

Part V: Western/Central Asia Site Network for the Siberian Crane and Other Waterbirds

WCASN Brief Report for 2007-2009

WCASN Action Plan for 2010-2012

Guidelines to Prepare Site Nomination Documentation (version from December 2010)

Introduction

The Western/Central Asian Site Network for Siberian Cranes and Other Waterbirds (WCASN) was formally launched on 18 May 2007 in Kazakhstan, in a special signing ceremony held during the Sixth Meeting of the Signatories (MOS6) to the CMS Memorandum of Understanding on Conservation Measures for the Siberian Crane (MOU) under the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS).

The establishment of a Siberian Crane site network has critical importance for Siberian Cranes. It has also benefited other cranes and waterbirds. WCASN is the first step towards developing a more comprehensive site network for migratory waterbirds under a wider framework proposed within the Central Asian Flyway (CAF) Initiative under CMS. WCASN will eventually be integrated within the wider waterbird site network under CAF.

The WCASN focuses on conservation efforts on sites of international importance for the Siberian Crane along its West and Central Asian flyways in Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, India, Islamic Republic of Iran, Kazakhstan, Pakistan, Russian Federation (western Siberia), Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. According to approved principles of WCASN, such sites include a) sites important for the conservation, recovery and reintroduction of the Siberian Crane; b) sites which are also important for other migratory cranes and waterbirds; c) the importance of involving local people in conservation efforts at the sites.

The WCASN goal is to ensure the conservation of the Siberian Crane and other migratory waterbirds along the Western and Central Asian Flyways through recognition and appropriate management of a network of internationally important sites.

During the CMS MOS6 in Kazakhstan in May 2007, the first ten sites were designated within WCASN included

five sites from Kazakhstan, two from Iran and one each from India, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. Two sites from Pakistan were added to WCASN through recommendations given to WCASN Nomination Committee by the current WCASN Nomination Review Working Group and through presentation of these sites by governmental representative during special ceremony at the CMS MOS7 in Bonn, Germany, on 12 June 2010.

Other range states (Azerbaijan, Afghanistan, Russia and Pakistan) also proposed their sites and are working on the preparation of nomination documents. Besides Kazakhstan proposed more three and Uzbekistan proposed more one sites for including to WCASN for future nomination. WCASN Committee and WCASN Review Working Group will advance the work of this initiative before the next meeting by reviewing proposals for additional sites.

Since WCASN lunch at the CMS MOS6 in 2007 in Kazakhstan, some activities were implemented at the designated sites of six countries including preparation of new sites nomination preparation, increasing of protected level of WCASN sites, CEPA and information exchange. Most of activities were implemented during implementation of *the UNEP/GEF Siberian Crane Wetlands Project (SCWP)* or with support of SCWP for countries which were not involved in it implementation. All range states were involved in preparation of Atlas of Key Sites for the Siberian Crane and Other Waterbirds in Western/Central Asia with was issued in Russian and English languages.

Future WCASN actions will be focused on the designated sites as well as on new sites of other range states which can be designated until the next CMS MOS8 meeting, supporting new nominations, CEPA, hunting reducing and regional actions to service the site network.

WCASN Brief Report for 2007-2009

1. Site nominations

During the CMS MOS6 in Kazakhstan in May 2007, the first ten sites were designated within the Site Network included five sites from Kazakhstan, two from Iran and one each from India, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. Other range states (Azerbaijan, Afghanistan, Russia and Pakistan) also proposed their sites and are working on the preparation of nomination documents.

During the site nomination ceremony in Kazakhstan representatives from the five countries were handed provisional certificates. After the meeting, a logo and certificate for the WCASN were developed. The final certificates signed by CMS Secretariat and ICF were handed to representatives of Kazakhstan, India and Iran in Rome, Italy, during the CMS COP9 meeting with short introductions of the designated WCASN sites. Certificates for Turkmenistan site «Durnaly» were passed to the technical focal points. In these countries, meetings with representatives of local administrations were organised during Crane Celebration events and the certificates were presented to them. In Uzbekistan, certificate was handed to a representative of Termez local administration during Round Table «Presentation of Termez as a wintering site of the Western/Central Asian Site Network».

2. Status of nomination of new WCASN sites

Before the CMS MOS7, possibilities for the nomination of new sites were investigated. During the CMS MOS6, Azerbaijan and Pakistan proposed two sites each for nomination. However Azerbaijan did not submit a Letter of Endorsement to the CMS Secretariat, and Pakistan provided insufficient information on the proposed sites. Pakistan has since submitted a Letter of Endorsement for the two nominated sites and Site Information Sheets with updated information to the CMS Secretariat. These documents are being reviewed by the WCASN Review Working Group which will make recommendations to the WCASN Committee on the nomination of these sites. Turkmenistan planned to nominate one more site – Tallymerjen & Kelif-Zeyit, however the local administration in that region has changed, therefore the process of endorsement has to be started again. The same situation has occurred for the Russian site «Kunovat» located in Yamalo-Nenetskiy Autonomous Region, where the Governor was recently replaced. Kazakhstan has prepared proposals for three new sites, Sarykopa, Turgai-Irgiz and Tengiz-Kurgaljino Lake Systems, which can be considered for future nomination. Uzbekistan proposed additional site Talimarjan for nomination to WCASN.

3. Increasing the protection level of WCASN sites

Since the last MOU meeting in 2007 progress was made on improving the protection level of a number of WCASN sites with support from the UNEP/GEF Siberian Crane Wetlands Project (UNEP/GEF SCWP). All 5 WCASN sites in Kazakhstan were included in the List of Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Convention). In addition, Naurzum Lake System was included as part of a World Heritage Site called «The Saryarka—Steppe and Lakes of Northern Kazakhstan». In Zharsor-Urkash Lake System, the Zharsor-Urkash State Wildlife Refuge at the republic level was established, under the management responsibility of Naurzum State Nature Reserve. Since June 2001, Fereydoonkenar in Mazandaran Province in Iran has been a «Non-Shooting Area», covering Fereydoonkenar, Ezbaran, Eastern & Western Sorkh Rud Damgahs and Fereydoonkenar Wildlife Refuge, including a buffer zone around each of these areas. The Ramsar site at Bujagh has been extended (500 ha) to cover the whole national park which consists of the whole of the lagoon area, its associated marshes and the marshes and sand flats at the mouth of the Sefid Rud river to the west. Management plans for Naurzum Lake System and Zharsor-Urkash Lake System were completed. The management plan for the site of Fereydoonkenar, Ezbaran & Sorkh Rud Ab-Bandans was finalized through a significant community participation process, and input was provided to the draft management plan for Bujagh National Park.

