

## NINTH MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION ON MIGRATORY SPECIES OF WILD ANIMALS: 1-5 DECEMBER 2008

The ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP 9) to the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) opens today in Rome, Italy and will continue through Friday, 5 December 2008. Approximately 300 representatives from governments, inter- and non-governmental organizations as well as scientists will come together to discuss urgent conservation responses to address the rapid decline of migratory animal species across the globe under the theme of “2010 and Beyond: Wildlife Renaissance.”

During the week, COP 9 will review implementation under the CMS Strategic Plan 2006-2011, including: reports from Convention and Agreement bodies, states, and partners; measures to improve the conservation status of CMS Appendix I and II species; information management, capacity building, outreach and communication; cooperation with other Conventions and partners; key policy issues such as climate change and avian influenza; and proposals for amendments to the CMS Appendices. COP 9 will also discuss the resources and “future shape” of the Convention, focusing on budget and administration, and institutional matters.

COP 9 was preceded by several associated meetings from 27-30 November: the first Meeting of the Parties to the Gorilla Agreement; the seventh UN Environment Programme (UNEP)/Global Environment Facility (GEF) Siberian Crane Wetlands Project Steering Committee meeting; the 34th CMS Standing Committee meeting; and the Aridland Mammals meeting. COP 9 will be followed by the second Meeting to Identify and Elaborate an Option for International Cooperation on Migratory Sharks, from 6-8 December.

### A BRIEF HISTORY OF CMS

Migratory species are vulnerable to a wide range of threats, including habitat shrinkage in breeding areas, excessive hunting along migration routes, and degradation of their feeding grounds. As a result of international concern over these threats, CMS was adopted in 1979 and entered into force on 1 November 1983. CMS, also known as the Bonn Convention, recognizes that states must be the protectors of migratory species that live within or

pass through their national jurisdictions, and aims to conserve terrestrial, marine and avian migratory species throughout their ranges. CMS currently has 110 parties.

The Convention was designed to allow for expansion and revision of commitments and to provide 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 ranges (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, over a hundred migratory species are listed in Appendix I.

CMS also provides for the development of specialized regional agreements for Appendix II species. To date, seven agreements and 14 memoranda of understanding (MOUs) have been concluded. The seven agreements aim to conserve: populations of European Bats; cetaceans of the Mediterranean Sea, Black Sea and contiguous Atlantic area; small cetaceans of the Baltic and North Seas; seals in the Wadden Sea; African-Eurasian migratory waterbirds; albatrosses and petrels; and gorillas and their habitats. The fourteen MOUs aim to conserve: the Siberian crane; the slender-billed curlew; marine turtles of the Atlantic coast of Africa; marine turtles of the Indian Ocean and Southeast Asia; the Middle-European population of the great bustard; the bukhara deer; the aquatic warbler; West-African populations of the African elephant; the saiga antelope; cetaceans of Pacific island states; dugongs; the Mediterranean monk seal; the ruddy-headed goose; and grassland birds. These agreements and MOUs are open to all range states of the species, regardless of whether they are parties to the Convention.

**COP 6:** The sixth meeting of the COP (4-16 November 1999, Cape Town, South Africa) adopted resolutions on: institutional arrangements; financial and administrative matters; by-catch; information management; Southern hemisphere albatross conservation; and concerted actions for Appendix I species. Seven species were added to Appendix I, including manatees of the marine areas of Panama and Honduras. Thirty-one species

were added to Appendix II, including dolphins of South-East Asia and the whale shark. Recommendations were approved on cooperative actions for various Appendix II species.

**COP 7:** The seventh meeting of the COP (18-24 September 2002, Bonn, Germany) added 20 species to Appendix I and 21 to Appendix II, with the fin, sei and sperm whales, and the great white shark being listed on both. COP 7 also adopted resolutions on: electrocution of migratory birds, offshore oil pollution, wind turbines, impact assessment, and by-catch. The COP adopted decisions on, *inter alia*: future action on the Antarctic minke, Bryde's and pygmy right whales; improving the conservation status of the leatherback turtle; an agreement on dugong conservation; the American Pacific Flyway Programme; and the Central Asian-Indian Waterbird Flyway Initiative.

