

## FIFTH MEETING OF THE TECHNICAL ADVISORY GROUP TO THE RAPTORS MOU

*(Online, 14 December 2022)*

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### RENEWAL OF THE TECHNICAL ADVISORY GROUP

*(Prepared by the Coordinating Unit of the Raptors MOU)*

#### Size, composition and mandate of the TAG

1. The purpose of the Technical Advisory Group to the Raptors MOU (TAG) is to serve and assist Signatories in the effective implementation of the MOU and its Action plan, as stated in paragraph 1 of the [Terms of Reference of the TAG](#).
2. The referred document details the tasks that the TAG is to undertake (paragraph 4), and states that the “Membership of the TAG shall comprise persons operating in their personal capacity, and qualified as specialists in raptor research, conservation and/or management” (paragraph 5). It adds that “[i]n appointing persons to the TAG, the MOS should strive to achieve a balance amongst areas of expertise especially in the context of delivery of advice requested of it, and the need for representation of those geographic regions with few Signatories”.
3. The referred Terms of Reference provide guidance regarding the size and composition of the TAG membership, explaining that it shall include up to 16 individuals as follows:
  - 10 persons nominated by Signatories from the four main geo-political regions covered by the Raptors MOU, namely:
    - Africa (excluding North Africa) – three representatives;
    - Asia – two representatives;
    - Europe – three representatives; and
    - Middle East and North Africa – two representatives;
  - Up to five other experts;
  - One person nominated by BirdLife International – the IUCN nominated authority on birds; and,
  - To promote synergies and co-operation, observers from the African-Eurasian Waterbirds Technical Committee, the CMS Landbirds Action Plan and Co-operating Partners may attend at their own cost.
4. The afore-mentioned document further stipulates that TAG members are to serve for a period of two regular Meetings of Signatories and, in “exceptional cases”, where the MOS so decides, may be nominated for a third term (paragraph 11). The document does not indicate what constitutes an “exceptional case”.

## Current membership of the TAG and nominations for the term MOS3-MOS5

5. In document [UNEP/CMS/Raptors/TAG4/Doc.5](#), the Coordinating Unit explained the status of the TAG membership as of November 2021, and that only two of its members (Mr Jean-Marc Thiollay and Mr Neil Deacon) had a mandate to serve beyond MOS3. Mr Thiollay has since passed away, and Mr Deacon is therefore the only current member of the TAG anticipated to serve beyond MOS3 (i.e. until the Fourth Meeting of Signatories, MOS4, tentatively in 2026). The current membership of the TAG is displayed in Annex I to this document.
6. In June 2022, the Coordinating Unit invited Signatories and Co-operating Partners to nominate candidates to fill in the 15 places available for serving on the TAG from the Third to the Fifth Meetings of Signatories (MOS3, tentatively in the first half 2023; MOS5, tentatively in 2029). Nominations were requested to include detailed information on the professional background and expertise of the nominees.
7. The Coordinating Unit received a total of 20 nominations. Of these, 10 were submitted by Signatories (Armenia, Hungary, Israel, Italy, Lebanon, Morocco, Somalia, South Africa, United Kingdom, and the Netherlands), nine by two Co-operating Partners (BirdLife International and the International Association of Falconry and Conservation of Birds of Prey), and one by BirdLife International for its reserved position.
8. Of the nominations received, nine were for re-appointing current members of the TAG for an additional term, thus applying the “exceptional case” provided for in paragraph 11 of the Terms of Reference of the TAG. These re-appointments were justified on the concern for a potential loss of continuity of the TAG’s work, given that 93% of its membership was anticipated to change. They were also justified with trust in the expertise and network that the re-appointed could offer to the group.