4. Atlas of Key Sites for the Siberian Crane and Other Waterbirds in Western/Central Asia

The Atlas has been prepared for presentation during the CMS MOS7 with the active participation of country representatives. For the preparation of this publication, Site Information Sheets for designated and proposed sites were used as well as information from the Siberian Crane database, which was created and managed within the framework of the UNEP/GEF SCWP, and data from the literature.

For each country, a brief overview of wetlands used by the Siberian Crane and detailed descriptions of historical and recent sightings of the Siberian Crane along the Western and Central Asian flyways has been prepared. The most important Siberian Crane sites (green squares) and known Siberian Crane sightings are presented in the map for each country (or its part). Each sighting is described in detail in the legend with reference to information sources. Despite the quite com-

prehensive overview of Siberian Crane sightings, it is possible that some sightings have been missed, especially those described in local publications. Please provide information on any omissions to Elena Ilyashenko (eilyashenko@savingcranes.org).

For the most important Siberian Crane sites, experts from the Siberian Crane range states presented information including maps of the sites, a brief overview of physiographic features, importance for the Siberian Crane with detailed description of all sightings, importance for other crane species and other waterbirds; negative factors for the wetlands, current and proposed conservation measures and the sites' international importance.

5. Information exchange

A section on the WCASN has been created in the merged UNEP/GEF SCWP – Siberian Crane Flyway Coordination website: <http://sibeflyway.org/flyway-conservation/wcasn>. Guidelines for Site Nomination have been uploaded here and can be used for the preparation of nomination documents for new sites. Information about each site has been included on a separate page with links to photos, maps and other documents.

Information on the launch of the WCASN was published in various newsletters, including the CWGE Newsletter. Presentations including WCASN activities were made during the CMS COP9 in Rome (December 2008), SCWP Project Completion Workshop in Harbin (October 2009), UNEP General Council Meeting in Bali (Press Conference February 2010) and others

6. Education activities at WCASN sites

Education activities were conducted at WCASN sites in Iran, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan with support from the UNEP/GEF SCWP. As Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan were not involved in project implementation, agreements were signed between ICF and the related organisations in these countries.

Booklets with information about the sites were published in all four countries. In Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan

and Turkmenistan, Crane Celebrations were organised where education and information materials provided by the Crane Working Group of Eurasia and published with the support of UNEP/GEF SCWP and CMS Secretariat were shared. Turkmenistan also published the poster "Protect Cranes and their Habitats" in Turkmen language which was shared widely. In the framework of the Crane Celebration, a meeting with the local administration was organised at Durnaly site and the certificate of designation of this site signed by CMS Secretariat and ICF was handed to the Head of Administration. In Uzbekistan a Round Table on «Presentation of Termez as a wintering site of the Western/Central Asian Site Network» was organised for different target groups: decision makers (regional and local administration, regional branch of State Committee for Nature Protection), stakeholders (frontier guards), hunters, scientific workers of the neighboring protected area (Surhanskiy State Nature Reserve), lecturer of Termez state university and local mass media. In Kazakhstan, a Siberian Crane Festival was organised at Naurzum involving nearly three thousand students, teachers, stakeholders and different groups of local people from Karamendy (where the administrative office of Naurzum State Nature Reserve is located) as well as from adjacent regions of Kazakhstan and Russia.

7. Future support for the development of the WCASN

Recognizing that the WCASN was developed as an initial step towards the development of a wider waterbird site network under the CMS Central Asian Flyway initiative, ICF and Wetlands International are working with CMS and UNEP to develop a regional proposal covering part of the Central Asian Flyway which would provide support for the sustainable management of key WCASN sites, the extension of the site network and for addressing the important threat that unsustainable hunting practices pose to the Siberian Crane and other migratory waterbirds. ICF is also seeking funds to support hunter education including some WCASN sites.

The actions will be focused on the designated sites, supporting new nominations, and regional actions to service the site network such as website, sharing information, raising funds, etc. The Action Plan is expected to focus on activities in the six countries (Iran, India, Kazakhstan, Pakistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan), that have already designated sites as well as on new sites of other range states of western and central populations which can be designated during Siberian Crane MOU implementation period from 2010 to 2012.

110

Objectives and Specific Activities	Countries	WCASN Sites	Confirmed Funding Sources	Proposed Funding Sources
Objective II: Monitoring and research				
2.1. Monitor and study the Siberian Crane and its habitat				
1. Strengthen/establish regular monitoring of cranes and other waterbirds at WCASN sites to ensure updated knowledge of crane usage, habitat needs and conservation issues	All involved countries	All designated sites and all potentially important sites		
2. Provide monitoring information to the Siberian Crane database, International Waterbirds Census and IBA databases	All involved countries	All designated sites and all potentially important sites		
Objective III: Increase numbers and genetic diversity				
3.1. Promote recovery of the Siberian Crane populations				
1. Support Flight of Hope Project activities approved by international planning group established under MOU for reintroduction programme on recovery of Western/Central Asian population	KZ, UZ (in cooperation with RU)	KZ: Naurzum Lake System UZ: Termez		
3.2. Develop safe migration routes for Siberian Cranes based on those used by Eurasian Cranes				
1. Conduct census of cranes and other waterbirds during migration and at wintering grounds as far as possible at WCASN sites	All involved countries	All designated sites and all potentially important sites		
2. Study relationship between waterbirds distribution, habitat condition and climate change, as a basis for proposing adaptation measures to reduce the vulnerability of regional waterbirds populations.	All involved countries	All designated sites and all potentially important sites		
Objective IV: Protect and manage habitats of importance for the Siberian Crane				
4.1. Protect and manage habitats of importance for the Siberian Crane				
1. Build capacity for effective site management and financial sustainability through development and implementation of site management plans, incorporating climate change adaptation measures	All involved countries	Selected demonstration sites		To be included new GEF proposal under development
2. Review water management needs to sustain wetlands and local communities	All involved countries	Selected demonstration sites		

