

**Global biodiversity mechanisms:  
a thematic review of recent developments and future evidence needs**

**Strand Palace Hotel, London 20<sup>th</sup> May 2009**

MEA Briefing

Convention on Migratory Species (CMS)

May 2009

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### Briefing note: Convention on Migratory Species

Migratory species are vulnerable to a range of threats, not just where they live in the breeding and non-breeding seasons, but also in the countries along their migration routes. The Convention on Migratory Species (CMS; also known as the Bonn Convention) is a species based, action focused Convention, which creates a framework to develop other treaties for specific species or groups of species.

CMS was adopted in 1979 and entered into force on 1 Nov 1983. Species may be listed on Appendix I as being in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant part of their range, or on Appendix II as having an unfavourable conservation status or would benefit significantly from international co-operation. To-date, seven Agreements and 14 Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) have been adopted. These Agreements and MoUs are open to all range states, whether or not they are parties to the Convention. The most recent (9<sup>th</sup>) Conference of the Parties was held in Rome from 1-4 December 2008<sup>1</sup>.

The UK is a party to the following CMS instruments:

- Agreement on the Conservation of Populations of European Bats (Eurobats)
- Agreement on the Conservation of Small Cetaceans of the Baltic and North Seas (ASCOBANS)
- Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (AEWA)
- The Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans in the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and contiguous Atlantic area (ACCOBAMS)
- Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP)
- Memorandum of Understanding Concerning Conservation Measures for Marine Turtles of the Atlantic Coast of Africa (Marine Turtle - Africa MoU)
- Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation and Management of Marine Turtles and their Habitats of the Indian Ocean and South-East Asia (Marine Turtle – IOSEA MoU)
- Memorandum of Understanding Concerning Conservation Measures for the Aquatic Warbler (*Acrocephalus paludicola*) (Aquatic Warbler MoU)
- Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of Migratory Birds of Prey in Africa and Eurasia (Raptor Agreement)

The Convention has grown significantly in the past decade. With 110 Parties, CoP9, at the FAO headquarters in Rome, Italy, was therefore a cross-roads. CoP recognised this by passing resolutions which looked to consolidate and review direction, in parallel with continuing action.

The conference adopted 17 resolutions and 5 recommendations<sup>2</sup> including those on:

- developing an inter-sessional process to determine the future shape of the convention;

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<sup>1</sup> A draft report of the CoP is available from the CMS website at: [http://www.cms.int/bodies/COP/cop9/documents/Final\\_Report\\_draft18March09.pdf](http://www.cms.int/bodies/COP/cop9/documents/Final_Report_draft18March09.pdf). Analysis by Earth News Bulletins is at <http://www.iisd.ca/cms/cop9/>.

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.cms.int/bodies/COP/cop9/COP9\\_Pre\\_final\\_res\\_rec\\_en.htm](http://www.cms.int/bodies/COP/cop9/COP9_Pre_final_res_rec_en.htm)

- reducing the impact of climate change on migratory species;
- convening a taskforce on wildlife diseases;
- recognition of emerging evidence of the impact of ocean noise; and
- continuing to work to mitigate the impacts of bycatch.

The UK contributed to the development of many of these and will be represented on the inter-sessional Working Group on the Future of the Convention.

Most of the new species listings were uncontroversial, but proposals to list the saker falcon, *Falco cherrug*, on Appendix I, and several shark species on Appendix II, generated considerable debate, both in formal session, and in the corridors. The proposal for listing the saker was eventually withdrawn, but only after adoption of a resolution which will bring it back for listing if there is not a significant improvement in its status by the next CoP. The shark proposals eventually went through, after agreement to restrict listing to the Northern hemisphere populations of the spiny dogfish *Squalus acanthias*, as South American Parties did not consider that there was scientific evidence of declines for Southern hemisphere populations.