## Selection panel and assessment criteria

9. Paragraph 10 c) of the Terms of Reference of the TAG states that the TAG’s regional representatives and other experts will be appointed by the Meeting of Signatories at the recommendation of a panel comprising of the Chair and Vice-chair of the TAG, and the Coordinating Unit’s Programme Officer and Executive Coordinator. Accordingly, a selection panel was established comprising Mr Des Thompson, Mr André Botha, Mr Umberto Gallo-Orsi, Ms Lauren Lopes, and Ms Rouba Abou-Atieh.
10. The selection panel convened twice online to assess candidates against the criteria provided in paragraph 8 of the Terms of Reference of the TAG, as follows:
  - **Criterion 8 a) - Networking capacity:** “Demonstrated capacity for networking with other experts in raptor research, conservation and/or management of species and their habitats at local, national and international scales, and demonstrated engagement in such expert networks”. Candidates were scored on a scale from 0 (No data provided or networking irrelevant to raptor conservation) to 5 (Involved in associations, networks, working groups, conferences or other relevant fora related to raptors conservation at local, national and international scales, and demonstrated engagement in such expert networks).
  - **Criterion 8 b) - Recognized experience and expertise:** “Widely recognized experience and expertise in one or more aspects of raptor research, conservation and/or management of species and their habitats, particularly those relevant to the tasks identified by the MOS

for the forthcoming work of the TAG”. Candidates were scored on a scale from 0 (No data provided or experience and expertise irrelevant to the areas required) to 5 (Has internationally recognized experience and expertise in one or more aspects of raptor research, conservation and/or management of species and their habitats).

- **Criterion 8 c) - Experience working at different levels:** “Experience of working with raptor experts at local, national and international levels”. Candidates were scored on a scale from 0 (No data provided or experience irrelevant to raptor conservation) to 5 (Has experience working on various aspects of raptor conservation, biology, ecology or threats).
- **Criterion 8 d) - Internet access:** “Full access to electronic mail and web-based information and communication systems, through which the intersessional work of the TAG will take place”. The selection panel agreed to assume that all candidates met this criterion.
- **Criterion 8 e) - Commitment:** “Commitment to undertake the work required of the TAG with the support, where relevant, of the member’s organization or institution”. The selection panel agreed to assume that all candidates met this criterion.

11. Further, to aid the selection of the 15 most suitable candidates out of the 20 nominations received, the selection panel considered the following criteria in its assessment:

- **Relevance of educational background:** University level or higher education related to raptors, conservation, and/or management of species and their habitats. Candidates were scored on a scale from 0 (No data provided or education irrelevant to raptor conservation) to 5 (Holds a PhD or higher degree focusing on raptor conservation).
- **Peer-reviewed authorship:** Authorship in peer-reviewed publications on raptor conservation and/or management of the species and their habitats, particularly species listed on the Raptors MOU. Candidates were scored on a scale of 0 (No data provided or authorship irrelevant to raptor conservation) to 5 (Various primary authorships on the relevant subjects in peer-reviewed journals).
- **Gender:** At the Third and Fourth Meetings of the TAG (TAG3, Sempach, December 2018; TAG4, online, December 2021) concern was raised about the need to ensure a better gender balance in the membership of the TAG (see paragraphs 170 and 174 of document [UNEP/CMS/Raptors/TAG3/Report](#), and paragraph 214 of document [UNEP/CMS/Raptors/TAG4/Report](#)). To address this concern, the selection panel agreed that if both a female and male candidate ranked equally after assessment against the above criteria, the female candidate would be the one proposed for selection.

### **Selection panel’s recommendation for renewed membership of the TAG**

12. The selection panel identified the 15 candidates scoring the highest following the assessment exercise described above. These candidates are presented in the table below, where they are allocated on the basis of their geographical area of experience. A summary of their qualifications is made available in Annex II to this document.

Membership representation	TAG member's name	Nominator (Signatory or Co-operating Partner)	Starting term	Expiry term (inclusively)
<b>Africa (excluding North Africa)</b>	André Botha	BirdLife International	MOS1	MOS4
	Darcy Orgada	BirdLife International	MOS3	MOS5
	Neil Deacon	IAF	MOS2	MOS4
<b>Asia</b>	Karen Aghababyan	Armenia	MOS3	MOS5
	Nyambayar Batbayar	BirdLife International	MOS1	MOS4
<b>Europe</b>	Arianna Aradis	Italy	MOS3	MOS5
	Des Thompson	UK	MOS1	MOS4
	Mátyás Prommer	Hungary	MOS1	MOS4
<b>Middle East &amp; North Africa</b>	Imad Cherkaoui	Morocco	MOS3	MOS5
	Mohammed Shobrak	BirdLife International	MOS1	MOS4
<b>Experts</b>	Campbell Murn	BirdLife International	MOS3	MOS5
	Fadzai Matsvimbo	BirdLife International	MOS3	MOS5
	Munir Virani	IAF	MOS1	MOS4
	Ohad Hatzofe	Israel	MOS3	MOS5
	Ralph Buij	The Netherlands	MOS3	MOS5
<b>BirdLife International</b>	Vicky Jones	BirdLife International	MOS1	MOS4