Objectives and Specific Activities	Countries	WCASN Sites	Confirmed Funding Sources	Proposed Funding Sources
Objective V: Increase public awareness and ecological education				
5.1. Share information on Siberian Crane conservation efforts				
Publicize information on the Siberian Crane conservation efforts in mass media, public and scientific magazines	All involved countries	All designated sites		
5.2. Community involvement				
1. Organise mass education and public awareness events (Crane Celebration, World Migratory Bird Day, World Wetlands Day) at WCASN sites	All involved countries	All designated sites	MBZ Species Conservation Fund	
2. Organise lectures and discussions with key stakeholders including hunters, frontier guards and other group of local people near WCASN sites about conservation of cranes and other waterbirds and wetlands	All involved countries	All designated sites		
3. Increase public awareness through involving local people in waterbirds and habitat monitoring	All involved countries	All designated sites		
4. Develop methods on involving volunteers in crane count and waterbirds monitoring by adapting ICF, WI, and BirdLife International experiences to local communities	All involved countries	All designated sites		
5. Implement young scholar programmes and competitions to mentor and empower promising young students	All involved countries	All designated sites		
Objective VI: Enhance national and international cooperation and information exchange				
6.1. Improve international cooperation and information exchange				
1. Publish information in CWGE Newsletter, ICF Bugle and other international publications	All involved countries	Selected demonstration sites		To be included new GEF proposal under development
2. Include list of new publications in regional newsletters	All involved countries	All designated sites		
3. Share successful examples (i.e. Sterkh Foundation) of awareness raising activities undertaken by countries, network sites, local NGOs	All involved countries, other Range States	WCASN sites, other key sites, local NGOs		
4. Upload information about activities and news at WCASN sites to WCASN webpage	All involved countries	All designated sites		

Objectives and Specific Activities	Countries	WCASN Sites	Confirmed Funding Sources	Proposed Funding Sources
Objective VI: Enhance national and international cooperation and information exchange				
6.2. Development of the Western/Central Asia Site Network for the Siberian Crane and other waterbirds				
<p>1. Prepare and submit to CMS Secretariat documents for nomination of proposed sites</p> <p>2. Review nominations submitted by countries and give recommendations to Committee on Site Nomination</p> <p>3. Evaluate proposals of potential site in Afghanistan – Amudaria Valley near the border with Uzbekistan</p> <p>4. Investigate possibility to create an international transboundary site in the border region between Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan and between Uzbekistan and Afghanistan in the Amudaria Valley.</p>	<p>AF, AZ, IN, KZ, RU, TU, UZ</p> <p>WCASN RWG</p> <p>AF</p> <p>AF, TU, UZ</p>	<p>AF: Ab-i-Estada and Dashte-Nawar AZ: Shirvan National Park and Gyzyt-Aghach Nature Reserve IN: Etawah-Mainpuri KZ: Sarykopa, Irgiz-Turgai, Kurgaljino RU: Kunovat, Kondo-Alymka, Belozerskiy and Agrakhan TU: Tallymerjen & Kelif-Zeyit UZ: Tallymjen</p> <p>AF: Amudaria Valley</p> <p>AF: Amudaria Valley (proposed) TU: Tallymerjen & Kelif-Zeit (proposed for nomination) UZ: Termez (designated)</p>		
6.4. Capacity building				
Promote and organise regional and national training workshops on wetland protected area management and monitoring, business planning, climate change adaptation, water management and community participation for network sites	All involved countries	All designated sites		
6.5. Raise funds to support a comprehensive conservation programme supporting MOU implementation				
<p>1. Identify existing projects and programmes that are or could support the WCASN sites</p> <p>2. Secure support from national or regional governments for finance (co-finance) support priority activities</p>	All involved countries	All designated sites with support from CMS, ICF, and WI		WWF Forever Indus program

Objectives and Specific Activities	Countries	WCASN Sites	Confirmed Funding Sources	Proposed Funding Sources
Objective VI: Enhance national and international cooperation and information exchange				
6.5. Raise funds to support a comprehensive conservation programme supporting MOU implementation				
3. Submit grant applications to support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Hunting strategy (Part GEF, To Be Determined (TBD)) b. Monitoring of cranes and other waterbirds at WCASN sites (TBD) c. Research on relationship between waterbirds distribution, habitat condition and climate change (GEF) d. Support "Flight of Hope" Project (TBD) e. Review water management needs to sustain wetlands and local communities (GEF?) f. Regional and national training workshops held on wetland protected area management and monitoring, business planning, climate change adaptation, water management and community participation for network site management (GEF) g. CEPA activities including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. organising mass education and public awareness events (TBD) ii. young scholars program (GEF) 	CMS, ICF, WI with involved countries	All designated sites		



Western/Central Asian Site Network for the Siberian Crane and Other Waterbirds



Guidelines for the Preparation of Site Nomination Documents

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Contact address:

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I. Western/Central Asian Site Network for the Siberian Crane and Other Waterbirds

1.1. Introduction

The Siberian Crane (*Grus leucogeranus*) is a critically endangered species that is dependent upon the existence of large open areas of shallow wetland habitats along its migration routes. Three routes are currently known - a West Asian flyway that leads from breeding grounds in Western Siberia around the western shore of the Caspian Sea to the Caspian Lowlands of northern Iran; a Central Asian flyway connecting Western Siberian breeding grounds to the wintering site in northern India; and an East Asian flyway leading from Yakutia to the central Yangtze floodplain lakes in China.

The flyways and habitats used by the Siberian Crane are shared with many other species of migratory waterbirds, including at least 32 globally threatened waterbird species, and thus have significance far beyond conservation of the Siberian Crane alone.

1.2. Summary

The UNEP/GEF Siberian Crane Wetland Project (SCWP) implemented from 2003 to 2009 had a stated goal to develop flyway site networks with nomination procedures for sites harmonized with other site network schemes. On the other hand, the Central Asian Flyway Action Plan to Conserve Migratory Waterbirds and their habitats (CAF Action Plan) was finalized in New Delhi in June 2005 by the range states of the Central Asian Flyway. The CAF Action Plan includes a provision to establish a site network for migratory waterbirds in the CAF.

At the "Waterbirds Around the World" Meeting (Edinburgh, April 2004), side events were held to discuss steps needed to develop these two related initiatives. Joint discussions focused on exploring the best mechanisms to link these initiatives, identifying frameworks for cooperation and applying lessons learned from the successful North East Asia Crane Working Group (NEACWG) established under the Asia-Pacific Migratory Waterbird Conservation Strategy, which now falls under the framework of the East Asian - Australasian Flyway Partnership.

Efforts for the conservation and recovery of the Siberian Crane gained momentum in recent years through the CMS Memorandum of Understanding concerning Conservation Measures for the Siberian Crane (the Siberian Crane MOU). The Siberian Crane MOU involves the Siberian Crane's 11 range states and provides the basis to develop and implement Conservation Plans for the Western, Central and Eastern populations of the Siberian Crane.

