



**CONVENTION ON  
MIGRATORY  
SPECIES**

UNEP/CMS/COP13/Doc.26.3.2

4 October 2019

Original: English

13<sup>th</sup> MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES  
Gandhinagar, India, 17 - 22 February 2020  
Agenda Item 26.3.2

**CONSERVATION OF THE AFRICAN WILD ASS (*Equus africanus*)**

*(Prepared by the Secretariat)*

Summary:

This document reports on progress to implement Resolution 12.18 *Conservation of the African Wild Ass* (*Equus africanus*), its associated *Roadmap for the Conservation of the African Wild Ass Equus Africanus 2017-2027* and Decision 12.71 *Conservation of the African Wild Ass* (*Equus africanus*). It also proposes amendments to the Resolution and the deletion of the Decision.

## CONSERVATION OF THE AFRICAN WILD ASS (*Equus africanus*)

### Background

1. The Conference of the Parties at its 12<sup>th</sup> meeting (COP12, Manila, 2017) adopted [Resolution 12.18 Conservation of the African Wild Ass \(\*Equus africanus\*\)](#) through which it endorsed the [Roadmap for the Conservation of the African Wild Ass \*Equus africanus\* 2017–2027](#). The Roadmap was agreed by the confirmed the Range States, Eritrea and Ethiopia, during a meeting financed by the Government of Germany in March 2017 in Bonn, Germany.
2. In addition to activities to be implemented by Eritrea and Ethiopia, the Roadmap also sets out activities to be implemented by unconfirmed Range States, Djibouti, Egypt, Somalia and Sudan, as well as actors related to *ex situ* populations of African Wild Ass.
3. In that regard, COP12 also adopted Decision 12.71 *Conservation of the African Wild Ass (Equus africanus)* providing:

#### **12.71 Directed to Djibouti, Egypt, Somalia and Sudan**

*Requests Djibouti, Egypt, and Somalia, as former Range States and invites Sudan to conduct research into whether naturally occurring extant populations of African wild ass remain in their territories, and to report their findings to the 14<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Conference of the Parties.*

### Activities to Implement Resolution 12.18 and Decision 12.71

4. With the generous financial support of the Government of Germany, the Secretariat was able to facilitate the implementation of the following objectives and activities of the Roadmap.

### **Eritrea**

5. As set out in the Roadmap, a major threat to the African Wild Ass is inadequate access to forage and water.<sup>1</sup> Hence research was conducted on 1) diet and nutritional overlap between the African Wild Ass and associated livestock (cattle, sheep, goats, donkeys and camels) and 2) identification and mapping of permanent water sources.
6. Research was also conducted on population dynamics, with respect to the potential cause of the slow population growth of the African Wild Ass and the role of livestock in terms of potential overlap in the use of forage. The research was focused on the most important area in Eritrea for the reproduction of the African Wild Ass, i.e. the Messir Plateau.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Roadmap: Objective 1.1 *Develop a Denkelia Ecosystem Conservation programme* and Actions 1.1.1 *Conducting research on range and ecological requirements of the African Wild Ass and livestock* and 1.1.5 *Improving access to water and forage at key sites*.

<sup>2</sup> Roadmap: Action 4.1.1 *Population dynamics in Denkelia*, Action 4.2.1 *Documentation of all individuals and collection of data on natality and mortality*, Action 4.3.1 *Collection of fecal samples for population genetics analyses*, Action 4.4.1 *Collection of fecal samples for analyses of nutritional status*, and Action 4.5.1 *Collection of skulls and skeletal material for morphological analyses*.

7. Results of the study indicate that the African Wild Ass dietary requirements significantly overlap with cattle and domestic donkeys but are different from camels and goats (predominantly browsers) and sheep (mixed feeders). This result suggests that the African Wild Ass is not able to access adequate forage, especially near water sources due to possible competition from migrating livestock, in particular, cattle from the highlands in rainfall months. The slow population growth of the African Wild Ass in the Messir Plateau might therefore be a result of competition with grazers (such as cattle) for forage.
8. The findings are important, as they back the proposal, which is supported by the local communities, to set aside 124 km<sup>2</sup> on the Messir Plateau as a protected area for the African Wild Ass and other wildlife.
9. In addition to covering the research costs, the support provided by the Government of Germany provided funding for capacity-building by supporting an Eritrean PhD student in his research and for training two community scouts to do research and understand the role of the African Wild Ass in the Denkelia ecosystem.

