



Global Action Plan

for the Conservation of the Steppe Eagle (*Aquila nipalensis*) 2026-2035

Raptors MOU Technical Publication No. 11 Summary

The vision of the Global Action Plan is to halt and reverse the decline of Steppe Eagles by delivering innovative actions in science-based conservation and community engagement across its whole range.

The Steppe Eagle is a long-distance migratory raptor found in open steppe grassland and semi-desert ecosystems across the African-Eurasian region. Once regarded as the most abundant large eagle globally, the species has undergone rapid and widespread declines and has been listed as Endangered on the IUCN Red List since 2015. The species is included in Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) Appendices I and II and is classified as Category 1 under the Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of Migratory Birds of Prey in Africa and Eurasia (Raptors MOU), reflecting its unfavourable conservation status and the need for concerted international cooperation. This Action Plan aims to secure the long-term conservation of the Steppe Eagle while contributing to wider biodiversity and sustainability goals.

Distribution and migration

The breeding range of Steppe Eagles extends from Eastern Europe through Central Asia to East Asia, with Kazakhstan supporting the majority of the global breeding population. It is now estimated the breeding population is fewer than 30,000 pairs worldwide. Outside the breeding season, Steppe Eagles migrate along the Central Asian and African Eurasian Flyways through key bottlenecks to non-breeding areas in the Arabian Peninsula, Sub-Saharan Africa, as well as South and Southeast Asia.



Life cycle and ecology

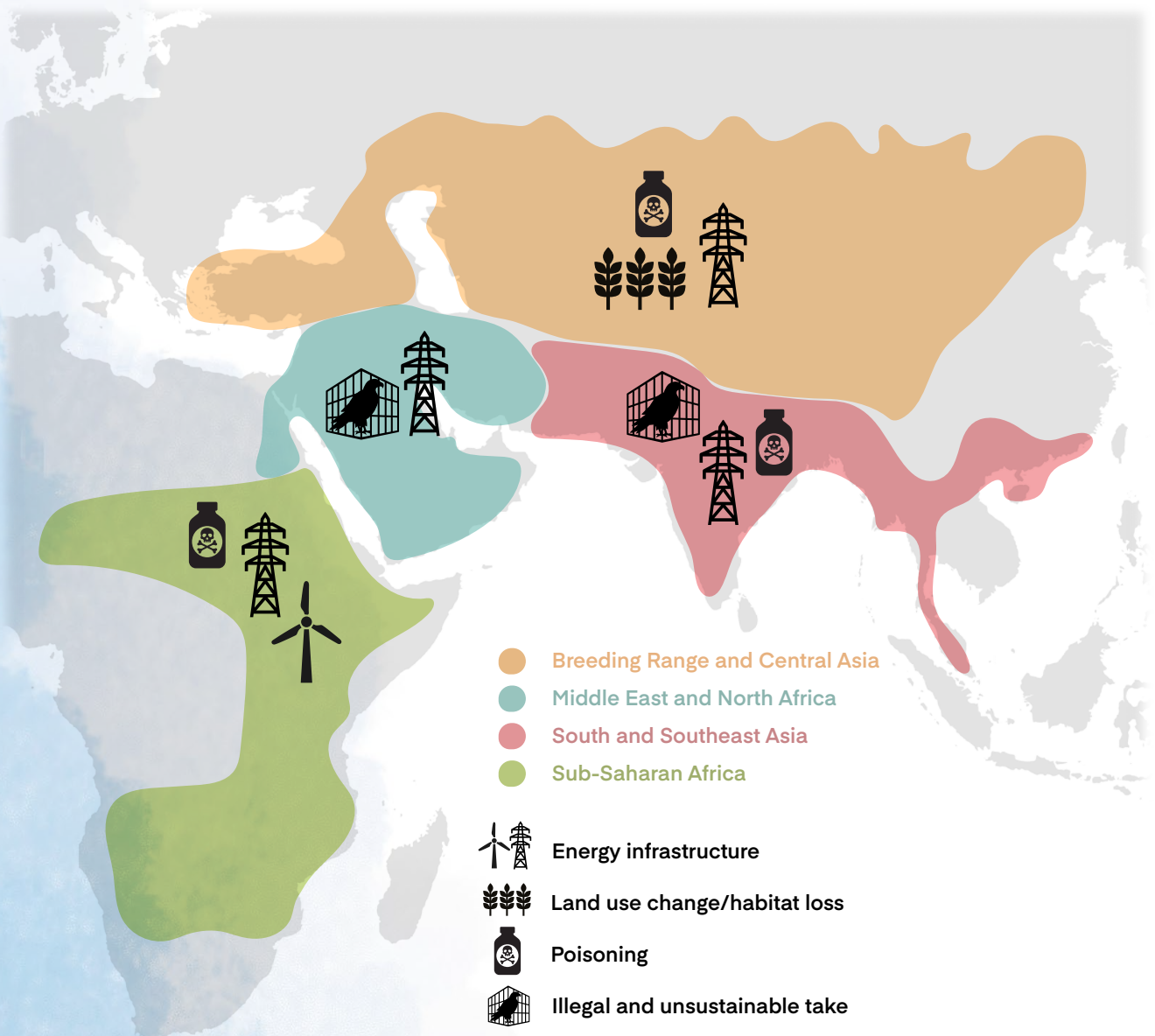
Steppe Eagles are hunters and scavengers, showing variation in their diet throughout their annual cycle and life stages and across different regions. Breeding productivity is closely linked to prey availability, particularly of small mammals. During migration and the non-breeding period, the species relies increasingly on scavenging and frequently congregates at carcass disposal sites, landfills, and other predictable food sources.