**COP 8:** The eighth meeting of the COP (20-25 November 2005, Nairobi, Kenya) addressed: the review of CMS implementation; sustainable use; the target to significantly reduce the current rate of biodiversity loss by 2010; measures to improve the conservation status of Appendix I species, including projects on Sahelo-Saharan antelopes and the Siberian crane; measures to improve the conservation status of Appendix II species, including raptors, migratory sharks, and marine turtles; proposals for amendments to Appendices I and II; the CMS 2006-2011 Strategic Plan; the CMS Information Management Plan; and financial and administrative arrangements. The meeting added 11 species to Appendix I and 16 to Appendix II, with the basking shark, bukhara deer and short-beaked common dolphin listed on both, and witnessed the signing of new MOUs on the West-African elephant and the saiga antelope.

#### INTERSESSIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

**AQUATIC WARBLER MOU:** The first meeting of the signatories to the MOU concerning conservation measures for the aquatic warbler took place in Criewen, Germany, from 25-27 June 2006. The meeting: reviewed the implementation, future implementation and development of the MOU and Action Plan; developed a priority projects list; and held preliminary discussions on expanding the geographical scope of the agreement area.

**SAIGA ANTELOPE MOU:** The first meeting of the signatories to the MOU concerning conservation, restoration and sustainable use of the saiga antelope, a cooperative initiative between CMS and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), was convened from 25-26 September 2006, in Almaty, Kazakhstan. The MOU entered into effect on 24 September 2006, when Kazakhstan signed, joining Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. The meeting assessed the species' conservation status and endorsed a medium-term international work programme.

**ASCOBANS MOP 5:** The fifth Meeting of the Parties to the Agreement on the Conservation of Small Cetaceans of the Baltic and North Seas (ASCOBANS) met on 12 December 2006 in The Hague, the Netherlands. Eight out of ten parties voted to merge the Secretariats of UNEP/ASCOBANS and UNEP/CMS. On 31 December 2006, the ASCOBANS Secretariat therefore ceased to exist and Secretariat functions were assumed by the Secretariat of UNEP/CMS.

**PACIFIC ISLAND CETACEANS MOU:** The first meeting of the signatories to the MOU for the conservation of cetaceans and their habitats in the Pacific Islands region was held from 5-9 March 2007, in Apia, Samoa. It was combined with the

Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) meeting to review its Action Plan on whale and dolphin conservation, an outreach workshop funded by Germany to discuss the possible contribution of CMS in the Pacific region with a focus on cetacean conservation, as well as an Australian-funded workshop on by-catch.

**CMS SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL:** The 14th meeting of the CMS Scientific Council convened from 15-17 March 2007, in Bonn, Germany. The Council reviewed its Strategy Implementation Plan for 2006-2011 and established intersessional working groups on climate change and migratory species, by-catch, sustainable use, and animal diseases. The Council also considered the status and future prospects of the CMS Small Grants Programme, and suggested several species for listing on the CMS Appendices.

**SIBERIAN CRANE MOU:** The sixth meeting of the signatories to the MOU concerning conservation measures for the Siberian crane was held from 15-19 May 2007, in Almaty, Kazakhstan. Highlights of the meeting included: the official launch of the Western and Central Asian Site Network for Siberian Cranes and other Waterbirds; elaboration and adoption of new, detailed conservation plans for each of the three flyways covered by the MOU; and review of important considerations related to the eventual integration, within the MOU framework, of activities currently being conducted under the GEF Siberian Crane Wetlands Project.

**CMS PRIMATES MEETINGS:** A series of primates meetings held in Paris, France, from 22-26 October 2007, resulted in the finalization of the Paris Agreement on the Conservation of Gorillas and their Habitats (the Gorilla Agreement), which aims to conserve and restore gorilla populations in Central and West Africa through an Action Plan covering education, research and forest protection. On 25 October, the UNEP/UNESCO Great Apes Survival Project Partnership (GRASP) organized a meeting of donors to inform potential GRASP partners about GRASP activities and to launch the GRASP Activity and Finance Plan, "Plan it for the Apes." Finally, on 25-26 October, the Congo Basin Forest Partnership (CBFP) met to: undertake technical workshops on capacity building and training, forest monitoring and private investment for forest ecosystem conservation; transfer the CBFP facilitation from the French to the German government; and sign the CMS Gorilla Agreement.