### **Ethiopia**

10. As stated in the Roadmap, a major threat to the African Wild Ass is inadequate access to forage and water.<sup>3</sup> Hence research was conducted on 1) the spatial and dietary overlap of African Wild Ass with livestock by collecting GPS location data and fecal samples and 2) identifying and mapping permanent water sources.
11. In addition, research was conducted concerning the threat of the small population size by continuing the collection of fecal samples for analyses of population genetics. The results of the study are still to be processed.

### **Egypt**

12. The Roadmap provides actions for Egypt to implement under the heading Other Actions, Action 1: *Collect samples from Elba National Park for genetic analysis*; and Action 2: *Conduct field surveys to determine occurrence, population and range*. The basis for these actions was a possible sighting of 60-80 African Wild Ass in March 2015 by an Egyptian biologist.<sup>4</sup> However, these animals may be feral domestic donkeys, or hybrids. Therefore, photographs and a collection of fecal samples for DNA analysis of all herd members are needed to verify if these animals are African Wild Ass.
13. The Government of Egypt has secured a permit for an Ethiopian expert on African Wild Ass to visit Elba National Park. The outcomes of the study will be published in due course.

<sup>3</sup> Roadmap: Objective 3.1 *Conducting research and monitoring on dietary overlap and resource competition* and 3.4 *Developing rangeland and water management schemes*.

<sup>4</sup> Photos of these animals were posted on the internet by Moss'ad Sultan:  
[https://www.flickr.com/photos/ganav\\_elba/21992697666/in/album-72157628867476237](https://www.flickr.com/photos/ganav_elba/21992697666/in/album-72157628867476237)

Amendment of Resolution 12.18 and renewal of Decision 12.71

14. In order to ensure the implementation of the Roadmap, it is suggested that the CMS Secretariat take an active monitoring and reporting role. Amendments are suggested to that effect in the Resolution.

Recommended actions

15. The Conference of the Parties is recommended to:
  - a) adopt the draft amendments to Resolution 12.18 as contained in Annex 1 to this document.
  - b) renew Decision 12.71 as contained in Annex 2 to this document.

## ANNEX 1

## PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO RESOLUTION 12.18

**CONSERVATION OF THE AFRICAN WILD ASS (*Equus africanus*)**

Adopted by the Conference of the Parties at its 12<sup>th</sup> Meeting (Manila, October 2017)

*Concerned* that the African Wild Ass is likely go extinct in the wild without immediate and decisive intervention,

*Noting* the dire global conservation status of the critically endangered African Wild Ass, which has a maximum of 200, and possibly as few as 50, mature individuals left in the wild, and experienced an approximate 90 per cent decline over its range since the 1980s,

*Noting* that it was once a widespread species across northern Africa and the Horn of Africa, and an intrinsic part of the ecosystem in that region,

*Concerned* about the unabated threats to the species, such as limited access to drinking water and lack of forage, recurrent and extreme droughts throughout the range, and hunting for food and medicinal purposes in some parts of the range,

*The Conference of the Parties to the  
Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals*

1. *Encourages* current and former Range States to implement the Roadmap for the Conservation of the African Wild Ass, contained in UNEP/CMS/COP12/Inf.19 as the principal strategy for conservation of the African Wild Ass;
2. *Urges* current and former Range States to include conservation measures stated in the Roadmap for the Conservation of the African Wild Ass within their National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs);
3. *Invites* Range States to develop and implement national legislation to increase the protection of the African Wild Ass;
4. *Requests* the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and the State of Eritrea to monitor the existing populations of the African Wild Ass;
5. *Requests* the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and the State of Eritrea and *invites* the former Range States to report to the Conference of the Parties at each meeting and to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Equid Specialist Group on the progress of implementation of the Roadmap for the Conservation of the African Wild Ass;
6. *Encourages* Parties, intergovernmental, and non-governmental organizations and donors to provide the technical and voluntary financial support to the Range States and to the Secretariat for implementing the actions set out by the Roadmap for the Conservation of the African Wild Ass.
7. *Requests* the Secretariat to monitor the implementation of the Roadmap and provide reports on its implementation as well as that of the Resolution to each meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

**ANNEX 2**

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO DECISION 12.71

**CONSERVATION OF THE AFRICAN WILD ASS (*Equus africanus*)**

***Directed to Djibouti, Egypt, Somalia and Sudan***

- 13.AA (12.71) Requests Djibouti, Egypt, and Somalia, as former Range States and invites Sudan to conduct research into whether naturally occurring extant populations of African Wild Ass remain in their territories, and to report their findings to the 14<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Conference of the Parties.