



EIGHTH CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION ON MIGRATORY SPECIES: 20-25 NOVEMBER 2005

The eighth Conference of the Parties (COP-8) to the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) convenes from 20-25 November 2005, in Nairobi, Kenya, with the theme "On the Move to 2010." CMS COP-8 was preceded by the 13th meeting of the CMS Scientific Council, held from 16-18 November, and the 29th meeting of the CMS Standing Committee, held on 20 November.

During the week, COP-8 will address the: review of CMS implementation; 2010 biodiversity target; measures to improve the conservation status of species listed in Appendix I, including projects on the Sahelo-Saharan antelope and the Siberian crane, and Appendix II; proposals for amendments to Appendices I and II; CMS Strategic Plan for 2006-2011; CMS Information Management Plan; and financial and administrative arrangements. COP-8 is also expected to finalize a new Agreement on the Asian Houbara bustard, and Memoranda of Understanding on the West African elephant and the Saiga antelope.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE CONVENTION ON MIGRATORY SPECIES

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 now has 92 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, six agreements and seven memoranda of understanding (MOUs) have been concluded. The six agreements are the: African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement (AEWA); Agreement on the Conservation of Seals in the Wadden Sea; Agreement on Small Cetaceans of the Baltic and North Seas (ASCOBANS); Agreement on the Conservation of Bats in Europe (EUROBATS); Agreement on Cetaceans of the Black and Mediterranean Seas (ACCOBAMS); and Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP). The seven MOUs are: Conservation Measures for the Siberian Crane; Conservation Measures for the Slender-billed Curlew; Conservation and Management of Marine Turtles and their Habitats of the Indian Ocean and South-East Asia (IOSEA); Conservation Measures for Marine Turtles of the Atlantic Coast of Africa; Conservation and Management of the Middle-European Population of the Great Bustard; Conservation and Restoration of the Bukhara Deer, and Conservation Measures for the Aquatic Warbler. These agreements and MOUs are open to all range states of the species, regardless of whether they are parties to the Convention.

CMS operational bodies include the COP, the Standing Committee, the Scientific Council and a Secretariat provided by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). The COP meets every two-and-a-half to three years to review and amend Appendices I and II. To date, the COP has met seven times.

COP-5: The fifth meeting of the COP (10-16 April 1997, Geneva, Switzerland) 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. The COP endorsed 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 an agreement on the conservation and management of the Houbara bustard.

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 six bird species, as well as manatees of the marine areas of Panama and Honduras. Thirty-one species were added to Appendix II, including dolphins of South-East Asia, seven species of petrel, a number of sturgeon and paddlefish species, and the Whale shark. Recommendations were approved on cooperative actions for various Appendix II species, including Sahelo-Saharan antelopes, the African elephant, Houbara and Great bustards, and marine turtles. Five additional range states signed the MOU on the Conservation of Marine Turtles of the Atlantic Coast of Africa.

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 species-specific decisions on: future action on the Antarctic Minke, Bryde's and Pygmy Right whales; regional coordination for small cetaceans and sirenians of Central and West Africa; improving the conservation status of the Leatherback turtle; an agreement on dugong conservation; regional coordination for small cetaceans and dugongs of South-East Asia and adjacent waters; the American Pacific Flyway Programme; and the Central Asian-Indian Waterbird Flyway Initiative.

INTERSESSIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

MEMORANDA OF UNDERSTANDING: Since COP-7, one MOU on Conservation Measures for the Aquatic Warbler has been concluded under CMS and entered into force in April 2003. To date, it has been signed by Belarus, Belgium, Bulgaria, France, Germany, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Poland, the Russian Federation, Senegal, Spain, Ukraine, and the UK.

ACCOBAMS MOP-2: The second meeting of the parties to the Agreement on Cetaceans of the Black and Mediterranean Seas (9-12 November 2004, Palma de Mallorca, Spain): adopted a work programme listing priority actions for the period 2005-2007 to improve regional conservation efforts for whales and dolphins; agreed to contribute towards implementation of the joint work programme between CMS and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD); adopted a resolution on the impact of man-made noise on cetaceans; and welcomed a conservation plan for the Common dolphin in the Mediterranean.