13. The selection panel considers that the above 15 candidates would be the most suitable for serving on the TAG in the upcoming period, and notes that this selection would secure a balance between ensuring the continuity of the TAG's work and ensuring that the group can benefit from the expertise of new individuals with different areas of expertise and novel approaches (as 50% of the group would comprise re-appointed members, and 50% would be new members).

#### Action requested

14. The TAG is invited to endorse the recommendation of the selection panel contained in paragraphs 12-13 above concerning the 15 persons that should serve on the Technical Advisory Group to the Raptors MOU starting after MOS3.

**ANNEX I**  
**Membership of the Technical Advisory Group to the CMS Raptors MOU (TAG) as of 18 November 2022**

Membership	Name	Nominator (Region or Country)	Start Term	Term of expiry
<b>Africa (excluding North Africa)</b>	<b>André Botha</b>	South Africa (Signatory) - Africa	MOS1	MOS3
	<b>Lily-Arison Rene de Roland</b>	Madagascar (Signatory) - Africa	MOS1	MOS3
	<u>Neil Deacon</u>	<u>IAF (Co-operating Partner) - Zimbabwe</u>	<u>MOS2</u>	<u>MOS4</u>
<b>Asia</b>	Suresh Kumar Ramani Kumar	Proposed by TAG chair in 2018	2018	MOS3
	Nyambayar Batbayar	BirdLife (Co-operating Partner) - Mongolia	MOS1	MOS3
<b>Europe</b>	<b>Mátyás Prommer</b>	Hungary (Signatory) - Europe	MOS1	MOS3
	<b>Des B.A. Thompson</b>	UK (Signatory) - Europe	MOS1	MOS3
	<b>Jari Valkama</b>	Finland (Signatory) - Europe	MOS1	MOS3
<b>Middle East &amp; North Africa</b>	<b>Sàlim Javed</b>	UAE (Signatory) - Middle East & North Africa	MOS1	MOS3
	<b>Sadegh Zadegan</b>	Iran (Signatory) - Middle East & North Africa	MOS2	Resigned in 2021
<b>Experts</b>	Fernando Feás	IAF (Co-operating Partner) - Spain	MOS1	MOS3
	Vibhu Prakash	BirdLife (Co-operating Partner) - India	MOS1	MOS3
	Mohammed Shobrak	BirdLife (Co-operating Partner) – Saudi Arabia	MOS1	MOS3
	<b><u>Jean-Marc Thiollay</u></b>	<u>France (Signatory) - Europe</u>	<u>MOS2</u>	<u>Deceased</u> <u>Nov. 2021</u>
	Munir Z. Virani	BirdLife (Co-operating Partner) - Kenya	MOS1	MOS3
<b>BirdLife International</b>	Victoria Jones	BirdLife (Co-operating Partner) - UK	MOS1	MOS3

Key: Nominations from Signatories are highlighted in **bold**. The members whose mandate is not ending at MOS3 are underlined.

## ANNEX II

### Summary of the qualifications of the 15 candidates scoring the highest in the selection panel's assessment exercise (presented in alphabetical order)

#### 1. Mr André Botha

Bachelor of Technology (Hons.) in Nature Conservation Veld & Game Management. Has been involved in more than 40 ornithological research and monitoring projects since 1993.

**Current role:** Manager Vultures for Africa Programme, Endangered Wildlife Trust, South Africa (2017-present).

**Other roles:** Overarching Coordinator of the CMS Vulture MsAP. Co-Chair of IUCN SSC's Vulture Specialist Group (2011-2020). Vice-Chair of Raptors MOU TAG (2012-present). Member of CMS Wildlife Poisoning Task Force (2015-present). Member of South African National Wildlife Poisoning Prevention Working Group (2015-present). Member of IUCN's SSC Conservation Planning Specialist Group, Hornbill Specialist Group, and Stork, Ibis & Spoonbill Specialist Group. Member of CITES Working Group on West African Vultures (2020-present). Southern Hemisphere Director of Raptors Research Foundation (2019-present).

