



**CONVENTION ON  
MIGRATORY  
SPECIES**

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MEETING TO CONCLUDE AND ENDORSE THE  
PROPOSED CENTRAL ASIAN FLYWAY ACTION  
PLAN TO CONSERVE MIGRATORY  
WATERBIRDS AND THEIR HABITATS  
New Delhi, 10-13 June 2005  
Agenda Item 6.0

**A PRELIMINARY LIST OF ONGOING INTERNATIONAL CONSERVATION  
FRAMEWORKS AND REGIONAL/NATIONAL ACTIVITIES THAT CONTRIBUTE  
TO MIGRATORY WATERBIRD AND HABITAT CONSERVATION IN THE  
CENTRAL ASIAN FLYWAY REGION**

**1. Existing international conservation frameworks**

Several global and international legally binding and free-standing cooperative frameworks provide opportunities for cooperation and conservation of waterbirds and their habitats in the Central Asian Flyway (CAF) region.

- The Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) and the Fifth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP5) (Geneva, April 1997) called on Range States through Resolution 5.4 to take an active role in developing a conservation initiative for migratory waterbirds in the Central Asian-Indian Flyway. CMS offers a framework and mechanism under which a legally binding Agreement, with an accompanying action plan, could be developed for the CAF.
- To the west, the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement (AEWA), developed under the auspices of CMS, extends into the Caucasus, North, and Southwest Asia, thereby including 16 out of the 30 prospective countries of the CAF. If the countries in the CAF region so wish, the AEWA is willing to consider the option of extending its coverage to include the whole of the Central Asian Flyway.
- The Asia-Pacific Migratory Waterbird Conservation Strategy: 2001-2005 (APMWCS), recommends developing and implementing an Action Plan for the CAF and establishing a site network for conservation of migratory waterbirds and internationally important wetlands in the Central Asian Flyway, along with the other flyways in the Asia-Pacific region.

- The Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971) provides a framework to manage and wisely use wetlands across the globe. The Ramsar Convention obliges Contracting Parties to designate suitable wetlands within their territory for inclusion in a List of Wetlands of International Importance on account of ecology, botany, zoology, limnology or hydrology. Article 2 paragraph 2 states that “in the first instance wetlands of international importance to waterfowl at any season should be included.” Article 3 requires Contracting Parties to formulate and implement planning so as to promote the conservation of the wetlands in the List, and as far as possible the wise use of wetlands in their territory. Contracting Parties are also required to encourage research and the exchange of data and publications regarding wetlands and their flora and fauna, as well as training of personnel in research, management and wardening.
- The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) provides a framework to establish international networks of protected areas that will benefit biodiversity, including migratory species in inland and coastal areas of the world. In CBD Decision VII/28 (Protected Areas), the CBD Conference of the Parties “Adopted a programme of work on protected areas...with the objective of the establishment and maintenance by 2010 for terrestrial and by 2012 for marine areas of comprehensive, effectively managed, and ecologically representative national and regional systems of protected areas that collectively, *inter alia* through a global network contribute to achieving the three objectives of the Convention and the 2010 target to significantly reduce the current rate of biodiversity loss.”
- The Programme for the Conservation of Arctic Fauna and Flora (CAFF) of the Arctic Council covers actions to promote conservation of Arctic breeding migratory species along their annual migration routes, which includes the Central Asian Flyway.

## **2. Existing and proposed conservation activities in the CAF region**

Efforts to date to promote the conservation of migratory waterbirds and their wetland habitats in the CAF region include a number of regional and nationally led initiatives:

### **Regional**

- A project entitled “*Towards a Strategy for Wetland and Waterbird Conservation in the Central Asian Flyway*” has been implemented by Wetlands International between April 2001 and December 2004. It was supported by the Netherlands Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality. This project served as a framework for promoting flyway wide awareness and conservation action. It has supported the organisation of the first meeting of governments, conventions, technical experts and NGOs of the Central Asian Flyway to discuss developing an international framework for cooperation and the development of an Action Plan, in Uzbekistan, in August 2001. This workshop was organised and funded by the Dutch government funded project mentioned above and strongly supported by CMS and the Dutch Embassy in Moscow, Russia. It was also supported and backed up by the concurrent organisation of an outreach workshop for Central Asian countries in the framework and with funding of the GEF/UNEP African Eurasian Flyway project to identify primary needs and opportunities for capacity building to manage wetlands and waterbirds.
- CMS Memorandum of Understanding concerning Conservation Measures for the Siberian Crane (*Grus leucogeranus*) (a critically endangered species) provides a legally non-binding framework to conserve this threatened species. The Fifth Meeting of Signatories to the MoU agreed to develop a site network for Siberian Cranes (and other waterbirds) as one means to achieve this to be implemented under the framework of a UNEP/GEF project (see next point).

