



HIGHLIGHTS FROM CMS COP-7 THURSDAY, 19 SEPTEMBER 2002

The Plenary met briefly in the morning to consider the draft report of the Credentials Committee and admission of additional NGOs. Following the Plenary, the Committee of the Whole (COW) met in morning and afternoon sessions to continue reviewing implementation of the Strategic Plan for 2000-2005, address measures to improve the conservation status of Appendix I and II species, and review Article IV agreements (Appendix II species), the synthesis of Party reports, and the budget. In the evening, a working group met to consider the Strategic Plan.

PLENARY

Credentials Committee Chair Tatwany briefed the COP on the Committee's draft report, noting that the credentials of 33 Parties had been accepted thus far. He indicated that the Committee would continue to review credentials documents.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

STRATEGIC PLAN FOR 2000-2005: COW Chair Ignacio invited further comments on the review of implementation of the Strategic Plan for 2000-2005 (UNEP/CMS/Conf.7.10). Reporting on the work of the Performance Working Group, the UK stated that specific targets had not been set due to a lack of firm baseline data. The COW established a working group to refine the Strategic Plan, improve performance indicators, and agree on a procedure to review the Plan.

CONSERVATION STATUS OF APPENDIX I AND II SPECIES: CMS Deputy Executive Secretary Hykle introduced documents on measures to improve the conservation status of Appendix I and II species (UNEP/CMS/Conf.7.8). John O'Sullivan, Birdlife International, described progress made on the conservation of the Ruddy-headed Goose, Houbara Bustard, Great Bustard, Slender-billed Curlew, Siberian Crane, Aquatic Warbler, Ferruginous Duck, White-headed Duck, White-winged Flufftail and Blue Swallow. He stressed the need for increased efforts by Parties regarding the Humboldt Penguin, Andean Flamingo, Lesser White-fronted Goose and Lesser Kestrel, and called for more concerted action and the development of a strategic approach for the coming triennium. He recalled pending recommendations to list the Black-faced Spoonbill, the Spoon-billed Sandpiper, and the Chinese-crested Tern in Appendix II.

William Perrin, CMS Scientific Councillor for cetaceans and other marine mammals, described concerted action for the La Plata Dolphin, Marine Otter and Mediterranean Monk Seal. He recommended expanding the list of species and noted Australia's intention to develop a regional agreement for the great whales of the South Pacific region.

Roseline Beudels, on behalf of Pierre Pfeffer, CMS Scientific Councillor for terrestrial animals, outlined concerted action regarding the South Andean Deer and Sahelo-Saharan Antelopes, and supported adding the Snow Leopard to the list of species that would benefit from concerted action.

Colin Limpus, CMS Scientific Councillor for marine turtles, highlighted the impact of commercial fishery by-catch on marine turtle populations, particularly the Leatherback and Loggerhead Turtles. He underscored the difficulty of addressing the cultural use of turtles by coastal communities.

SPAIN noted progress on lowering the populations of the invasive Ruddy Duck species and called for promoting conservation projects for the Atlantic Monk Seal. ZIMBABWE stressed the need for more concrete action on Appendix I species, such as the Lesser Kestrel, while FINLAND described domestic actions for Lesser White-fronted Goose conservation. SENEGAL supported concerted actions for Sahelo-Saharan Antelopes and African Elephants. BENIN, SAINT LUCIA, NIGERIA and others stressed the need to address the effect of coastal and beach development on marine turtle populations. UGANDA noted difficulties in protecting migratory bird species on private lands. MOROCCO highlighted ongoing rehabilitation projects for antelope habitats and recommended cooperation for the implementation of action plans concerning the White-headed Duck and the Monk Seal. THE ROYAL SOCIETY FOR THE CONSERVATION AND THE PROTECTION OF BIRDS (RSCPB) highlighted activities relating to Mediterranean turtles and cetaceans. Scientific Council Chair Galbraith stressed benefits from cooperative actions and called for listing of new species. Hykle highlighted consensus on a new procedure for developing review reports for potential Appendix I and II species.

Delegates established a working group to draft a resolution on concerted actions for species proposed for Appendix I and II listing.

REVIEW OF ARTICLE IV AGREEMENTS: Agreements already concluded: During a review of these agreements (UNEP/CMS/Conf.7.9.1), the Secretariat of the Agreement on the Conservation of Seals in the Wadden Sea noted the development of a revised Seal Management Plan and drew attention to population reductions due to a virus outbreak. The EUROBATS Secretariat welcomed the doubling of its membership to 26 in the past four years, highlighted the inclusion of an amendable appendix to the Agreement, and encouraged the conclusion of bats agreements for other regions. The ASCOBANS Secretariat explained that a recovery plan had been finalized and opened for signature. The ACCOBAMS Secretariat highlighted the establishment of sub-regional coordination units and capacity-building activities.

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AUSTRALIA, providing Interim Secretariat functions for the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels, expressed optimism that the Agreement would enter into force in 2003.

On the 1993 MOU concerning Conservation Measures for the Siberian Crane, Hykle noted that new, comprehensive conservation plans were recently developed. He also highlighted that the 1999 MOU concerning Conservation Measures for Marine Turtles of the Atlantic Coast of Africa has 19 signatories out of 25 Range States. He said the success of the 2001 MOU on the Conservation and Management of Marine Turtles and their Habitats of the Indian Ocean and South-east Asia is dependent on voluntary contributions.