#### 2. Ms Arianna Aradis

PhD in Animal Biology. Has fulfilled several roles as expert ornithologist scientific advisor since 1997.

**Current role:** First Technologist/Ornithologist, Institute for Environmental Protection and Research, Italy (2005-present). Holds lectures and seminars across Italy on ornithology and nature conservation.

**Other roles:** Bern Convention IKB Special Focal Point for Italy (2020-present). Scientific responsibility for conservation measures for Egyptian Vulture in Italy and the Canary Islands under the LIFE Egyptian Vulture project. Member of Italy's Steering Committee of the Action Plan for the Fight Against IKB (2017-present). Member of IUCN SSC (2017-present). National coordinator of Italian contribution to the SakerGAP (2013). Referee for the European Journal of Wildlife Research, Journal of Raptor Research, Ringing & Migration, Bird Study, Avocetta - Journal of Ornithology, and RETICULA.

#### 3. Mr Campbell Murn

PhD in Biological Sciences. Has experience with developing and delivering conservation projects in the UK and internationally.

**Current role:** Head of Conservation and Research, Hawk Conservation Trust, UK (2007-present). Lecturer, School of Biological Sciences, University of Reading, UK (2018-present).

**Other roles:** Board member of Saving Asia's Vultures from Extinction (present). Member of UK DEFRA's Zoo Expert Committee (present), British & Irish Association of Zoos and Aquariums Reintroduction Advisory Group (present), European Species Committee – Cinereous Vulture, White-headed Vulture, African White-backed Vulture (present), IUCN SSC (present), and Hawk Conservancy Trust's Ethical Review Committee (present). Fellow of the Royal Society of Biology, the Linnean Society, and the Royal Geographic Society (present). Member of Reviewer for 18 scientific journals. Former editor for Vulture News – Journal of the IUCN Vulture Specialist Group.

4. **Ms Darcy Ogada**

PhD in Zoology and Post-Doctoral Fellowship researching ecological implications of vulture declines.

**Current role:** Africa Programme Director, The Peregrine Fund, Kenya (2010-present). Associate Editor of Kenya Birding (2006-present).

**Other roles:** Africa Regional Chair and Red List Authority of IUCN Vulture Specialist Group (2016-present). Executive Committee member of Nature Kenya (2009-present). Member of Kenya Wildlife Service Bird Taskforce (2012-present), Pan-African Ornithological Congress Committee (2012-present), Bird Committee of Nature Kenya (2006-present), and Association of Zoos and Aquariums (2016-present). Mentor for Women for Conservation Botswana (2020-present). Research Associate at National Museums of Kenya (2004-present). Member of the Editorial Board of Scopus: Journal of East African Ornithology (2007-present).

5. **Mr Des Thompson**

PhD and DSc in Zoology. Has authored and co-authored many papers, books, and chapters on ecology and conservation of Britain's and arctic ecosystems.

**Current role:** Principal Adviser on Biodiversity and Science, NatureScot, UK (2017-present).

**Other roles:** Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, and Fellow of Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management. Member of Royal Botanic Garden of Edinburgh Scientific Advisory Committee (2022-present). Chair of the AEWA's European Goose Management International Working Group (2021-present). Chair of Raptors MOU TAG since MOS1. Appointed Specialist Adviser to Ministerial Expert Group on Grouse Moor Management (2017-19). Chair of Watson Raptor Science Prize Panel, awarding annual prizes for best European scientific research on birds of prey (2011-2019). Associate Editor for Frontiers in Bird Science - Bird Conservation and Management (2022-present).

6. **Ms Fadzai Matsvimbo**

BSc in Forestry Resources and Wildlife Management. MBA undergoing completion.

**Current role:** Preventing Extinctions Programme Manager, BirdLife Zimbabwe (2015-present; Conservation Officer 2007-2015).

