

RECOMMENDATIONS

Workshop on the Implementation and Coordination of the Saiga Antelope (*Saiga spp.*) Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and other CMS Instruments for Migratory Ungulates in Kazakhstan

Astana, Kazakhstan,
17-18 February 2011

Representatives of the Forestry and Hunting Committee of the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Kazakhstan, together with representatives of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), and several scientific institutions and non-governmental organizations, as well as a panel of experts met in Astana, Kazakhstan, from 17-18 February 2011, with the aim to:

1. Review the implementation of the CMS Saiga MOU in Kazakhstan;
2. Discuss the Saiga MOU technical coordination and how it could contribute to Saiga MoU implementation in Kazakhstan and the other range states;
3. Identify priority projects for Kazakhstan to implement the Medium-Term International Work Programme (MTIWP) 2011-2015;
4. Assess the implementation of the Bukhara deer (*Cervus elaphus bactrianus*¹) MOU in Kazakhstan and the other range states; discuss next steps building up to the First Meeting of Signatories to the Bukhara deer MOU in Norway in November 2011;
5. Introduce the CMS Eurasian Aridland Mammal Concerted Action (Recommendation 9.1).

The workshop was hosted by the Forestry and Hunting Committee and jointly organized by CMS and the Association for the Conservation of Biodiversity in Kazakhstan (ACBK). Financial support was provided by the German Federal Ministry of the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety.

The meeting, which was chaired by Mr. Khairbek Mussabaev (Forestry and Hunting Committee), confirmed

1. The need to enhance the efficiency of coordination and information exchange between the Saiga MOU Signatories in order to implement the MTIWP 2011-2015;
2. The need to put in place disease prevention and training measures to minimize the risk of a further mass die-off of Saiga antelopes taking place;
3. The necessity of urgent intervention in order to halt the ongoing decline of the Ustiurt saiga population;
4. A dramatic increase in poaching aimed exclusively at Saiga horns, which is only born by the males of the species and is thus likely to lead to a severe decline in males;
5. The insufficient protection of all saiga populations due to the vast species range;
6. The insufficient awareness of the saiga conservation challenges among communities located nearby the saiga distribution areas of all three populations;
7. The need to study Saiga ecology and migratory routes in order to enhance the

¹ It is noteworthy that, following the adoption of Wilson & Reeder (2005) as a taxonomic reference at the 9th CMS Conference of the Parties, the Bukhara deer was listed as *Cervus elaphus yarkandensis* on CMS Appendix I.

conservation of the species.

With reference to the above mentioned objectives, the participants of the meeting:

1. Welcomed and supported the Saiga MOU coordination mechanism proposed by ACBK and the Saiga Conservation Alliance (SCA) and agreed to collaborate closely to ensure effective MOU coordination, for example by providing expert advice and sharing information.
2. Identified the following priority measures for the conservation of Saiga antelopes in Kazakhstan within the framework of the MTIWP 2011-2015:
 - a) Development of a project on epidemiological and other research on saiga diseases to inform mitigation, control and action in the event of a disease outbreak or mass mortality episode (MTIWP: section 8.8); taking into account the concepts presented by Kazakhstan's Institute of Zoology, Institute of Human and Animal Physiology, Biosecurity Research Institute, and KazAgroInnovation JSC at the meeting;
 - b) Making joint fundraising for this epidemiological project a priority;
 - c) Extending the satellite telemetry programme, which is currently being successfully applied in Betpak-dala and initiated in Ustiurt, to the Ural population;
 - d) Creating a protection coordination center under Okhotzooptom State Enterprise as a matter of urgency in Kazakhstan;
 - e) Enhancing the relevant capacity of those agencies involved in the prevention of illegal trade and export of horns and horn products, such as customs;
 - f) Creating economic incentives for local people to engage in saiga protection (MTIWP: 4.1, 4.3);
 - g) Conducting further research into the ecology and behaviour of Saiga antelopes in order to improve conservation effectiveness in the long-term;
 - h) Identification of critical sites for the Saiga antelope by seasons (e.g. calving, rutting, wintering sites, migration routes; see MTIWP sections 6.0);
 - i) Encouraging game husbandry managers within the saiga range to engage in order to improve saiga protection;
 - j) Enhancing the efficiency of the saiga census in all range by using consistent and coherent census techniques (MTIWP: 8.3, 8.5);
 - k) Strengthening and expanding the existing protected area network for the conservation of Saiga antelopes.

The participants further

3. Emphasized the need to discuss the conservation status of the Bukhara deer in all range states and suggest convening a separate technical meeting for this purpose in order to address issues such as the protection and restoration of critical habitat (riparian forests) and the release of captive bred animals.
4. Urged the member states of the Bukhara deer MOU, with assistance from the UNEP/CMS Secretariat, to submit to the Secretariat official national reports on the status of the Bukhara deer MOU implementation in their countries.
5. Invited the UNEP/CMS Secretariat to look into the possibility of involving Afghanistan

into the conservation of Bukhara deer under the MOU, as the country is a range state of Bukhara deer.

6. Welcomed the CMS Eurasian Aridland Mammal Initiative based on Recommendation 9.1 and invited the relevant stakeholders to develop this policy further in close collaboration with the CMS Scientific Council and UNEP/CMS Secretariat. Additional consultations may be required.

7. Considered the listing of additional migratory species on the Appendices of the Convention leading up to the 10th CMS Conference of the Parties and noting the deadline of 23 June 2011 for the submission of species proposals to the UNEP/CMS Secretariat. Guidance regarding the procedure is available from the Secretariat.

8. Recommended (i) to include the above-mentioned priorities in the National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) and other sectoral development programmes in Kazakhstan, and (ii) to improve the coordination between the government agencies involved in the saiga conservation and protection (e.g. customs, police, border patrol), and (iii) to enhance the interaction and negotiation process with the Chinese Traditional Medicine Association and companies, reiterating the recommendations of the Urumqi saiga meeting in 2010.