

## FOURTEENTH MEETING OF THE SAKER FALCON TASK FORCE (STF14)

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### A PROPOSED CMS DECISION-MAKING STRUCTURE FOR THE CONSERVATION AND ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT OF THE SAKER FALCON

#### 1. Background

CMS Resolution 11.18 (Rev.COP14) urges Parties, Range States, and stakeholders to actively support the work of the Saker Falcon Task Force (STF). The Resolution instructs the STF to actively promote the implementation of the Saker Global Action Plan (SakerGAP) and coordinate its review. It instructs the STF also to further develop, refine, and implement, where legally possible, and following best practice, an adaptive management and monitoring framework to improve the present conservation status of the Saker Falcon *Falco cherrug* and to promote monitoring and research whilst minimizing the impacts of illegal taking and use, energy infrastructure and other key threats on birds. See Annex 1 for details of a legal opinion providing context for the work of the STF. The Saker Falcon Task Force is now nearing the completion of the development of an innovative Adaptive Management Framework concept. The current membership of the STF is listed in Annex 2 for information.

The following outlines the governance structure and modus operandi required to implement a system of adaptive management for the Saker Falcon. The system proposes a decision-making framework at the global level in order to provide an overview and direction for the conservation and management actions required. This approach is designed to be cost-effective, inclusive and to use the best available science to inform decisions.

Note that at the national level, decisions are made by national governments' Management and Scientific Authorities, or if different, national wildlife conservation authorities. They decide on implementation and translate such international frameworks into national laws, policies, and regulations and thus would be responsible for the national implementation of the Saker Falcon AMF.

#### 2. Existing key structures – at the international level.

- **The CMS Conference of the Parties (CMS COP)** provides the overall decision-making forum for the work on the Saker Falcon through adopting Resolutions and decisions to provide strategic direction for the work of the Task Force. The decision on listing the Saker Falcon on Appendix I or II and the application of sustainable use of the species is made by the CMS Conference of Parties (CMS CoP). The CMS CoP also approves the overall guidelines for sustainable use, and international population management strategies.
- **The Saker Falcon Task Force (STF)** derives authority directly from the CMS CoP through Resolution 11.18 (Rev.COP14). The STF takes forward the implementation of the Resolution, reporting on progress to forthcoming CMS CoP15, scheduled for early 2026. It reports also to Meetings of the Signatories to the Raptor MoU and to the CMS Scientific

Council. These latter two bodies provide valuable sounding boards on some of the key issues involved.

- **The Raptor MoU, Technical Advisory Group and the Coordinating Unit.** Meetings of the Signatories to the Raptor MoU and the related Technical Advisory Group (TAG) provide important guidance for the work of the STF. The Coordinating Unit facilitates the work of the STF, ensuring the delivery and cost- effectiveness of the work.

### 3. Proposed governance modus operandi

It is proposed that the STF, acting under renewed mandate to be considered at CMS CoP 15 scheduled for early 2026, continues to implement Resolution 11.18 (Rev.COP14) and uses the following approach to decide on periodic quotas of Saker Falcons that can be taken from the wild, where legally possible, and on the conservation measures that must be in place to ensure that any quota is sustainable and does not cause any detriment to existing wild populations across the full range of the species. The STF will continue to report to subsequent CMS CoPs on the effectiveness of this approach.

The membership of the STF shall be:

- Chair and Vice Chair – as elected at the 1st Meeting.
- STF Secretariat – to be provided by CU of the Raptors MOU
- 2 CMS Scientific Councillors – including the Chair of the Scientific Council
- 3 – 4 representatives from Central and East Asia (core breeding areas)
- 2 representatives from Europe and Eastern Europe (breeding areas)
- 2-3 representatives from the Middle East (migration/wintering areas and falconry)
- 1-2 representatives from North and East Africa (wintering areas)
- 2-3 representatives from NGO partners
- 1 independent Specialist Technical Advisor (ornithologist)
- 1 representative from CMS Secretariat
- 1 representative from CITES Secretariat

- The STF will meet every year to review progress in the implementation of the Saker Falcon Global Action Plan and its Annual work plan.
- The STF will meet at least every three years to propose any quota for the coming triennium (three-year period following each CMS CoP) and will indicate also at each of these meetings an indicative level of quota for the subsequent two triennia (giving a projection of nine years in total) to provide a medium-term indication based on known science at that time. This forward- look will be revised each time the STF meets to consider quotas.
- Ideally decisions on the level of any quota at the international level should be reached by consensus, however, if voting is required then each member of the STF would have one vote and the Chair would have an additional casting vote in the event of a tie. All opinions expressed in relation to the level of any quota should be reported to the subsequent CMS CoP for information.
- Meetings of the STF should take place between CMS COPs so that the proposed quota levels can be considered and endorsed at each subsequent COP. Meetings of the STF should be held in person, if resources allow, otherwise they should be held online. The result of the discussions by the STF should be routed via the CMS Scientific Council for

their views and then submitted to the CMS COP for consideration. The Raptor MOU should be informed of the outcome of the deliberations of the STF.

- The STF should establish an independent scientific process to undertake a prioritized assessment of the numbers and trend of saker falcon populations in each region of the world so that the full life cycle (breeding, migration and wintering) of the species is periodically reviewed. Such an independent assessment should be used to inform the decision on any quota and any significant data or information gaps should be assessed by the STF when making any decision.
- Revision of the Terms of Reference for the STF is now required. This should in particular, include the new role in taking forward the operation of the adaptive management approach outlined here, along with the need to implement conservation action and to limit illegal activities. A proposed revised Terms of Reference for the STF is at Annex 3.

**4. Decision 14.160 Saker Falcon (*Falco cherrug*) Global Action Plan**

The decision calls the Secretariat, subject to the availability of external resources: to organize regional workshops of the Saker Falcon Task Force within the triennium 2024-2026 in the breeding range, to promote the implementation of the Saker Falcon Global Action Plan (SakerGAP) and to review and update the SakerGAP as the document timeline has passed.

Revising SakerGAP will require the organization of regional workshops and consultancy services for a total of 90.000 USD.

**Annex 1.**

Legal context for the work of the Saker Falcon Task Force.

**Annex 2.**

Present membership and role of the Saker Falcon Task Force.

The STF has prepared detailed Saker Falcon AMF guidelines. The STF currently includes the representatives of Multilateral Environmental Agreements, CMS Parties and Range States, conservation, falconry and research organizations and independent technical and scientific experts.

**Annex 3.**

Proposed revised Terms of Reference for the STF.