The Fifth Meeting of the Signatories (MOS5) to the Siberian Crane MOU (Moscow, April 2004) agreed on the need to establish a network of sites critical for the Siberian Cranes of the Western and Central populations to promote protection of key wetlands and coordination among the Signatories in the Western/Central Asian flyways. It also agreed with a proposal to introduce the site network concept into the next version of the respective Siberian Crane MOU Conservation Plans.

The preliminary conclusions of an Inter-sessional Working Group established by the CMS MOS5 were presented to the UNEP/GEF SCWP's Third Project Steering Committee Meeting (SCM3) in December 2004 in Iran. The process, title, objectives, site selection criteria, scope of activities to be conducted under the network, and opportunities for interaction and exchange were discussed throughout the course of the SCM3.

The SCM3 participants recommended that the site network be called the Western/Central Asian Site Network for the Siberian Crane and Other Waterbirds or WCASN.

The Meeting to Endorse the Proposed Western/Central Asian Site Network for the Siberian Cranes and Other Waterbirds (New Delhi, 13 June 2005) agreed on criteria and qualifiers for selection of sites for the network, the site information (datasheet) required for site nominations, and procedures to nominate, review and approve sites.

1.3. Goal of the WCASN

To ensure the long-term conservation of the Siberian Crane and other migratory waterbirds along the Western and Central Asian Flyways through recognition and appropriate management of a network of internationally important sites.

1.4. Principles of the WCASN

The initiative to establish a Siberian Crane site network under the CMS MOU will focus attention on:

- Sites important for the conservation, recovery and reintroduction of the Siberian Crane;
- Sites which are also important for other migratory cranes and waterbirds; and
- The importance of involving local people in conservation efforts at the sites.

1.5. Administrative Structure of WCASN

WCASN is served by the CMS Secretariat, the WCASN Committee and the WCASN Review Working Group (RWG).

At the Meeting to Endorse the Proposed WCASN (New Delhi, 13 June 2005), it was agreed that the vetting of nominations should be conducted by WCASN RWG, composed of the chair (elected at every MOS) one representative from the breeding range (Russian Federation), two representatives (rotating) from the staging areas of each flyways (western and central), two representatives from the wintering range (Islamic Republic of Iran and India), as well as BirdLife International, Wetlands International and the International Crane Foundation.

The WCASN RWG has been operating on an interim basis. It considers nomination documents presented by range states and makes recommendations to the WCASN Committee for approval. The WCASN Committee consists of one governmental representative of each Siberian Crane range state of western and central flyways. Terms of References for the WCASN RWG (Annex 5) and the WCASN Committee (Annex 6) were developed and approved during the CMS MOS6 (Almaty, Kazakhstan, May 2007) and updated during the CMS MOS7 (Bonn, Germany, June 2010).

1.6. Activities under the WCASN

The 2005 New Delhi Meeting to Endorse the Proposed WCASN agreed joint activities which would be conducted within the framework of the network as follows:

- Providing monitoring and management of the sites;
- Facilitating staff exchange programme;
- Participating in education and public awareness activities in the WCASN;
- Maintaining a regional Siberian Crane database;
- Providing training workshops for site managers and experts;
- Participating in communication and information exchange between site management bodies researchers, and other relevant agencies in the network and other global networks; and
- Fundraising.

These activities were integrated in Conservation Plans for western and central flyways under the CMS Siberian Crane MOU issued in 2008¹. At the CMS MOS7 to the Siberian Crane MOU held in Bonn in June 2010 it was decided to develop a separate WCASN Action Plan which should constitute a subset of actions under the overall Siberian Crane MOU Conservation Plans.

¹UNEP/CMS Technical Report Series 16. Conservation Measures for the Siberian Crane, Fourth Edition. 2008.

1.7. List of Priority Sites

Range states representatives to the Meeting to Endorse the Proposed WCASN suggested a preliminary list of priority sites² for possible inclusion in the network.

During the CMS MOS6 to the Siberian Crane MOU held in Kazakhstan in May 2007, the first ten sites were designated within the Site Network including five sites from Kazakhstan, two from Iran and one each from India, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. Two sites from Pakistan were added to WCASN at the CMS MOS7 held in Bonn, Germany, in June 2010.

Several other sites have been identified by range states (Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Pakistan, Russia and Uzbekistan) for future nomination (**Annex 1**).

1.8. Criterion and Qualifiers for Site Selection³

For site selection, attention will be focused on sites important for the conservation, recovery and reintroduction of the Siberian Crane, including sites that are also important for other migratory cranes and waterbirds. Please see the Site Information Sheet (Annex 1) and Explanatory Notes (Annex 2) for details.

Criterion 1 and its four temporal sub-criteria are designed to ensure that governments will select sites based on their current and past importance for Siberian Cranes.

The Qualifiers give an indication of the additional importance for other cranes and waterbirds of sites that have been selected primarily because of their importance for Siberian Cranes. They are also important to promote the future integration of the WCASN into the larger proposed waterbird site network for the Central Asia Flyway under the CMS Central Asian Flyway Action Plan for the Conservation of Migratory Waterbirds and their Habitats.

The criteria and qualifiers are adapted from selected criteria to nominate Wetlands of International Importance under the Ramsar Convention. Guidance for applying the Ramsar criteria can be found in the Convention's document: Ramsar Convention Handbook #7: Designating Ramsar Sites⁴.

²The original preliminary list included two sites from Mongolia (Khuiten-Kurkh, and Gun Galuut and Ayagin Lakes), however it was clarified that the proposed Mongolian sites were outside the geographic remit of the network and that the populations in question fit completely into the East Asian-Australasian Flyway Site Network.

³As agreed by the Meeting to Endorse the Proposed Western/ Central Asian Site Network for Siberian Cranes (and other waterbirds) (New Delhi, 2005), with minor editorial revisions.

⁴Ramsar Convention Secretariat 2004. Ramsar handbooks for the wise use of wetlands. 2nd Edition. Ramsar Convention Secretariat, Gland, Switzerland. Can be downloaded free from www.ramsar.org.

1.9. Site Information Sheet

The 2005 New Delhi Meeting to Endorse the Proposed WCASN discussed the information needed to nominate a site. The meeting agreed to a list 15 categories of information needed as part of the nomination procedure. However, during the process to develop these guidelines, the list of information categories was revised to reflect the last updated version of the Ramsar Information Sheet. The revised list now encompasses all comments from the meeting participants and the additional updates. This information is reflected in the Site Information Sheet (Annex 2).