**Other roles:** Project Manager of Vulture Safe Zones Implementation: Pioneering Vulture Safe Zones in Zimbabwe (2019-present). Project leader of Vulture and Raptor Surveys in Mana Pools National Park (2018), Vulture and Raptor Surveys in the Zambezi Valley (2016), and Vulture Surveys in the south-east Lowveld of Zimbabwe (2010). Project Manager for Saving Africa's Vultures (2016-2018) and for CMS-funded project Blue Swallow Monitoring in the Eastern Highlands of Zimbabwe (2011-2013). Member of National Biodiversity Forum, Zimbabwe Government (2015-present). National Coordinator of EU-funded IBA monitoring project (2007-2011).

7. **Mr Imad Cherkaoui**

PhD in Animal Biology and Ecology. Has developed protected area management plans for various national parks in Morocco.

**Current role:** Associate Professor & Head of Department of Environmental Engineering, Ibn Tofail University/Kénitra Higher School of Technology, Morocco.

**Other roles:** Chair of Pan-African Ornithological Congress from Dakar to Victoria falls (2016-2022). Member of CMS MIKT (2015-present), AEWA Technical Commission as North-Africa Representative (2016-2021), Ramsar Wetland and Culture Network (2019-present), and of IUCN SSC for Waterfowl and Vultures (2012-present), Threatened Waterfowl Specialist Group as regional representative (2020-present), Commission on Ecosystem Management (2020-present), and World Commission on Protected Areas (2018-present). Honor fellow of International Ornithologists' Union (2018-present).

8. **Mr Karen Aghababyan**

PhD in Zoology. Broad experience in coordinating projects with large budgets, maintaining environmental networks in rural communities and among NGOs.

**Current role:** Executive Director, BirdLinks Armenia, Armenia (2015-present). Legal Adviser to the Minister, Ministry of Environment of Armenia (2019-present).

**Other roles:** National Focal Point for AEWA (2020-present). National Coordinator of Armenia in "European Breeding Bird Atlas 2" (2012-2020). Delegate of European Bird Census Council in Armenia (2013-present). Expert of IUCN Species Survival Commission (2014-present), Wetlands International/IUCN SSC Threatened Waterfowl Specialist Group (2017-present), and Ministry of Nature Protection of RA on Ornithology (2014-present). Board Member of Batumi Raptor Count NGO (2018-present). Member of Working Group on Birds of Prey and Owls (2001-2015). National Validator of Observation.org platform (2017-present).

9. **Mr Mátyás Prommer**

MSc in Environmental Management and Policy. PhD undergoing completion.

**Current role:** Conservation Expert, GRASSLAND-HU LIFE Integrated Project, Herman Ottó Institute, Hungary (2019-present). PhD student in Interdisciplinary Ecology, University of Florida.

**Other roles:** Involved in various Saker Falcon conservation projects between 2011 and 2019. Member of the Raptors MOU TAG since MOS1. Member of the Raptors MOU Saker Falcon Task Force advising on the SakerGAP (2009-2014). National Coordinator of the Peregrine Falcon Conservation Programme of MME/BirdLife Hungary (2005-present). Editor for Heliaca, a journal on raptor conservation (2006-present). Member of Raptor Research Foundation, European Colour-Ring Birding (co-ordinating colour ringing of Saker Falcons in Europe), MME/BirdLife Hungary, and Hungarian Ringing Centre.

10. **Mr Mohammed Shobrak**

PhD in Animal Ecology and Wildlife Conservation, researching the ecology of lappet-faced vultures in Saudi Arabia.

**Current role:** Animal Ecology and Wildlife Conservation Professor. Independent Consultant.

**Other roles:** Carried out avian studies in Kuwait for IUCN/West Asia Regional Office as Regional Consultant (2019-2022). Board member of National Center for Wildlife (2019-present). Member

of Raptors MOU TAG (2013-present), CMS Energy Task Force (2017-present), Raptors MOU Saker Falcon Task Force (2012-present), CMS Vulture MsAP Steering Committee, BirdLife International Middle East Executive Committee (2008-present), and Taif University's Scientific Council (2014-2017). Chair of AEWA's Northern Bald Ibis International Working Group (2012-2017) and AEWA's Sociable Lapwing International Working Group (2011-2020).