**MONK SEAL MOU:** During the Western African Talks on Cetaceans and their Habitats (16-20 October 2007, Tenerife, Spain) a new MOU was concluded for the protection of the Eastern Atlantic populations of the Mediterranean monk seal. Mauritania, Morocco, Portugal and Spain signed the MOU, which is open for signature to all Atlantic range states. The meeting also discussed a preliminary text of a new agreement, as well as two draft action plans, for the conservation of small cetaceans and manatees in the region.

**ACCOBAMS MOP 3:** The third Meeting of the Parties to the Agreement on Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and contiguous Atlantic Area (ACCOBAMS) convened from 22-25 October 2007, in Dubrovnik, Croatia. The meeting agreed to a new conservation plan for cetaceans in the Black Sea region and adopted a resolution on the highly endangered Mediterranean common dolphin. Parties also agreed

to include the prohibition of driftnet use and presence on board of fishing boats in the text of the Agreement, and to create a working group to address the issue of ocean noise.

**CMS STANDING COMMITTEE:** The 32nd meeting of the CMS Standing Committee convened from 8-9 November 2007, in Bonn, Germany. The meeting heard reports on the Convention's conservation programme, the budget, fundraising activities, progress made in the development of partnerships, and a special presentation on the Task Force on Avian Influenza. Members also considered papers on the future organization of CMS and on the strategic review of flyways, and established a working group to map the way forward until COP 9.

**CMS SHARKS MEETING:** The first Meeting to Identify and Elaborate an Option for International Cooperation on Migratory Sharks under CMS took place in Mahé, Seychelles, from 11-13 December 2007. A majority of participants favored a global, non-binding instrument, but no decision was made on the exact legal nature and species scope of the agreement. There was broad support for the involvement of existing regional and intergovernmental organizations, and agreement on key elements for the instrument and establishment of an intersessional steering group to advance the work.

**IOSEA MARINE TURTLE MOU:** The fifth meeting of the signatories to the Indian Ocean South-East Asia (IOSEA) marine turtle MOU was held in Bali, Indonesia, from 20-23 August 2008. The meeting reviewed the implementation of the conservation and management plan contained in the MOU, with a particular focus on coastal development issues and fisheries interaction with marine turtles.

**AEWA MOP 4:** The fourth Meeting of the Parties to the African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement met from 15-19 September 2008, in Antananarivo, Madagascar. Among the meeting's main achievements were: the adoption of a budget that will allow the Secretariat to maintain its current level of staff and activities; and the adoption of the African Initiative for the Conservation of Migratory Waterbirds and their Habitats in Africa. The meeting also adopted, among other things, the Strategic Plan 2009-2017 and seven international Single Species Action Plans, added 20 additional seabird species to Annex 2 of the Agreement, and adopted resolutions on: phasing out lead shot in wetlands; avian influenza; climate change and migratory waterbirds; hunting and trade legislation; re-establishment projects; and non-native species.

**WESTERN AFRICAN AQUATIC MAMMALS MOU:** During the second intergovernmental meeting on Western African and Macaronesian aquatic mammals (WATCH-Western African Talks on Cetaceans and their Habitats), which took place in Lomé, Togo, from 2-3 October 2008, 15 countries signed an MOU to protect over 30 aquatic species in an area that stretches from Macaronesia, through Morocco to South Africa. The new instrument contains two action plans to conserve small cetaceans and the West-African manatee, and aims to facilitate transboundary cooperation.

**BIRDS OF PREY MOU:** At a CMS meeting held in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, from 20-22 October 2008, 28 countries signed a new MOU and Action Plan on migratory birds of prey in Africa and Eurasia. A new CMS coordinating unit is planned to be established in Abu Dhabi to promote and monitor the new agreement as a UNEP initiative.

**SAIGA ANTELOPE MOU:** A technical meeting held from 29-31 October 2008, in Almaty, Kazakhstan, focused on implementation issues related to the CMS saiga antelope MOU. The meeting assessed the status of the medium-term work programme 2007-2011, while a workshop assessed how individual saiga populations are currently being monitored, what optimal methodology should be used, and how such methods could be implemented.