The Site Information Sheet standardizes the information needed for the site nomination procedure. Site management bodies will submit the Site Information Sheet along with a Site Map and provide the required details on a proposed site, without regard to whether:

- a. The site is currently listed as a national, provincial or local nature protection area or internationally important area (under the Ramsar Convention, World Heritage Convention, etc.); or
- b. Constant monitoring of birds is being undertaken at the site.

II. Procedure for Listing Sites⁵

The primary basis for a site's nomination to join the WCASN is the site's importance for Siberian Cranes. By nominating a site, the relevant site management body pledges to incorporate the conservation of Siberian Cranes, other waterbirds and their wetland habitats into management goals for the site in line with the aims of this site network.

In order to nominate a site to join the WCASN, a **Site Information Sheet** must be completed (**Annex 2**). A detailed description and a **Site Map** of the boundaries of the wetland or wetlands should be provided with the Site Information Sheet. The Siberian Crane Flyway Coordinator (SCFC), whose contact details are found below, can assist with completion of the Site Information Sheet.

The relevant site management body should send a **Nomination Letter** proposing the nomination to the national government agency responsible for administering the implementation of the CMS MOU on the Siberian Crane for endorsement. This will help to ensure that there is local support for the proposal. A sample Nomination Letter is given in **Annex 3**. Site nominations may originate from local site management bodies, including private landowners, however these entities are encouraged to send a letter proposing the nomination to the responsible national government agency for endorsement and final submission.

The responsible national government agency should then send the Site Information Sheet and Site Map together with an appropriate **Letter of Endorsement** to the CMS Secretariat in Bonn, Germany. A sample

Endorsement Letter is given in **Annex 4**.

The WCASN Review Working Group (RWG), serviced by the Siberian Crane Flyway Coordinator, will undertake a technical review of the nomination. The WCASN RWG may seek additional information from the site management body if required. **The Chair of WCASN RWG** will provide a report containing WCASN RWG recommendations to the CMS Secretariat. Terms of References for WCASN RWG are given in **Annex 5**.

The Secretariat will then seek final approval of the nomination from the **WCASN Committee**, comprising representatives of the Siberian Crane MOU Signatories from the Siberian Crane western and central flyways. Once approved by the WCASN Committee, through its Chair, the site will be announced on the CMS and SCFC websites. Communications normally are conducted by email. Terms of References for WCASN Committee is given in **Annex 6**.

A Site Certificate, co-signed by the CMS Executive Secretary and the Chair of the SNC, will be provided to the site management body. Such agencies are encouraged to then conduct a **Dedication Ceremony** at the new network site. A suggested procedure for Network Site Dedication Ceremonies is given in **Annex 7**. Where possible, a member of the Site Network Committee will attend the ceremony to help promote the importance of the site locally.

Contact details for the Siberian Crane Flyway Coordinator

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⁵This procedure is based on that used for nominations of sites to the site networks under the former Asia-Pacific Migratory Waterbird Conservation Strategy.

III. References

1. Anonymous 1996. Asia-Pacific Migratory Waterbird Conservation Strategy: 1996-2000. Wetlands International – Asia Pacific, Kuala Lumpur and International Waterfowl and Wetlands Research Bureau, Japan Committee, Tokyo. <http://www.jawgp.org/anet/str1996.htm>.
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5. Ramsar Convention Secretariat 2004. Ramsar handbooks for the wise use of wetlands. 2nd Edition. Ramsar Convention Secretariat, Gland, Switzerland. <www.ramsar.org>.
6. Report on the Fifth Meeting of Signatory States to the CMS Siberian Crane Memorandum of Understanding (Moscow, April 2004). <www.cms.int/species/siberian_crane/sib_meetings.htm>.
7. Report on the Meeting to Endorse the Proposed Western/Central Asian Site Network for the Siberian Cranes (and other waterbirds) New Delhi, India, 13 June 2005. <www.cms.int/species/siberian_crane/sib_meetings.htm>.
8. The Central Asian Flyway Action Plan to Conserve Migratory Waterbirds and their Habitats can be downloaded from the CMS website. <www.cms.int/bodies/meetings/regional/caf/caf_meeting_report.htm>.

List of designated and proposed sites (as to June 2010)

Designated Sites

India

1. Keoladeo (Ghana) National Park

Iran

2. Fereydoonkenar, Ezbaran and Ruds Ab-Bandanas
3. Bujagh National Park

Kazakhstan

4. Naurzum Lake System
5. Zharsor-Urkash Lake System
6. Kulykol-Taldykol Lake System
7. Tyuntyugur-Zhanshura Lake System
8. Ural Delta and Nearest Caspian Sea Coastal Zone

Pakistan

9. Taunsa Barrage Wildlife Sanctuary
10. Thanedar Wala Game Reserve

Turkmenistan

11. Durnaly

Uzbekistan

12. Termez

Proposed Sites

Afghanistan

1. Ab-i-Estada
2. Dasht-e-Nawar

Azerbaijan

3. Shirvan National Park
4. GyzyI-Aghach Nature Reserve

India

5. Etawah-Mainpuri

Kazakhstan

6. Sarykopa Lake System
7. Turgay-Irgiz Lake System
8. Tengiz-Kurgaljino Lake System

Russian Federation

9. Kunovat
10. Kondo-Alymka
11. Belozerskiy
12. Agrakhanskiy

Turkmenistan

13. Tallymerjen & Kelif-Zeyit

Uzbekistan

14. Talimarjan

WCASN Site Information List

The relevant site management body intending to nominate a site to be included in the Western/Central Asian Site Network for the Siberian Crane and Other Waterbirds (WCASN) established under the CMS Memorandum of Understanding concerning Conservation Measures for the Siberian Crane (*Grus leucogeranus*) is requested to complete a Site Information Sheet and submit a Site Map.

The Site Information Sheet is based on the Ramsar Information Sheet. Please note that not all Ramsar sites would necessarily qualify for inclusion in the WCASN, and not all network sites would necessarily satisfy all of the Ramsar criteria for listing under that convention.

Guidance to fill in the form is provided in Explanatory Notes for the WCASN Site Information Sheet uploaded at SCFC website (www.sibeflyway.org).

All information provided and communications should be in the English language in view of the international nature of this site network.

This information sheet may be used:

(a) For an existing Ramsar Site (if so, please update the entries in the existing Ramsar Information Sheet here on this form, and provide additional information in Questions 9 & 13); or

(b) For a site that is not listed under the Ramsar Convention (please complete all the entries in the Site Information Sheet form).

