

**NINTH MEETING OF THE TECHNICAL ADVISORY GROUP TO THE RAPTORS
MOU**

(Monfragüe National Park, 18-20 February 2025)

UNEP/CMS/RAPTORS/TAG9/Doc.2

**PROPOSED RESOLUTION FOR CMS COP15 ON THE INTERNATIONALLY
IMPORTANT RAPTORS SITES**

(Prepared by the Coordinating Unit of the Raptors MOU)

Introduction

1. The Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of Migratory Birds of Prey includes, as Table 3 of Annex 3, the List of Internationally Important Sites for Migratory Birds of Prey in Africa and Eurasia. The latest update, approved at MOS3, has increased the number of sites to over 7,000.
2. This is the largest network of sites dedicated to the conservation of migratory birds of prey, representing a significant contribution to raptor conservation and biodiversity in general.
3. CMS Resolution 12.13 on Important Marine Mammal Areas (IMMAs) and CMS Resolution 14.7 on Important Shark and Ray Areas (ISRAs), along with related decisions, provide global recognition of networks of sites identified within CMS Agreements and MOUs. These resolutions highlight the global relevance of these networks and their contribution to international commitments, clarifying how their conservation and protection support Parties in meeting Targets 1 and 3 of the Global Biodiversity Framework.
4. The related decisions call for all Parties to contribute to the identification and conservation of additional sites. This expands the commitment from the original Parties and Signatories of the agreements (ASCOBAMS and Sharks MOU) to all Parties to CMS.
5. The proposed Resolution and related decisions, provided as Annex I to this document, would grant the same status to the List of Internationally Important Sites for Migratory Birds of Prey in Africa and Eurasia.

Action required

6. TAG Members are requested to review the Annex to this document and provide comments ahead of its submission to the CMS Scientific Council.



**CONVENTION ON
MIGRATORY
SPECIES**

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[Date]

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ANNEX 1

INTERNATIONALLY IMPORTANT RAPTOR SITES (IIRSs)

(Prepared by the Secretariat)

Summary:

To further the implementation of core mandates of the conservation for Birds of prey listed in CMS Appendices, in particular CMS Art III (4), this document provides information about the use of Internationally Important Sites for migratory birds of prey in Africa and Eurasia (IIRS) and proposes a Draft Resolution and Draft Decisions.

INTERNATIONALLY IMPORTANT RAPTOR SITES (IIRSs)

Background

1. The first Conservation Status Assessment Report for migratory birds of prey in Africa and Eurasia¹ highlighted that the Red List Index of all migratory raptors in Africa and Eurasia, when compared to the same index for all birds, is declining at an alarming rate. The International Union for Conservation of Nature Red List of Threatened Species (IUCN Red List) estimates that approximately 34% of these species are at risk of extinction being Critically Endangered, Endangered, Vulnerable or Near Threatened and more that 50% of all migratory raptors in the region are declining. Population declines are driven by habitat degradation habitat loss due to agriculture and logging, hunting and trapping (which includes intentional and unintentional poisoning, illegal shooting, taking for belief-based use) and electrocution / collision with powerlines and wind turbines.
2. The conservation of important habitats that support populations of CMS listed species is of significant importance to achieve the central goal of the Convention to achieve and maintain a sustainable conservation status for migratory species of wild animals.
3. 21 species of migratory birds of prey occurring in Africa Eurasia are listed in Appendix I and 82 are listed in Appendix II under Accipitridae, Pandionidae and Falconidae.
4. In Article II(1) of CMS

“The Parties acknowledge the importance of migratory species being conserved and of Range States agreeing to take action to this end whenever possible and appropriate, paying special attention to migratory species the conservation status of which is unfavourable, and taking individually or in co-operation appropriate and necessary steps to conserve such species and their habitat.”

5. Article III(4) of CMS provides that

“Parties that are Range States of a migratory species listed in Appendix I shall endeavour:

*a) to conserve and, where feasible and appropriate, restore those habitats of the species which are of importance in removing the species from danger of extinction;
....”*

6. The Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of migratory birds of prey in Africa and Eurasia (Raptors MOU) includes strong mandate calling for the identification of identify important areas, significant routes, breeding and congregatory sites for birds of prey and promote their protection and/or appropriate management, rehabilitation and/or restoration. A provisional list of sites of importance for raptor conservation was provided included Annex 3 as Table 3 (List of Sites) since the MOU entered in force in 2008.
7. In 2022, Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) adopted the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework at their 15th Conference of the Parties. Through Target 3 Parties agreed to

“ensure and enable that by 2030 at least 30 per cent of terrestrial, inland water, and

¹ <https://www.cms.int/raptors/en/document/conservation-status-assessment-report>

of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services, are effectively conserved and managed through ecologically representative, well-connected and equitably governed systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, recognizing indigenous and traditional territories, where applicable, and integrated into wider landscapes, seascapes and the ocean, while ensuring that any sustainable use, where appropriate in such areas, is fully consistent with conservation outcomes, recognizing and respecting the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities including over their traditional territories.”

