framework through which Parties may act to conserve migratory species and their habitat by: adopting strict protection measures for migratory species that have been characterized as being in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of their range (species listed in Appendix I of the Convention); concluding agreements for the conservation and management of migratory species that have an unfavorable conservation status or would benefit significantly from international cooperation (species listed in Appendix II); and joint research and monitoring activities.

At present, more than 70 endangered migratory species are listed in Appendix I of the Convention including the Siberian Crane, White-tailed Eagle, Hawksbill Turtle, Mediterranean Monk Seal and Dama Gazelle. Parties that are Range States of such species are requested to: conserve and, where feasible and appropriate, restore those habitats of the species that are of importance to removing the species from danger of extinction; prevent, remove, compensate for or minimize the adverse effects of activities or obstacles that impede or prevent migration; and prevent, reduce and control factors that are endangering or are likely to further endanger the species. The CMS prohibits the taking of species listed in Appendix I with exemptions for: scientific purposes; improvement of propagation or survival of the species; traditional subsistence use; and extraordinary circumstances.

The CMS provides for the development of specialized regional agreements for species listed in Appendix II. To date, five agreements and three memorandums of understanding (MOU) have been concluded to this end and are detailed below. Such agreements are open to all Range States of the species, regardless of whether they are Parties to the Convention.

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The operational bodies of the CMS include the COP, the Standing Committee, the Scientific Council and a Secretariat under the auspices of UNEP. The COP meets every two and a half to three years to review the lists of species and make any additions or deletions. To date, the COP has met five times.

COP-5: The fifth session of the COP (COP-5) convened in Geneva, Switzerland, from 10-16 April 1997. COP-5 added 21 species to Appendix I and 22 species to Appendix II, and adopted a resolution identifying the Lesser Kestrel, Andean Flamingo, Puna Flamingo, Lesser White-fronted Goose and Mountain Gorilla as species for concerted actions and for review reports to be considered at COP-6. It also adopted resolutions: endorsing draft guidelines for the harmonization of future agreements; setting out a strategy for CMS development for the 1998-2000 triennium; supporting co-location of agreement Secretariats; and detailing financial and administrative matters. In addition, the COP adopted recommendations endorsing an Action Plan for selected migratory birds listed in Appendix I and II, cooperative actions for Appendix II species, development of an Action Plan for the Great Cormorant in the African-Eurasian region and progress on the agreement on the conservation and management of the Houbara Bustard.

CMS SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL: COP-1 of the CMS established the Scientific Council to, *inter alia*: provide advice on scientific matters; recommend and coordinate research on migratory species; recommend species to be included in Appendix I and II; and suggest specific conservation and management measures to be included in agreements. Council members are experts appointed by either the COP or individual Parties. Since its establishment, the Scientific Council has held eight meetings. At its eighth session held from 3-5 June 1998 in Wageningen, the Netherlands, the Council considered actions for selected Appendix I species, cooperative actions for Appendix II species and proposed allocation of US\$600,000 set aside by COP-5 for projects to further implement the CMS. The Council also addressed a review of Appendix I listings conducted by the World Conservation Monitoring Center, potential proposals to amend the CMS appendices, and the development of new agreements on species, including the Southern Hemisphere Albatross, South African Sand Grouse and small cetaceans of Southern South America, Southeast Asia and Western Africa.

CONSERVATION AGREEMENTS CONCLUDED UNDER THE CMS

SEALS IN THE WADDEN SEA: The Agreement on the Conservation of Seals in the Wadden Sea was concluded in 1990 and entered into force on 1 October 1991. Developed in response to a dramatic decline in the Wadden Sea Seal population, the Agreement provides for a Conservation and Management Plan, coordination of research and monitoring, prohibition of taking, habitat protection, reduction of pollution and public awareness efforts.

SMALL CETACEANS OF THE BALTIC AND NORTH SEAS (ASCOBANS): The Agreement on Small Cetaceans of the Baltic and North Seas (ASCOBANS) covers all small cetaceans, including species and subspecies of toothed whales, except for sperm whales. The Agreement entered into force on 29 March 1994 and encourages cooperation among Range States with respect to habitat conservation and management, pollution mitigation measures, surveys and research.

BATS IN EUROPE (EUROBATS): The Agreement on the Conservation of Bats in Europe (EUROBATS) entered into force on 16 January 1994. EUROBATS' signatories agree to: prohibit the deliberate capture, keeping or killing of bats; identify and protect

important conservation sights; consider potential side effects of pesticides on bats; and promote research programmes on the conservation and management of bats.

AFRICAN-EURASIAN MIGRATORY WATERBIRDS (AEWA): The African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds Agreement (AEWA) is the largest agreement under the CMS, covering 172 species of birds ecologically dependent on wetlands in Africa and Eurasia, including the Middle East, Greenland and parts of Canada. The Action Plan set out in the AEWA details a wide range of conservation actions and addresses key issues such as species and habitat conservation, management of human activities, research and monitoring, education and information, and implementation. The AEWA entered into force on 1 November 1999.

CETACEANS OF THE MEDITERRANEAN AND BLACK SEA (ACCOBAMS): The Agreement on Cetaceans of the Mediterranean and Black Sea (ACCOBAMS) requires signatories to, *inter alia*: protect dolphins, porpoises and whales; establish a network of protected areas important to their feeding, breeding and calving; enforce legislation to prevent the deliberate taking of cetaceans by vessels under their flag or within their jurisdiction; and carry out research and monitoring. ACCOBAMS is expected to enter into force by the end of 1999.

SIBERIAN CRANE: The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) concerning Conservation Measures for the Siberian Crane, concluded on 1 July 1993, was the first MOU under the Convention. The MOU aims to ensure the survival of the Siberian Crane. The Range States have met three times since completion of the MOU and at their last meeting noted that recovery efforts are well coordinated and that these populations are remaining stable. The MOU was recently expanded to include China and now encompasses all populations of the Siberian Crane.

SLENDER-BILLED CURLEW: The MOU on Conservation Measures for the Slender-billed Curlew was concluded in 1994. The CMS Secretariat and BirdLife International established a Slender-billed Curlew Working Group to coordinate conservation activities toward the implementation of the MOU. BirdLife International recently completed a comprehensive long-term Action Plan for the species as called for in the MOU.

MARINE TURTLES: The MOU on Conservation for Marine Turtles is the result of the International Conference on the Conservation of Sea Turtles of the Atlantic Coast of Africa organized by the CMS Secretariat in collaboration with Côte d'Ivoire, which convened from 25-29 May 1999. The meeting also produced a draft Conservation Plan outlining measures to be undertaken in the short- and medium-term. Seven Range States signed the MOU at the meeting and others are expected to join during COP-6.

AGREEMENTS UNDER DEVELOPMENT: Draft agreements are currently being developed or are envisaged for a wide range of migratory species, including Sahelo-Saharan Ungulates, Albatrosses of the Southern Hemisphere and Bustards.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL: The CMS Scientific Council will open at 9:30 am in the Grand Ballroom. Scientific Council Chair Dr. Pierre Devillers is expected to deliver opening remarks. The Council will then adopt the agenda of the meeting, hear reports on intersessional activities and commence consideration of actions for selected Appendix I species. In the afternoon, the Council is expected to consider new research project proposals.