The Site Information Sheet has been divided into two parts. It is essential to provide all of the basic information requested in Part 1, comprising Sections 1-13. Part 2 seeks additional information. It is strongly encouraged that both parts be completed as fully as possible.

The completed Site Information Sheet, Site Map and supplementary information with an Endorsement Letter should be submitted to the CMS Secretariat:

UNEP/CMS Secretariat
Nations Campus
Hermann-Ehlers-Str. 10
53113 Bonn, Germany
Tel. (+49 228) 815 2401
Fax. (+49 228) 815 2449
E-mail: secretariat@cms.int

Part 1

1. Date of submission
2. Country
3. Name of site
4. Geographical coordinates
5. Altitude
6. Area
7. Outline map of site (specify digital or hardcopy of map format)
8. Overview
- 9a. WCASN criterion and qualifiers
- A. **CRITERION 1:** Site's Importance for Siberian Cranes
Temporal Sub-criteria for the Siberian Crane: a site must meet one of the following sub-criteria (listed in order of importance). Please tick only **ONE** of the following boxes::

Sub-criterion 1.1: Siberian Crane(s) were recorded at the site at least five times during the last 10 years. This should not include records within the same season or repeated sightings of the same individual birds.

● **Sub-criterion 1.2:** The site has held one or more Siberian Cranes during the last 50 years, but there are less than five records during the 10 last years.

● **Sub-criterion 1.3:** The site is historical habitat of the Siberian Crane, but there are less than five records during the last 50 years.

● **Sub-criterion 1.4:** There are no records of Siberian Crane at a site, but it is considered to contain appropriate habitat for the species (wide expanses of shallow water containing appropriate food resources, and with low levels of disturbance) and it is suitable for release and re-introduction projects (e.g., safety of the site is secured, a management regime is in place, etc.).

- B. **QUALIFIER 1:** Site's importance for other crane species

Please tick this box if the site meets the following qualification:

The site is important for other crane species when it is known to support a total of 25 or more migratory cranes (which can be of more than one species) at any stage of their life cycle (e.g., breeding, migration stop-over (staging), non-breeding birds (wintering), etc.).

B. QUALIFIER 2: Site's importance for other waterbird species.

Please tick ANY of the following boxes that apply:

Sub-qualifier 2.1: The site regularly supports 20,000 or more migratory waterbirds during migration periods.

• **Sub-qualifier 2.2:** The site regularly supports 5,000 or more migratory waterbirds or 0.25% of a migratory waterbird population on a single count during a single migration period.

• **Sub-qualifier 2.3:** The site regularly supports 1% of the individuals in a population of one species or subspecies of migratory waterbird.

• **Sub-qualifier 2.4:** The site supports migratory waterbird species at a critical stage in their life cycles, or provides refuge during adverse conditions.

9b. Justification of the WCASN criterion and qualifiers (summary of the Siberian Crane records)

10. Wetland types (see explanatory notes for codes)
11. Jurisdiction
12. Management authority
13. Name and address of compiler

Part 2

(Please limit this part to a maximum of 10 pages)

14. General Location
15. Physical features of site
16. Physical features of catchment area
17. Hydrological values
18. Ecological features
19. Noteworthy flora
20. Noteworthy fauna
21. Social and cultural values
22. Land tenure/ownership
23. Current and potential site usage
24. Factors (past, present or potential) adversely affecting the site's ecological character, including changes in land (including water) use and development projects
25. Conservation measures taken (the lack of any current protection status/regime does not disqualify a site for consideration for inclusion in the Network if it meets listed criteria for Siberian Crane)
26. Conservation measures proposed, but not implemented yet
27. Current scientific research and monitoring (although the presence of constant monitoring is not a requirement for nominating a site for inclusion in the Network)
28. Current conservation communication, education and public awareness
29. Current recreation and tourism
30. Bibliographical references

Sample Nomination Letter

PURPOSE: To guide Nominating Authorities (such as site management bodies) to develop a nomination letter to nominate a site to the Western/Central Asian Site Network for the Siberian Crane and Other Waterbirds.

SENDER: Site management body or provincial agency.

ADDRESSED TO: National Agency responsible for administering the implementation of the CMS MOU concerning Conservation Measures for the Siberian Crane (and copied to the National Agency responsible for protected area management, if this is a different agency or department).

To:

The Director,

Division of ...

Department of ...

Address

Reference number <insert number>

Date <insert date>

Dear Sir/Madam,

Under the framework of the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) Memorandum of Understanding concerning Conservation Measures for the Siberian Crane, a Western/Central Asian Site Network for the Siberian Crane and Other Waterbirds is being developed. This site network will contribute to the conservation of the Siberian Crane, other waterbirds and their wetland habitats.

As the site management body responsible for <insert name of site(s)>, it is my pleasure to propose the nomination of <insert name of site(s)> to join the Western/Central Asian Site Network for the Siberian Crane and Other Waterbirds.

According to the attached Site Information Sheet(s) and Site Map(s), the site(s) meets the criteria for inclusion in the site network as follows:

<List sub-criteria and qualifiers as applicable>

Nominating the site(s) represents a significant and cost-effective step towards our national biodiversity conservation objectives and we look forward to participating in the cooperative conservation activities of the site network.

I would be very grateful if you could endorse this nomination and then transmit a letter of endorsement, together with the Site Information Sheet(s) and Site Map(s), for consideration by the Secretariat of the Convention on Migratory Species. On behalf of the site managers, I look forward to the successful nomination and participation in the Western/Central Asian Site Network for the Siberian Crane and Other Waterbirds.

Yours sincerely,

<insert name>

<insert position, organisation>

<insert contact details>

Enclosed: Site Information Sheet and Site Map

Sample Endorsement Letter

PURPOSE: To guide National Agencies to develop a letter to endorse the nomination of a site to the Western/ Central Asia Site Network for the Siberian Crane and Other Waterbirds for submission to the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) Secretariat.

SENDER: National Agency responsible for administering the implementation of the CMS MOU concerning Conservation Measures for the Siberian Crane.

ADDRESSED TO: The CMS Executive Secretary with a copy to the ICF/CMS Siberian Crane Flyway Coordinator.