IOSEA MOP 1-3: Since CMS COP-7, the signatory states of the IOSEA Marine Turtles MOU met three times (22-24 January 2003; 16-19 March 2004; and 29-31 March 2005, in Bangkok, Thailand). MOP-1 established an advisory committee, reviewed implementation of the Conservation and Management Plan and identified complementary regional initiatives. MOP-2 supported the establishment of a network of important sites for marine turtles under the MOU, and an assessment of progress on the basis of reports provided by signatory states. MOP-3 agreed on a regional "Year of the Turtle" public awareness campaign for 2006 and on resolutions on fisheries by-catch and post-tsunami development activities.

GREAT APES INTERGOVERNMENTAL MEETING: The first Intergovernmental Meeting on Great Apes, in conjunction with the first meeting of the Council of the Great Apes Survival Project (5-9 September 2005, Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo), approved the Kinshasa Declaration and a Global Strategy for the Survival of Great Apes.

AEWA MOP-3: The third meeting of the parties to AEWA (23-27 October 2005, Dakar, Senegal) called for improved national contingency planning and better information

on risk assessment and necessary responses to avian influenza. MOP-3 also adopted resolutions on, *inter alia*: amendments to the annexes; a strategic plan and a communication strategy; single species action plans; climate change in relation to migratory waterbirds; and implementation of the CBD Addis Ababa Principles on Sustainable Use.

RAMSAR COP-9: The ninth conference of the parties to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat (8-15 November 2005, Kampala, Uganda) adopted, *inter alia*, a resolution on managing wetlands and waterbirds in response to highly pathogenic avian influenza, requesting the Convention's continued participation in the Scientific Task Force on Avian Influenza.

CMS SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL: The Scientific Council has met twice since COP-7, on 31 March-3 April 2004 in Glasgow, UK, and on 16-18 November 2005 in Nairobi, Kenya. Prior to COP-8, the Scientific Council endorsed most of the proposals for species listings, with the exception of the Maccua duck. Controversy surrounded the listing of the Basking shark. The Scientific Council also supported the development of the proposed future agreements, but advised postponement of negotiations of one on African bats.

OPENING CEREMONY

CMS COP-8 opened on Saturday afternoon, 20 November 2005. Following a children's music performance, Morris Nzoro, Minister for Tourism and Wildlife, Kenya, welcomed delegates and praised CMS for its regional agreements and MOUs as an innovative approach to developing partnerships and setting priorities. Nzoro noted that CMS continue to face some challenges such as the need for: further research on habitats and more scientific information for species management plans; additional financial resources to effectively implement action plans and other CMS instruments; and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), especially poverty reduction.

Robert Hepworth, CMS Executive Secretary, highlighted CMS work to achieve the 2010 target, including: expanding the number of CMS parties, particularly in developing and small island states; further developing partnerships with the private sector and NGOs, to broaden CMS conservation programmes; keeping administrative costs under control and stretching funds towards project implementation. He urged parties to continue working in a cooperative and concerted manner to consider a proper budget to enable CMS to deliver its objectives.

Jim Knight, Minister for Biodiversity, UK, urged protection of endangered migratory species, stressing the threats of climate change and desertification, unsustainable natural resource use, global pandemics and poverty. He also called for a coordinated global response to avian influenza that should be proportionate to risk and based on sound advice. Knight welcomed emerging partnership arrangements between CMS and other conservation initiatives, called for complementary people-centered action, and urged delegates to look beyond the 2010 target, in the broader context of the MDGs.

Following the CMS thesis award ceremony, the presentation of the "Friends of CMS" initiative and the Partnership Fair, Bakary Kante, Director of UNEP's Division of Environmental Conventions, closed the opening ceremony. He pledged DEC's full support to the Convention, lauded Germany for being the driving force behind CMS, and called upon delegates to work proactively to implement the Convention's objectives.