**GREAT BUSTARD MOU:** The second meeting of the signatories to the great bustard MOU met from 9-12 November 2008, in Feodosia, Ukraine. Delegates adopted, *inter alia*, an updated Medium-Term International Work Programme for 2009-2012, as well as new guidelines and proposals for action, including on capturing and radio-tracking.

### COP 9 ASSOCIATED MEETINGS

**15TH SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL MEETING:** This meeting took place on 27-28 November and was chaired by Scientific Council Chair John Mshelbwala (Nigeria). The Council acknowledged the great value of the CMS Small Grant Programme and made a strong plea for financial support through the CMS Trust Fund. Council members endorsed the creation of a joint UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)-CMS Task Force for Emerging Diseases of Wildlife, a new initiative following the example of the CMS-led Task Force on Avian Influenza. The Council reviewed the conservation status of Appendix I and II species as well as new listing proposals. Discussion on proposals for Appendix I focused on the barbary sheep and the saker falcon; the first proposal was withdrawn, while two options regarding the second proposal were forwarded to COP 9. After a lengthy debate, the Council concluded that the porbeagle shark and the spiny dogfish meet the criteria for Appendix II listing, acknowledging differences in conservation status between the northern and southern hemisphere populations. The Council extended the terms of office of its Chair and Vice-Chairs.

**34TH STANDING COMMITTEE MEETING:** This meeting took place on Sunday, 30 November, and was chaired by outgoing Standing Committee Chair Andrew McNee (Australia). The Committee took note of the offer made by the United Arab Emirates to provide funding for a regional coordination unit for the birds of prey MOU, the dugong MOU and the western part of the IOSEA marine turtles MOU. The Secretariat reported on efforts to increase collaboration with CITES, with emphasis on saiga antelopes, African elephants and sharks, noting that the CITES Standing Committee has approved a draft joint work programme. There was a lengthy debate on credentials and eligibility to vote. Participants also considered a draft COP resolution on the future shape of CMS. CMS Executive Secretary Robert Hepworth described proposals for the composition of the Standing Committee, including an enlargement of the Committee to reflect CMS growth.

**SIBERIAN CRANE MEETING:** The seventh UNEP/GEF Siberian Crane Wetlands Project Steering Committee met on 29-30 November. The meeting discussed the implementation of this multi-million dollar GEF project, which covers Kazakhstan, the Islamic Republic of Iran, China and the Russian Federation, and in which CMS is involved through its Siberian crane MOU.

**ARIDLAND MAMMALS MEETING:** The meeting on Aridland Mammals of Eurasia took place on Sunday, 30 November, and was chaired by Pierre Devillers, CMS Scientific

Councillor for the EU. Participants discussed the proposed CMS project "Concerted Action on the Large Mammals of the Aridlands of Eurasia," which will establish a network of protected areas acting as corridors for animals to migrate in response to climate change. It was noted that the project will cover nearly 100 species, including the Asiatic lion, tiger, wild camel, and Przewalsky horse, extending from Mongolia to Syria. Participants agreed that the main threats to large mammals are habitat destruction, poaching and space consumption by human activities. Discussing case studies from Syria and Mongolia, delegates called for increased efforts with regard to: establishment of protected areas; protection and reintroduction of species; and ecological research.

### **GORILLA AGREEMENT MOP 1**

The first Meeting of the Parties (MOP 1) to the Agreement on the Conservation of Gorillas and their Habitats (the Gorilla Agreement) was held on Saturday, 29 November. Approximately 60 participants attended the meeting, representing five parties, four non-party range states, 17 non-range states, ten non-governmental organizations, UNEP, UNEP-World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC) and UNEP-GRASP. Participants discussed, among other things, a draft action plan, the establishment of a Technical Committee, and financial and administrative matters.

**OPENING:** MOP 1 was chaired by Samy Mankoto, UNESCO, with John Mshelbwala, CMS Scientific Council Chair, as Vice-Chair. Chair Mankoto welcomed participants to the meeting, noting significant progress since the Paris Primate Meetings. He stated that the Gorilla Agreement entered into force on 1 June 2008, and that six out of the ten gorilla range states have signed the Agreement. CMS Executive Secretary Robert Hepworth highlighted successes in gorilla conservation to date, and called for balanced support from range states and donors. He expressed hope that the UN Year of the Gorilla 2009 will generate extra resources for conservation projects. Delegates adopted the meeting's agenda and rules of procedure (UNEP/CMS/GOR-MOP1/Doc.1 Rev.1 and Doc.4).

