

CMS Office – Abu Dhabi: A Decade of Achievements

Celebrating a 10-year Partnership with Environment Agency – Abu Dhabi and the UAE

We Need Vultures and They Need Us: Urgent International Action to Save Vultures

Vultures are the most endangered group of land birds in the world and will be extinct in our lifetimes unless urgent action is taken.

Almost all vulture species have experienced dramatic population declines in recent years. Poisoning — including fatal reactions to veterinary drugs in animals carcasses — poaching and habitat destruction are some of the main threats to vulture populations, in addition to lack of food, human disturbance, electrocution by power lines, and collision with wind turbines.

In a bid to address the issue, in 2017, the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Migratory Species adopted a Multi-species Action Plan to Conserve African-Eurasian Vultures ([Vulture MsAP](#)), covering 15 species of these charismatic birds.

Following an earlier request by CMS Parties in 2014, development of the Action Plan was led by the Coordinating Unit of the CMS Raptors MOU, which is based in CMS Office – Abu Dhabi.

The 166-page plan is the outcome of three years of consultations with a broad consortium of governments, organisations and experts. This huge international collaborative effort engaged all 128 Range States. A total of five workshops took place, in four different countries across three continents. The initiative was supported by the generous contributions of Environment Agency – Abu Dhabi, the Government of Switzerland, [BirdLife International](#), the [IUCN SSC Vulture Specialist Group](#), the [Environment and Protected Areas Authority, Sharjah](#) and the [Vulture Conservation Foundation](#).

The Vulture MsAP is widely acclaimed as the international roadmap for the recovery and conservation of African-Eurasian vulture populations.

“Vultures are a critical component of many ecosystems and provide significant economic bonuses, as well as major health benefits to wildlife, domestic livestock and humans — by cleaning up carcasses



*Mass poisoning of vultures in Africa
by Endangered Wildlife Trust*



African White-backed Vultures by Andre Botha

and other organic waste in the environment, and preventing the spread of diseases like botulism, rabies and anthrax,” said Nick P. Williams, Head of the Coordinating Unit of the Raptors MOU.

“The Vulture MsAP reinforces the need for urgent action by all Range States. It sets out an extensive framework of conservation objectives and priority activities at a regional scale,” he said. “This Multi-species Action Plan is unique and is the most

significant output to-date within the context of the CMS Raptors MOU.”

To assist with the implementation, a Strategic Implementation Plan (SIP) for the Vulture MsAP is being drawn up with further valuable support from the Government of Switzerland. The SIP will outline concrete priorities for delivering the agreed framework of actions and highlight relevant cooperation opportunities along with steps to help mobilise resources and support. It will also contain a review of a further consultation with stakeholders, summarizing key activities which have already been undertaken, are ongoing or are being planned for the future.

While a number of important steps have already been taken, the success of the Vulture MsAP is contingent upon sustained commitment and major financial support from CMS Parties and others, throughout the remaining ten-year implementation period of the Plan. Reversing the declines in vulture populations is a massive, long-term challenge but the Coordinating Unit of the Raptors MOU stands ready to work collaboratively with Range State governments, international organisations, and the research and conservation community to ensure this precious goal is achieved.

Established in 2009, CMS Office – Abu Dhabi comprises the Coordinating Unit of the Raptors MOU, alongside the Secretariat of the Dugong MOU and is hosted by Environment Agency – Abu Dhabi on behalf of the Government of the United Arab Emirates. The vision and long-term support of the UAE, combined with the rich scope of a United Nations forum, is supporting the conservation of raptors, dugong and other migratory species, as well as promoting the well-being of associated human communities, to contribute towards achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.



Vulture MsAP cover