To:

The Executive Secretary

UNEP/CMS Secretariat

United Nations Premises

Hermann-Ehlers-Str. 10

53113 Bonn, Germany

Tel. (+49 228) 815 2401

Fax. (+49 228) 815 2449

E-mail: secretariat@cms.int

Reference number <insert number>

<Insert date>

Dear Sir,

Re: Endorsement of the nomination of a new site in <insert country name> for inclusion in the Western/Central Asian Site Network for the Siberian Crane and Other Waterbirds

<Insert country name> recognizes the importance of conserving the Siberian Crane and other waterbirds and their wetland habitats and wishes to participate in the Western/Central Asian Site Network for the Siberian Crane and Other Waterbirds established under the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) Memorandum of Understanding concerning Conservation Measures for the Siberian Crane. It is my sincere pleasure to endorse the nomination of <insert name(s) of site(s)> to join this site network in order to further the aim of conserving the Siberian Crane, other waterbirds and their wetland habitats.

According to the attached Site Information Sheet(s) and Site Map(s), the site(s) meet(s) the criteria for inclusion in the site network as follows:

<List sub-criteria and qualifiers as applicable>

I look forward to the CMS Secretariat confirming that the site(s) will be included in the Western/Central Asian Site Network for the Siberian Crane and Other Waterbirds.

Yours sincerely,

<Insert name>

<Insert position>

<Insert agency>

Enclosed: Site Information Sheet and Site Map

cc: Ms. Elena Ilyashenko, Siberian Crane Flyway Coordinator (eilyashenko@savingcranes.org)

WCASN Review Working Group (RWG) Terms of Reference

The WCASN Review Working Group (RWG) is to be appointed by the WCASN Committee under the framework of the CMS Memorandum of Understanding Concerning Conservation Measures for the Siberian Crane.

1. Membership

The WCASN RWG has the following composition:

- One representative of a breeding ground range state - Russian Federation;
- Two representatives (rotating) of staging area range states of each flyway - western (Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan) and central (Afghanistan, Pakistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan);
- Two representatives of wintering area Range States - Islamic Republic of Iran and India;
- BirdLife International – representative to be confirmed;
- Wetlands International – Dr. Taej Mundkur;
- International Crane Foundation – Mr. Crawford Prentice;
- ICF/CMS Siberian Crane Flyway Coordinator – Ms. Elena Ilyashenko.

WCASN RWG selects its own chair by consensus and would conduct its business by e-mail correspondence.

2. Tasks

The SNRWG will conduct the following tasks:

- Review site nomination forms submitted by range state governments (to be undertaken within one month of receipt of the completed nominated forms);
- Assess from a technical standpoint the adequacy of information provided to determine if the nominated sites meet the criteria;
- Request additional information if necessary;
- Make recommendations to the WCASN Site Network Committee; and
- Report to meetings of the CMS MOU on the activities of the SNRWG.

For the period 2010-2012:

Dr. Taej Mundkur was elected as a chair of RWG.

Members of WCASN RWG as follows:

Russia: Dr. Alexander Sorokin (breeding grounds of central & western flyways)

Islamic Republic of Iran: Mr. Sadegh Sadeghi Zadegan (wintering grounds of western flyway)

India: Mr. Gopi Sundar (wintering grounds of central flyway)

Azerbaijan: Dr. Elchin Sultanov (staging areas of western flyway)

Turkmenistan: Dr. Eldar Rustamov (staging areas of central flyway)

WCASN Committee Terms of Reference

WCASN Committee has been established under the framework of the CMS Memorandum of Understanding Concerning Conservation Measures for the Siberian Crane (hereafter CMS Siberian Crane MOU).

1. Membership

The WCASN Committee, serviced by the CMS Secretariat, has the following composition:

- One governmental representative of each of the range states for the western and central Siberian Crane flyways (Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, India, Islamic Republic of Iran, Pakistan, Russian Federation, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan).

WCASN Committee selects its own chair by consensus and conducts its business by e-mail correspondence.

2. Tasks

The Site Network Committee will conduct the following tasks:

- Oversee implementation of the Site Network programme to be undertaken under the WCASN Action Plan;
- Appoint and review membership of WCASN Review Working Group;
- Approve site nomination forms submitted by range state governments, normally within 2 months from the date of receipt of completed nomination documentation according to the prescribed requirements;
- Receive technical reviews of the nominated sites to be undertaken by WCASN Review Working Group (RWG) and make decisions on the approval of nominated sites based on the recommendations of RWG;
- Co-sign with CMS Secretariat the Site Certificates for designated sites; and
- Report on activities to each Meeting of the range states to the CMS Siberian Crane MOU.

For the period 2010-2012:

Dr. Alexander Sorokin was elected as a chair of WCASN Committee

Suggested Procedure for Network Site Dedication Ceremonies

1. Purpose of the Dedication Ceremonies

Sites are nominated for inclusion in the WCASN by the national agency responsible for administering the CMS MOU concerning Conservation Measures for the Siberian Crane. Following review by the Site Network Review Working Group, they are approved by the Site Network Committee and certificates are issued by the CMS Secretariat. The main purpose of the Network Site Dedication Ceremony is to provide formal recognition of a site's status as part of this international network under the CMS MOU at local level. In addition, Network Site Dedication Ceremonies can be used as a means of attracting publicity about the conservation values of sites and their role as part of an international network of sites supporting migratory waterbird populations. Similarly, they provide a way of raising awareness of local stakeholders of the values of sites and shared responsibilities for the management and/or sustainable use of these sites.

2. Suggested Participation

Organisers

Site Dedication Ceremonies should be organised by the local site management authority in cooperation with the national agency responsible for administering the CMS MOU concerning Conservation Measures for the Siberian Crane. Other key stakeholders may also collaborate in organising the event.

Participants

International

The organisers should liaise with the Siberian Crane Flyway Coordinator at an early stage to arrange for participation of a Site Network Committee member at the Dedication Ceremony as far as possible..

National

- Senior representative of the national agency responsible for administering the CMS MOU concerning Conservation Measures for the Siberian Crane
- Representatives of other national government agencies with an interest in the site or biodiversity conservation
- Representatives of national environmental NGOs with an interest in the site or biodiversity conservation
- Popular figures, national experts, etc with an identified interest

Local

- Senior representative of the local site management agency
- Senior representative of the local government administration
- Key stakeholders (this can include: political representatives, religious leaders, local government agencies, local NGOs, community representatives, business interests, local universities and schools, etc.)

Media

As far as possible, the national and local media should be invited to cover the event (newspapers, TV, radio, specialist magazines, etc)

3. Programme

The main focus of the Site Dedication Ceremony should be the official presentation of the WCASN Site Certificate to the local management authority.