8. Area-based conservation can be an important management tool to safeguard biodiversity. Several approaches have been developed and implemented for identifying networks of globally important areas based on the delineation of sites or landscapes of importance for various elements of biodiversity (e.g., birds, marine mammals, sharks and rays).

Criteria and process for the identification of IIRS

9. The criteria used for the identification of the IIRSs are based on those used for the identification of the internationally Important Birds Areas (IBAs) and therefore based on globally standardized scientific criteria. Detailed information about these criteria and how those should be applied are provided at: <https://datazone.birdlife.org/site/ibacriteria>. Sites recognised as Special Protection Areas (SPA) in Europe, all Special Protection Areas (SPAs) for which one or more raptors listed in Annex 1 of the Raptors MOU are a trigger species of the SPA identification have been included in the Site List as well.
10. The IBA criteria provide a framework to assist in an independent, expert-based process to inform the identification and selection of areas that are critical for migratory raptors, and to identify discrete, that have the potential to be delineated and managed for conservation. The IBA Criteria can be applied to all environments where raptors occur and consider the diversity of species, their complex behaviours and ecology, and biological needs.
11. Sites to be included in the List of Sites of the Raptors MOU can be proposed by Signatories to the Raptors MOU using the appropriate form (<https://www.cms.int/raptors/en/document/site-proposal-and-amendment-form>) or proposed by the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) of the Raptors MOU.
12. The TAG is tasked with verifying that proposed site, in order to be proposed for listing in Table 3 of Annex 3, meets the identification criteria. Any amendment to the list is approved by the Meeting of Signatories.

Progress in implementation

13. The Raptors MOU was concluded in 2008 including as Table 3 to the Annex 3 (Action Plan) which listed “Important Bird Areas that are currently known to be important congregatory bird of prey sites in Africa and Eurasia”. The annex clarified that the “indicative list should be treated as a minimum list of internationally important areas”.
14. The TAG, established at the First Meeting of Signatories to the Raptors MOU (Abu Dhabi, 2012) has the mandate to consult with the Signatories and make recommendations as to the updating of List of Sites listing internationally important sites for raptors.
15. A draft list of sites was circulated ahead of the Second Meeting of Signatories to the

Raptors MOU (MOS2, Trondheim, 2018) and Signatories submitted comments on the lists and proposed new sites. MOS2 took note of the list and Signatories were invited to take the draft list into consideration in their National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs).

16. Subsequently the TAG improved the list also taking into consideration the proposed changes to the Raptors MOU Annex 1 (List of Species). The revised list was circulated ahead of the meeting of Signatories. A few comments were received from Signatories and a final revised list was submitted to the Signatories for approval at MOS3 (Dubai, 2023). The list with few amendments was approved by MOS3.

Gap identification

17. The 2016-2020 Workplan called the TAG to “[a]dvise on gaps in current information on key breeding areas, stop-overs, refuelling, bottleneck, other congregational and non-breeding sites along raptor flyways, and: a) make recommendations on how these might be filled; and, b) advise on appropriate approaches for the conservation and management of critical areas”.
18. In order to deliver advice and recommendations on gaps in the network of internationally important sites (Table 3 of Annex 3 to the MOU) for Annex 1 species, as well as on ways to strengthen the comprehensiveness of that network, the TAG carried out a pilot site network analysis on a subset of 12 species selected to ensure good representation of a variety of ecological and migratory strategies.
19. The Pilot study recognized that for several species such as the Egyptian Vulture (*Neophron percnopterus*) and Steppe Eagle (*Aquila nipalensis*) the network presents gaps and that several species have undergone significant range contractions, which may mean these species are no longer occurring at a number of the sites in the network, although this would need to be confirmed through monitoring. It is important to still recognise these sites as they represent candidate areas for conservation efforts focussed on connecting habitats and restoring former ranges.

Endorsement by Raptors MOU Signatories and mandated to continue the work

20. Signatories at MOS3 agreed on a revised and significantly expanded list of over 7,000 sites which are listed in Table 3 of Annex 3 to the Raptors MOU.
21. Signatories at MOS3 agreed that the site network analysis provided great value towards strengthening the comprehensiveness of the network of IIRs and agreed that such analysis should be expanded to at least all other Annex 1 species.

Discussion and analysis

22. The identifications of IIRs contributes significantly to the implementation of several mandates under CMS, including Articles II(1) and III(4) of the Convention on Migratory Species and the CMS Raptors MOU. It aims to increase recognition of the habitat needs of migratory birds of prey, guide the development of area-based conservation initiatives, and contribute to mortality reduction and population recovery. By raising awareness of the importance of considering raptors in spatial planning, it will provide guidance for the design and implementation of conservation measures that will reduce mortality and restore populations.
23. The list of identified IIRs, will be instrumental to support Parties with identifying and

prioritizing areas for conservation that are most critical for the survival of raptors listed in CMS Appendices. This will be particularly important in light of the “30 by 30” target, an important goal of the Global Biodiversity Framework aiming to effectively conserve and manage at least 30 percent of terrestrial areas. The Secretariat, therefore, suggests supporting the site network analysis and the identification of more IIRSs as feasible and appropriate through the Convention.