#### 11. **Mr Munir Virani**

PhD in Biomedical Sciences and Medicine. Has over 24 years of experience in conservation, strategic planning, project design, management and execution, and fundraising.

**Current role:** Chief Executive Officer, Mohamed Bin Zayed Raptor Conservation Fund, UAE (2021-present).

**Other roles:** Develops and implements organizational strategy for conservation, grant-making, communication, engagement, fundraising, endowment, investing, financial management, and human resource management (2021-present). Wrote and implemented The Peregrine Fund's Vision 2050 Five Year Strategic Plan (2015-2021). Member of the Raptors MOU TAG since MOS1. Has set-up and managed field and diagnostic teams that conducted research on birds of prey in East Africa, India, Nepal and Pakistan, Panama, and the Caribbean Islands.

#### 12. **Mr Nyambayar Batbayar**

PhD in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology. MSc in Raptor Biology.

**Current role:** Director and Research Biologist, Wildlife Science and Conservation Center of Mongolia (2005-present). Research Associate, International Crane Foundation, USA (2012-present).

**Other roles:** Country representative for the Raptors MOU (2016-present). Member of IUCN Vulture Specialist Group (2017), Pelican Specialist Group (2007-present), Crane Specialist Group (2007), and Goose Specialist Group (2010). Also member of Wetlands International Anatidae Working Group (2011), Asian Raptor Research and Conservation Network (1998-present), Association for Field Ornithology (2001-2002), American Ornithological Union (2004-present), European Ornithological Union (2005-present), and Raptor Research Foundation (2002-present). Chief-editor for Toodog – Mongolian Journal of Ornithology (2014-present).

#### 13. **Mr Ohad Hatzofe**

MSc in Zoology, researching the ecophysiology of the development of vulture embryos.

**Current role:** Head Avian Ecologist, Israel Nature and Parks, Israel (2003-present).

**Other roles:** Has prepared and directed reintroduction and action plans for various raptor species for Israel Nature and Parks since 1989. Has supported the development and implementation of a Griffon Vulture Action Plan to prevent local extinction in Cyprus (1997-present). Member of Vulture Conservation Foundation Advisory Board, and of IUCN Wetlands International Cormorant Specialist Group, Pelican Specialist Group, and Vulture Specialist Group. Board member of Israel Zoological Society (2005-2007). Founded and supervised the "Lateva Nolad" medical center for wild animals (1997-2000).

**14. Mr Ralph Buij**

PhD in Conservation Biology, researching the impact of land use in Sudano-Sahelian savannas on raptor population dynamics.

**Current role:** Africa and Asia Program Director, The Peregrine Fund, USA (2019-present).

**Other roles:** Has over 15 years of experience in raptor conservation and research in Africa, Asia, and Europe. Works on raptor (including African vulture) threat mapping, sensitivity mapping, and foraging ecology. Member of IUCN SSC Vulture Specialist Group. Board member of The Van Tienhoven Foundation for International Nature Protection (2008-2016) and LEO Foundation (2010-present). Editor for Cogent Environmental Science. Reviewer for Conservation Biology, Biological Conservation, Animal Conservation, Oryx, Journal of Raptor Research, African Journal of Ecology, Ostrich, Malimbus.

**15. Ms Vicky Jones**

PhD in Zoology. Has been working with the Coordinating Unit of the Raptors MOU for several years developing proposals for amending the Raptors MOU Annexes.

**Current role:** Flyways Science Coordinator, BirdLife International, UK (2007-present).

**Other roles:** Works with CMS family of agreements and BirdLife network to identify site networks under the Raptors MOU and AEWA, implement the Rome Strategic Plan on illegal killing, taking and trade, and implement the CAF situation analysis. Member of Raptors MOU TAG since MOS1 and of Raptors MOU Saker Falcon Task Force. Coordinates scientific work within BirdLife on illegal killing, taking and trade of raptors and their collision/electrocution with energy infrastructure. Supervised University of Cambridge undergraduates taking Behaviour and Ecology courses. Member of Heritage in Schools Panel for Ireland, running conservation workshops and field-trips.