



**CONVENTION ON
MIGRATORY
SPECIES**

Distribution: General

UNEP/CMS/Resolution 12.10

Original: English

CONSERVATION OF AFRICAN-EURASIAN VULTURES

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

Affirming the commitment to support implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure prosperity for all,

Recognizing the continuing loss of biodiversity, as established in Global Biodiversity Outlook 4 (2014), which provides a mid-term assessment of progress towards the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD),

Affirming the commitment to the implementation of the Aichi Targets adopted under CBD, inter alia the achievement of Target 12, within Strategic Goal C - To improve the status of biodiversity by safeguarding ecosystems, species and genetic diversity,

Concerned that the 15 species of African-Eurasian Old World vulture (namely, Bearded Vulture *Gypaetus barbatus*, Egyptian Vulture *Neophron percnopterus*, Red-headed Vulture *Sarcogyps calvus*, White-headed Vulture *Trigonoceps occipitalis*, Hooded Vulture *Necrosyrtes monachus*, Himalayan Griffon *Gyps himalayensis*, White-rumped Vulture *Gyps bengalensis*, White-backed Vulture *Gyps africanus*, Indian Vulture *Gyps indicus*, Slender-billed Vulture *Gyps tenuirostris*, Cape Vulture *Gyps coprotheres*, Rüppell's Vulture *Gyps rueppelli*, Griffon Vulture *Gyps fulvus*, Cinereous Vulture *Aegypius monachus*, and Lappet-faced Vulture *Torgos tracheliotus*) are one of the most threatened groups of migratory birds in the world, with eleven being globally threatened, eight critically so, and three being Near Threatened according to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List,

Aware that the precipitous population declines experienced in recent years by most African-Eurasian vulture populations have been driven by anthropogenic factors; primarily mortality caused by poison baits set illegally: a) to protect livestock from predators but unintentionally kill vultures; b) by poachers, deliberately targeting vultures to prevent them drawing attention of wardens to illegally killed Elephant; and, c) for the deliberate collection of vultures for belief-based use; and by vultures feeding on carcasses contaminated with the veterinary drug, diclofenac, in South Asia; but also due to a range of other threats including: habitat loss or degradation, decreasing food availability, mortality caused by electrocution on powerline poles, collision with wind turbines and other energy generation and transmission infrastructure, human disturbance and fragmentation of remaining populations,

Commending countries such as Spain and France, which, through intensive and sustained conservation efforts, have secured the recovery of their national populations of vultures, and other countries that have already developed and are implementing national action plans for vultures,

Recognizing that vultures provide critically important ecosystem services, offering significant economic and health benefits by cleaning up carcasses and other organic waste in the environment; where there are no vultures, carcasses can take up to 4 times longer to decompose with significant consequences for the spread of diseases in both wild and domestic animals, as well as elevating pathogenic risks to humans; and *also recognizing* that vultures hold special intrinsic cultural value in many countries,

Recalling the ‘Programme of Work on Migratory Birds and Flyways 2014-2023’ included in CMS Resolution 11.14, and its Action 9 to “[...] promote the development, adoption and implementation of species action plans for priority species in line with CMS priorities for concerted and cooperative action, including: [...] d) all African-Eurasian Vultures (except Palm-nut Vulture (*Gypohierax angolensis*)) via the CMS Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of Migratory Birds of Prey (Raptors MOU)” to be completed by COP12,

Noting CMS-led initiatives established by Resolution 11.15 – Preventing Poisoning of Migratory Birds, including the associated Working Group, Resolution 11.16 - The Prevention of Illegal Killing, Taking and Trade of Migratory Birds, including the Inter-Governmental IKB Task Force, and Resolution 11.27 – Renewable Energy and Migratory Species, including the associated Energy Task Force,

Acknowledging the Resolutions of IUCN World Conservation Congress WCC-2016-Res-014 on combatting the illegal poisoning of wildlife, WCC-2016-Res-022 on conservation measures for vultures, including banning the use of veterinary diclofenac, and WCC-2016-Res-082 on a path forward to address concerns over the use of lead ammunition in hunting,