**REPORTS:** Ian Redmond, GRASP, presented on the conservation status of gorillas (UNEP/CMS/GOR-MOP1/Inf.5), noting that by 2030 only 10% of great ape habitat in Africa will be unaffected by human infrastructural development. He stressed the need to "point a finger at those who are paying the man with the chainsaw," and to address sociopolitical pressures in gorilla habitat. He described the important ecological role of gorillas as "gardeners of the forest," and noted that the killing of gorillas for traditional medicine is even harder to combat than the bushmeat trade. He underscored the income-generating potential of ecotourism.

Liam Addis, CMS Secretariat, summarized the report by the CMS and GRASP Secretariats (UNEP/CMS/GOR-MOP1/Doc.5), which addresses progress with regard to the Agreement's Action Plan, the Year of the Gorilla 2009, liaison with other organizations, and areas for future action.

**SECRETARIAT:** Executive Secretary Hepworth recalled that the CMS Secretariat has been operating as the Secretariat for the Gorilla Agreement. He suggested that MOP 1 request CMS COP 9 to confirm the mandate given to the Secretariat by the CMS Standing Committee to act as Secretariat for the Gorilla Agreement through the next triennium. He also suggested that

the associated costs be covered by the CMS Trust Fund. After several parties commended the Secretariat on its work, delegates agreed to both suggestions. Liam Addis clarified that the CMS and GRASP Secretariats will thus continue their joint work as Gorilla Agreement Secretariat.

**REPORTING FORMAT:** Liam Addis highlighted efforts to harmonize reporting across CMS and its agreements, and suggested that reporting for the Gorilla Agreement follow this format. An *ad hoc* working group was established, led by WWF, to look into the specificities of a gorilla-relevant reporting format, focusing on standardized criteria for and methods of monitoring gorilla populations as well as law enforcement procedures. This new format will be forwarded to the range states for their approval.

**TECHNICAL COMMITTEE:** Chair Mankoto invited range states to nominate Technical Committee members, proposing that the range states' GRASP focal points assume these positions. Several parties requested more time to identify representatives. Others emphasized that the Technical Committee should be comprised of technical experts rather than state representatives. After extensive debate, the meeting decided that range states may submit their nominations to the Secretariat after MOP 1. The meeting also established an *ad hoc* working group to select three additional Committee members, with different areas of expertise, from among a separate set of nominations from range states and observer bodies.

**ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE:** Rosaline Beudels-Jamar, CMS Scientific Council, noted that various conservation projects have been proposed for the four gorilla taxa, underlining the need to finance these projects. France and Monaco pledged their support to the Agreement and its projects. The Republic of Congo suggested strengthening the collaboration with the CBFP. Executive Secretary Hepworth highlighted collaboration between CMS and the International Tropical Timber Organization. Noting that the Congo Basin Forest Fund (CBFF) allocates funds to projects addressing deforestation and poverty, Ian Redmond, GRASP, suggested gearing gorilla conservation projects towards these more general goals to allow them to qualify for CBFF funding.

Executive Secretary Hepworth presented the Secretariat's budget estimates (UNEP/CMS/GOR-MOP1/Doc.6 and Annexes A and B). Delegates accepted the estimated budget and expressed support for minimum annual contributions of 3000 euros. Various participants acknowledged the need for extrabudgetary resources. Uganda said states are more willing to allocate resources if a prioritized list of concrete projects is available.

**ACCESSION:** The meeting noted progress towards accession by Angola, Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea and Uganda.

**ACTION PLAN:** Ian Redmond introduced the draft action plan, which is comprised of separate documents for the four different gorilla taxa (UNEP/CMS/GOR-MOP1/7a-d). Acknowledging that these documents are based upon IUCN's regional Gorilla Action Plans, delegates adopted the Cross River and Mountain Gorilla Action Plans with minor textual amendments. Several range states expressed satisfaction with the action plans, calling for targeted actions on the ground. Due to time constraints, the two remaining action plans were deferred to an extra, one-hour MOP session that will be held on Monday afternoon. Chair Mankoto suspended the meeting at 5:40 pm.