Recommended actions

24. The Conference of the Parties is recommended to:
 - a) adopt the draft Resolution contained in Annex 1 of this document;
 - b) adopt the draft Decisions contained in Annex 2 of this document;

DRAFT RESOLUTION

INTERNATIONALLY IMPORTANT RAPTOR SITES (IIRSs)

Alarmed that migratory birds of prey in Africa Eurasia are facing a biodiversity crisis with an estimated 34% of species threatened with extinction and 50% are declining,

Conscious that area-based conservation is essential to safeguard declining biodiversity, and concerned that migratory birds of prey are overlooked by many national and international efforts to develop and apply area-based conservation and management measures such as the creation of protected areas and with management plans, or as areas subject to other effective area-based conservation/ restoration measures,

Welcoming targets 1 and 3 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework,

Recalling the Memorandum of Understanding on the conservation of migratory birds of prey in Africa and Eurasia (Raptors MOU) which calls in Art. 8(d) to “identify important areas, significant routes, breeding and congregatory sites for birds of prey and promote their protection and/or appropriate management, rehabilitation and/or restoration”,

Recognizing that Internationally Important Raptors Sites (IIRSs) are an advisory, expert-based classification, consisting of discrete portions of habitat, important to birds of prey, that have the potential to be delineated and managed for conservation,

Recalling CMS Resolution 12.13 *Important Marine Mammal Areas (IMMAs)* and CMS Resolution 14.7 *Important Shark and Ray Areas (ISRAs)* which amongst other things acknowledges the criteria and identification processes for CMS-listed marine mammals and sharks, rays, and chimaeras, and request Parties and invites Range States, Intergovernmental Organizations, and partners to identify specific areas where the identification of IMMAs and ISRAs could be particularly beneficial,

Welcoming the development of robust selection and review criteria for the identification of IIRSs by the TAG of the Raptors MOU and progress made in identifying IIRSs that will contribute to the Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs),

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

1. *Requests* Parties and invites all Range States, intergovernmental organizations and partners to support with the identification IIRSs could be particularly beneficial, for example through stimulating protected area network design and connectivity, or addressing threats to migratory birds of prey more comprehensively;
2. *Acknowledges* the IIRSs criteria and identification process **available on Raptors MOU website** for CMS listed bird of prey;
3. *Requests Parties and invites all Range States, relevant international and regional organizations, and partners to support with the identification and delineation of IIRAs in Africa and Eurasia*
4. *Recommends that such support to identify IIRAs engages the authorities of Parties and*

relevant regional and international organisations in the spirit of transparency at an early stage;

5. *Invites* Parties, Range States, intergovernmental organizations and partners to request the support of the Technical Advisory Group of the Raptors MOU to advance in the identification and assessment of IIRSs;
6. *Also invites* the Convention on Biological Diversity, other relevant MEAs and international financial Institutions to consider IIRSs as useful contributions for the determination Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) and other areas; and
7. *Encourages* Parties to make use of the identified Internationally Important Raptors Sites (IIRSs) available as Table 3 of Annex 3² of the Memorandum of Understanding on the conservation of migratory birds of prey in Africa and Eurasia when designating protected areas, or areas subject to other effective area-based conservation/ restoration measures or generally for spatial planning processes, to support the conservation of CMS-listed birds of prey.

2

www.cms.int/raptors/sites/default/files/basic_page_documents/Annex%203%20Table%20List%20of%20Sites_EN.pdf

ANNEX 2

DRAFT DECISIONS

INTERANTIONALLY IMPORTANT RAPTOR SITES (IIRSs)***Directed to Parties***

14.AA Parties are requested to:

- a) support the identification of new IIRSs.
- b) take into account identified IIRSs for spatial planning and conservation action with a view to implementing Targets 1 and 3 of the Global Biodiversity Framework, including through National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs); and
- c) report to the Conference of Parties at its 16th meeting on the progress in implementing the decision to mitigate threats to IIRSs through their National Reports.

Directed to Parties, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations

14.BB Parties, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations are encouraged to

- a) Actively contribute to the identification of proposed IIRSs in Africa Eurasia and submit the proposal to the Technical Advisory Group of the Raptors MOU (TAG);
- b) to actively engage with and provide support to the TAG for the process of identifying Internationally Important Raptors Sites.

Directed to the Scientific Council

14.CC The Scientific Council is requested to support the Technical Advisory Group of the Raptors MOU, with the identification of IIRSs for CMS-listed raptor species in Africa Eurasia, through sharing information and data.

Directed to the Secretariat

14.DD The Secretariat shall:

- a) continue to promote the value of IIRSs for the conservation of CMS-listed birds of prey;
- b) inform the Scientific Council and the Parties of newly identified IIRSs; and
- c) promote consultation and coordination between TAG, Parties, Range States, relevant international and regional organizations with a view to mutually support the objective of science-based conservation and sustainability based on a science-based and an ecosystem-based approach;

- d) report to the Conference of Parties at its 16th meeting on the implementation of this Decision.