Beyond that the programme should be tailored to suit local circumstances. Some possibilities include:

- Speeches by VIPs & other invited guests
- Talks, presentations or videos on the conservation of Siberian Crane and other migratory waterbirds, including description of the WCASN

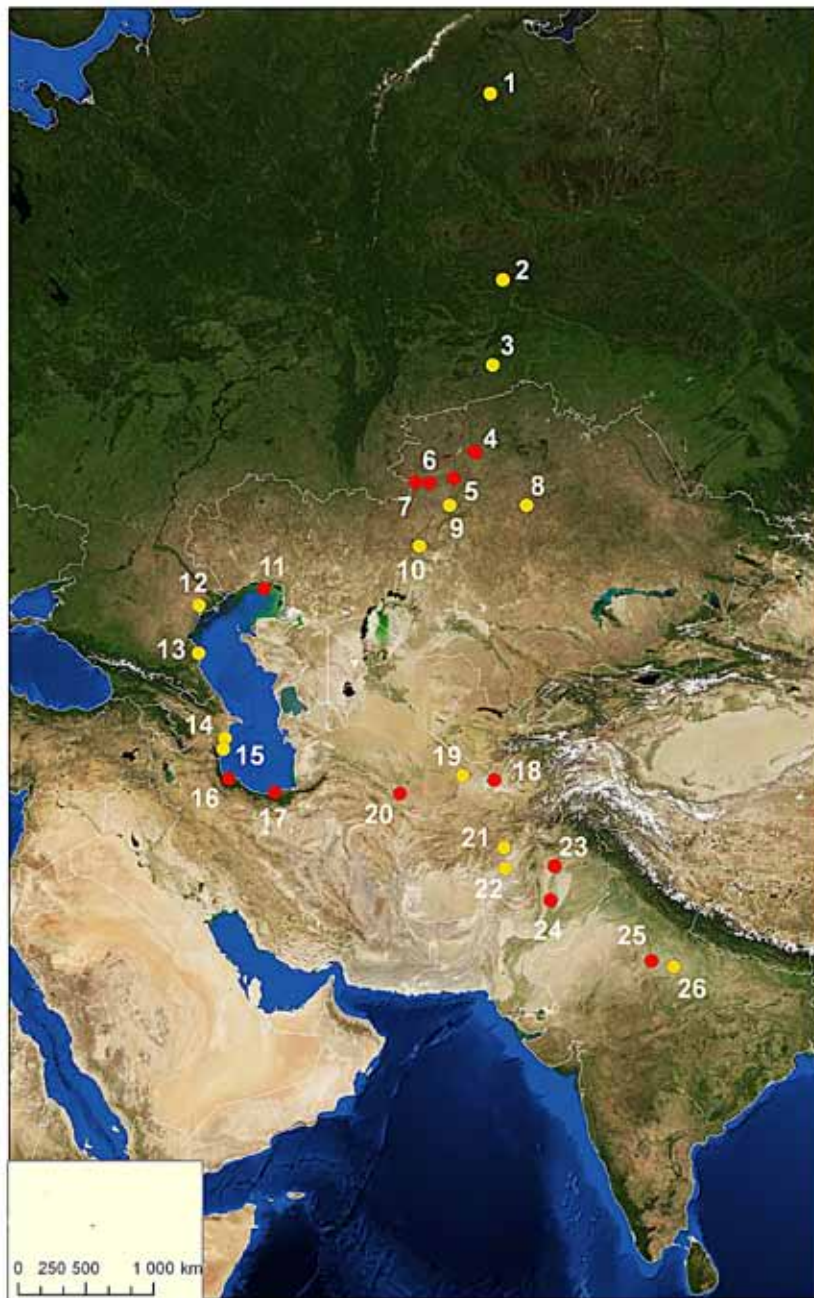
- Talks, presentations or videos on the conservation values of the site
- A site visit including a commentary by a suitable expert
- Local cultural performances (songs, dances, music, etc)
- Exhibitions of art, photographs, posters, etc
- Activities for children and youth (art competitions, games, site exploration, etc)

4. Follow up

The organisers are requested to send reports or articles on Site Dedication Ceremonies (including digital photographs) to the Siberian Crane Flyway Coordinator for use in international newsletters and websites related to the WCASN and CMS MOU.

Local stakeholders should be reminded of the international status of the site during communications, education and awareness programmes, and through news stories concerning Siberian Cranes at the sites or elsewhere in the flyway.

Figure 5. Map of the Western/Central Asian Site Network for the Siberian Crane and Other Waterbirds



Legend:

- 1 - Kunovat, Russia
- 2 - Kondo-Alymka, Russia
- 3 - Belozerskiy, Russia
- 4 - Tyuntyugur-Zhanshura Lake System, Kazakhstan
- 5 - Naurzum Lake System, Kazakhstan
- 6 - Zharsor-Urkash Lake System, Kazakhstan
- 7 - Kulykol-Taldykol Lake System, Kazakhstan
- 8 - Irgiz-Turgai Lake System, Kazakhstan
- 9 - Sarykopa Lake System, Kazakhstan
- 10 - Tengiz-Kurgaljino Lake System, Kazakhstan
- 11 - Ural Delta and Nearest Caspian Sea Coastal Zone, Kazakhstan
- 12 - Astrakhan State Nature Biosphere Reserve, Russia
- 13 - Agrakhanskiy, Russia
- 14 - Shirvan National Park, Azerbaijan
- 15 - Ghyzyl-Aghach State Nature Reserve, Azerbaijan
- 16 - Bujagh National Park, Iran
- 17 - Fereydoonkenar, Ezbaran and Ruds Ab-Bandanas, Iran
- 18 - Termez, Uzbekistan
- 19 - Tallymerjen & Kelif-Zeyit, Turkmenistan
- 20 - Durnaly, Turkmenistan
- 21 - Ab-i-Estada, Afghanistan
- 22 - Dashte-Nawar, Afghanistan
- 23 - Thanedar Wala Game Reserve, Pakistan
- 24 - Taunsa Barrage Wildlife Sanctuary, Pakistan
- 25 - Keoladeo (Ghana) National Park, India
- 26 - Etawah-Mainpuri, India

- - designated sites
- - proposed sites

Certificate of the Western/Central Asian Site Network for the Siberian Crane and Other Waterbirds



Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS)

Certificate of Participation

In the

Western / Central Asian Site Network for the Siberian Crane and Other Waterbirds

In recognition of its international importance for the conservation
of the Siberian Crane, other waterbirds and their habitats

Executive Secretary
Convention on Migratory Species