Regarding the 1994 MOU concerning Conservation Measures for the Slender-billed Curlew, BIRDLIFE INTERNATIONAL explained the difficulties encountered in studying this rare bird. CMS Executive Secretary Müller-Helmbrecht noted that there are already ten signatories to the 2000 MOU on the Conservation and Management of the Middle-European Population of the Great Bustard. He informed delegates that all four Range States have signed the 2002 MOU concerning the Conservation and Restoration of the Bukhara Deer. Bert Lenten, AEW Executive Secretary, said that AEW may expand to include more species and new regions, but called attention to its staffing shortage.

Development of future agreements: Regarding future agreements (UNEP/CMS/Conf.7.9.2), SAUDI ARABIA reported developments relating to the Houbara Bustard, noting planned meetings to consider a draft agreement. ZIMBABWE raised concern over falconry. Reporting on developments on the Aquatic Warbler, BIRDLIFE INTERNATIONAL expressed hope that a draft MOU would be finalized by the end of 2002. The COW endorsed the convening of a workshop to finalize the MOU, cooperation with the Secretariat, and a request for financial assistance.

SOUTH AFRICA reported developments concerning the Sand Grouse, highlighting ongoing implementation of domestic conservation plans, and the expected finalization of a MOU by the end of 2003. GERMANY reiterated the Range States' commitment regarding measures on sturgeons, but said that development of a MOU is deferred until clarification of CITES' policy on the issue. Concerning marine turtles, Hykle drew attention to, and the COW endorsed, ongoing discussions for an instrument on marine turtles of the Pacific Sea. BANGLADESH suggested increasing financial support to local communities for using turtle-excluding devices.

On marine mammals, Perrin highlighted, and the COW endorsed, the Scientific Council's approval of an action plan on small cetaceans and manatees in tropical West Africa; a draft regional agreement on small cetaceans in South-East Asia; and proposals for training courses and workshops on cetaceans in the Indian Ocean. GUINEA and others supported the development of an instrument for whales and manatees of the West African coast.

BANGLADESH, PAKISTAN and INDIA called for more attention to cetaceans of the Bay of Bengal, River Dolphins and Elasmobranch Dolphins, respectively. AUSTRALIA invited other dugong Range States to discuss the possibility of a regional instrument.

BELGIUM proposed, and the COW supported, a meeting of the Sahelo-Saharan Working Group to develop an agreement on Sahelo-Saharan Antelopes. The COW also endorsed the development of MOUs for the Saiga Antelope, the Mongolian Gazelle, and the African Elephant in Western and Central Africa. NIGERIA called for a workshop on African Elephants. At the suggestion of Scientific Council Chair Galbraith, the COW requested the Council to gather more information on bats and to report the findings to COP-8.

SYNTHESIS OF PARTY REPORTS AND PROPOSED

FORMAT FOR NATIONAL REPORTS: Hykle and UNEP/WCMC introduced documents on the synthesis of Parties' reports (UNEP/CMS/Conf.7.6.1) and on the proposed format for national reports (UNEP/CMS/Conf.7.6.2). UNEP/WCMC highlighted the low response rate and lack of information on some Appendix I species. He noted, *inter alia*, that the new format would facilitate harmonization of reports under various conventions, and would encourage detailed responses. He recommended the inclusion of detailed guidelines for each section, space for "miscellaneous comments" and a section on protected areas. MONACO noted, *inter alia*, difficulties in listing obstacles to migration, and suggested adding space to indicate lack of relevance of some issues. DENMARK, on behalf of the EU, welcomed efforts to standardize reports and expressed hope that the new format will encourage Parties to submit regular reports. CHILE welcomed the possibility to learn about ongoing activities in other countries and within various agencies. BIRDLIFE INTERNATIONAL called for conclusions and proposals on the basis of the information received. The COW approved 31 December 2002 as a deadline to submit reports.

FINANCIAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS: Hykle introduced the documents on financial and administrative matters (UNEP/CMS/Conf.7.13.1 Corrigendum and Addendum) and noted a proposed 38% increase in the triennium budget. He explained that unlike the budget adopted at COP-6, funding for implementation measures, conservation measures and agreement development is included in the core budget, which accounts for a major portion of the budget increase. He also noted that the budget provides for one additional staff post. The EU said the proposed increase in budget is unrealistically high and questioned prioritizing the creation of a new staff post at the expense of new conservation projects. The COW established a working group to consider the budget.

WORKING GROUP

The Strategic Plan Working Group met in the evening, appointing Olivier Biber (Switzerland) as its Chair. Participants commented on the objectives set out in the Review of Implementation of the Strategic Plan 2000-2005 (UNEP/CMS/Conf.7.10). Several Parties supported modifying the objective on focusing and prioritizing conservation actions for migratory species to include a cross-taxonomic focus and to refer to regional issues and emerging threats. Parties also discussed merging the objectives on enhancing global membership in the CMS through targeted promotion of the Convention's aim, and on improving the implementation of the Convention. Another meeting will be held to consider these matters further.

IN THE CORRIDORS

The proposed budget increase was brought to the attention of participants late Thursday, with some questioning such a significant rise. A budget working group scheduled for Friday lunchtime seems likely to see delegates call for further clarification, although a number of participants pointed out that appropriate financial commitments are essential if the CMS is to implement its increasingly ambitious agenda. As one delegate commented, "species proposals aren't so controversial, but the budget is."

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE: The COW will meet in morning and afternoon sessions to discuss, *inter alia*: review of implementation of the Information Management Plan, GROMS, proposals for amendment of Appendices I and II, institutional arrangements, and financial and administrative matters.

WORKING GROUP: A Budget Working Group will meet at lunchtime in the Plenary Hall.