Noting that the Second Meeting of Signatories (MOS2) to the CMS Raptors MOU held in Norway in October 2015 formally recognized all Old World vultures (except the Palm-nut Vulture) as migratory species by listing them in Table 1 of Annex 3 of the Raptors MOU, and, furthermore tasked the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) to support the Coordinating Unit in facilitating development of a Multi-species Action Plan to Conserve African-Eurasian Vultures (Vulture MsAP), encompassing all 15 species that are obligatory scavengers,

Noting that four workshops were held between October 2016 and February 2017 to elaborate the regional components of the Vulture MsAP and an Overarching Workshop in February 2017 brought these components together into a comprehensive Vulture MsAP,

Encouraging the need for immediate action by Range State governments, partners, stakeholders and other interested parties, to address the principal threats to the 15 species of African-Eurasian vultures at all stages of their life cycle, and across all 128 countries of their ranges,

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

1. *Adopts* the 12-year Multi-species Action Plan to Conserve African-Eurasian Vultures (Vulture MsAP) 2017-2029, and *urges* Parties and *encourages* non-Party Range States, partners and stakeholders to implement the Vulture MsAP as a matter of priority locally, nationally and regionally as well as at flyway level;
2. *Urges* Parties and *encourages* non-Party Range States, in implementing the Vulture MsAP, to urgently address: a) the problem of poisoning of vultures, particularly by poison baits, the veterinary use of diclofenac and other non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) toxic to vultures and the use of lead ammunition, in conjunction with the CMS Preventing Poisoning Working Group and in line with the Guidelines to Prevent Poisoning of Migratory Birds adopted by Resolution 11.15, ensuring that national conservation legislation is properly implemented and enforced; b) the impact of electrocution and collisions associated with energy infrastructure in conjunction with the CMS Energy Task Force in line with Resolution 11.27; and, c) the illegal killing, taking and trade in vultures and their body parts in line with Resolution 11.16;
3. *Urges* Parties and *encourages* non-Party Range States to implement existing measures under CMS, the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (AEWA), the Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of Migratory Birds of Prey in Africa and Eurasia (Raptors MOU), especially where these contribute to the objectives of the Vulture MsAP, in order to increase the resilience of African-Eurasian vultures and their potential to adapt to environmental change;

4. *Further urges* Parties, non-Party Range States and stakeholders and *invites* United Nations Environment Programme and other relevant international organizations, bilateral and multilateral donors to work collaboratively to immediately begin to mobilize the considerable resources required to fully implement the Vulture MsAP;
5. *Requests* the Secretariat, through the Coordinating Unit of Raptors MOU, to facilitate continuation of the Vulture Working Group and its associated structures (Vulture Steering Group and proposed Regional Implementation Committees) and team of coordinators, including by continuing to encourage engagement, communication, cooperation and collaboration between the stakeholders, by means of (regional) meetings and workshops, subject to the availability of funds;
6. *Invites* Parties and non-Party Range States to establish National Vulture Task Forces or equivalent bodies to develop National Vulture MsAPs to ensure the national implementation of the Vulture MsAP, integrating them into their (revised) National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) developed under CBD, especially to deliver Aichi Target 12 on preventing extinctions, and also achieve CMS objectives;
7. *Calls* on Parties and invites non-Party Range States to pursue programmes of vulture reintroduction in potentially suitable ecosystems that were historically populated by these species, provided that such programmes are conducted in accordance with the “*IUCN Guidelines for Reintroduction and other Conservation Translocations*”;
8. *Calls* on Parties and *invites* non-Party Range States and stakeholders, with the support of the Secretariat, to strengthen national and local capacity, including through twinning programmes between countries experienced in vulture conservation and those less so, following identification of training and capacity development needs, for the implementation of the Vulture MsAP;
9. *Calls* on Parties to report progress in implementing the Vulture MsAP, including monitoring the efficacy of measures taken, to each Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CMS, including through their National Reports.