- The UNEP/GEF Siberian Crane Wetlands Project (Development of a Wetland Site and Flyway Network for the Conservation of the Siberian Crane and Other Migratory Waterbirds in Asia) is in the process of establishing a network of sites along the western flyway of the Siberian Crane from Russia to Iran including the staging sites in Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan and along the central flyway from Russia to India including staging sites in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Afghanistan and Pakistan to promote the conservation and recovery of this species and other migratory waterbirds.
- The UNEP/GEF African Eurasian Flyway project, to be initiated in 2005, has identified Central Asia as one of the focal areas to develop capacity for enhanced conservation of migratory waterbirds and the network of sites they depend upon.
- The Asian Wetland Inventory (AWI) supports efforts of Ramsar Parties and others to determine the status of Asian wetlands, including those in Central and South Asia, by developing a database format and training and capacity building to ensure monitoring, sustainable use and management of wetlands. Wetlands International initiated the AWI in 1999, with support from the Ministry of the Environment of Japan, AEON Foundation and Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (DGIS).
- The Russian-Indian Working Group on Environmental Protection and Natural Resources, promotes cooperative action for the research and conservation of migratory birds between Russia and India under a bilateral agreement. The framework has focussed on the Siberian Crane and more widely on other species.
- Research and monitoring activities in several countries to identify the migratory routes, distribution and conservation priorities of waterbirds through ringing (banding) and more recently through satellite tracking of waterbirds, coordinated annual counts in Central Asia (through the International Waterbird Census - IWC) and in southern Asia (through the Asian Waterbird Census – AWC, that covers the Asia-Pacific Region), the Important Bird Areas (IBA) programme, etc. provide the basis for more concerted actions.
- The publication *Waterbird Population Estimates – Third Edition* produced by Wetlands International in 2002 includes the latest information on the status and trends of populations of waterbirds in the Central Asian Flyway.
- The BirdLife International publications *The Directory of Important Bird Areas of Asia* in 2004 includes a list of important sites for migratory waterbirds in the South Asian countries and the *Important Bird Areas in the Middle East* in 1994 includes a list of important sites for migratory waterbirds in the West Asian countries.
- Regional single species action plans have been produced for a number of threatened species, including Siberian Crane (by CMS), White-headed Duck *Oxyura leucocephala* (underway by AEWa), Sociable Lapwing *Vanellus gregarious* (by AEWa), Black-winged Pratincole *Glareola nordmanni* (by AEWa), Great Snipe *Gallinago media* (by AEWa), etc. that provide a basis for implementation of a range of specific conservation activities.
- The countries in the east and northeast parts of the flyway considerably overlap with countries covered by the East Asian-Australasian Flyway, in which the APMWCS is carrying out successful research and conservation work through the establishment of three international site networks for Anatidae, cranes and shorebirds. The western boundaries of these existing site networks overlap with the eastern boundaries of the CAF region and offer an opportunity for cooperative action and skill sharing.
- UNEP/GEF/CAFF Integrated Ecosystem Approach to Conserve Biodiversity and Minimize Habitat Fragmentation in the Russian Arctic (ECORA).
- UNEP/GEF Development of the Econet for Long-term Conservation of Biodiversity in the Central Asia Ecoregions (Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan).

- UNDP/GEF Towards a Convention and Action Programme for the Protection of the Caspian Sea Environment (Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Russian Federation, Turkmenistan).

### *National*

- Implementation of national actions by Parties to CMS, AEWA, the Ramsar Convention and the Convention on Biological Diversity to conserve migratory waterbirds and wetlands; particularly through legislation on protecting migratory species and controlling legal and illegal harvesting of the birds, inventory and management of important wetlands, establishment of national networks of protected areas, etc.
- A number of national wetland projects and site based projects in Bangladesh, China, India, Iran, Kazakhstan, Nepal, Pakistan, Russia, Uzbekistan and elsewhere that deal with sites of importance for waterbirds are underway or are being developed with funding from national sources with additional support from UNDP, UNEP, World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, JICA and others.
- A number of national Important Bird Area directories are completed (India and Nepal) and are underway in other countries by BirdLife International and its national partners.

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