Threats

Key threats facing the Steppe Eagle are present in all regions, but the level of impact varies geographically. These threats are:

- **Energy Infrastructure:** Electrocutation and collision with unsafe powerlines and windfarms are major causes of mortality and considered a primary driver of the decline.
- **Illegal Killing, Take & Trade (IKB):** Hunting, trapping, and trade (including online markets) persist across the range, particularly in the Middle East, North Africa and Southeast Asia.
- **Poisoning & Contaminants:** Exposure to pesticides and other toxic contaminants such as Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs (NSAIDs), heavy metals, and unsafe disposal of potentially contaminated carcasses threatens survival.
- **Habitat Loss & Environmental Change:** Changing prey populations, land-use change, and climate-driven shifts are reducing breeding success.

Priority threats by region



Strategic Goals

Six Strategic Goals have been developed to tackle each of the key threats, in addition to addressing knowledge gaps, to inform conservation action across the species' global range and to ensure the support and effective implementation of the plan. These Goals underpin the 49 actions necessary to tackle the main threats to the species through evidence-based interventions targeting key parts of the species' life cycle or spatial hotspots, with long-term research, monitoring and engagement enabling this process. The Conservation Action Framework is prioritised to reflect the relative urgency of each action, with expected timescales, key stakeholders and dependencies detailed.

Note The actions included below are an extract from the full Conservation Action Framework, representing the highest priority for each Goal.

Action	Description	Stakeholders	Priority
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1. Reduce the impact of energy infrastructure on Steppe Eagles along the flyway

1.3.1	Identify the highest risk areas through promoting wider coverage of sensitivity mapping tools (such as Avistep, etc), and by paying particular attention to bottleneck and congregation sites, prioritising assessments of the powerlines and windfarms for electrocution and collision risks in these key areas. List of important sites (see 2025 list in Annexe Main Report)	Energy Utilities	Timescale: Short
1.3.2	Ensure all key breeding areas, bottleneck and congregation (such as dumpsites and landfills) have safe electricity transmission infrastructure through the replacement and retrofitting of dangerous infrastructure (burying underground, insulation, diverters etc) and that new infrastructure also meets these standards.	National Authorities (wildlife management & energy), Energy Utilities, Conservation NGOs	Timescale: Short

2. Reduce significantly mortality due to impact of legal and illegal take and trade



2.3.1	Enhance enforcement of illegal take and trade laws in hot-spot areas by building cooperation and capacity between conservation organizations (i.e. both governmental and non-governmental) and law enforcement agencies.	National Authorities, Conservation NGOs, MIKT, SWAITB TF	Timescale: Short
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3. Understand and reduce the impact of unintentional poisoning on Steppe Eagle populations


3.1.1	Conduct research and disseminate literature on critical chemicals likely to affect the fitness (health and population productivity) and/or survival of Steppe Eagle throughout its range.	National Authorities, Academic Institutions, Research Agencies, Conservation NGOs	Timescale: Short
3.1.2	Understand the extent of use, impact and contamination pathway of NSAIDs, pest control chemicals and other environmental contaminants (such as heavy metals) at or near breeding and congregation sites including systematic sampling and analysis of primary food resources.	National Authorities, Academic Institutions, Research Agencies, Conservation NGOs, Waste management authorities	Timescale: Immediate
3.1.3	Sample live Steppe Eagles and fresh eagle carcasses, in a timely effective manner to determine cause of death and presence of critical chemicals and disease, recorded in a centralised database to enable data sharing.	National Authorities (state testing laboratories, wildlife management), Research Agencies, Conservation NGOs, CITES Authorities	Timescale: Short

Action	Description	Stakeholders	Priority
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4. Attain good quality habitats that support populations of Steppe Eagle across the species' range

4.1.1	Conduct targeted research, in the breeding, migratory and non-breeding ranges on habitat use, site connectivity and diet, to fill key knowledge gaps.	Academic Institutions, Research Agencies, Conservation NGOs	Timescale: Short 
4.2.3	Ensure key congregation sites (including dump sites) are managed to ensure they provide safe roosting and feeding opportunities for Steppe Eagles through safe energy infrastructure and no access to poisoned food resources.	National authorities, Waste authorities, Electricity companies	Timescale: Short 

5. Address key knowledge gaps on Steppe Eagle distribution, movement, and threats by increasing collaboration and coordinated research, to inform conservation action across their global range

5.2.1	Carry out species monitoring (at all life stages) using standardised methods to guide sensitivity mapping and conservation action.	National Authorities, Conservation NGOs	Timescale: Immediate 
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6. Ensure endorsement and effective implementation of the Steppe Eagle GAP across all range states by increasing outreach with key communities and all major stakeholders

6.1.2	Highlight and promote the Steppe Eagle as a flagship species of the Central Asian and African-Eurasian Flyways, utilising and supporting existing national and international events to raise awareness of Steppe Eagle global conservation needs and efforts.	Conservation NGOs, CMS, National Authorities, CAFI	Timescale: Short 
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Priority scale of actions:  Critical  High

From 2026–2035, partners from across the Steppe Eagle’s range will be delivering this Action Plan to enable the recovery of the species. If you would like to learn more about the Plan or contribute to its delivery in any of the 62 countries and territories, please contact:

cmsoffice.ae@un.org

or visit the web page: raptors.cms.int/steppe-eagle-global-action-plan

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