

Report on progress towards the CMS MOU in the period September 2006-June 2007.

Section 1. Implementation

Internationally, the publication of *Saiga News* by the Saiga Conservation Alliance has been supported in this period by INTAS, the Darwin Initiative and the Wildlife Conservation Network. The Convention on Migratory Species is supporting the collation of information about progress towards MTWP implementation through a 2-year grant to Imperial College London, starting on 1st July 2007 (action 1.5).

In Uzbekistan, a Coordinating committee for implementation of the MoU has been set up within the framework of the MTWP; a working program of urgent measures aimed at the conservation of saiga antelopes for the period of 2006 to 2010 was outlined (actions 1.2, 1.3).

In Kazakhstan, in compliance with the order of the head of the Kazakhstan Prime Minister's office No 7-64/002-565 of 20 February 2007, the Institute of Zoology and the Committee for Forestry and Game Ranching of the Ministry of Agriculture initiated the development of the second stage of the programme for the conservation and rehabilitation of rare and vanishing wild ungulates and saiga antelopes for the period of 2008 to 2010 (action 1.2)

Section 2. Anti-poaching

No major increase in funding for anti-poaching patrols over that already in place has been reported in any range state.

In Russia, a small grant from IFAW is reported to have been received by the Stepnoi Sanctuary, to support the monitoring and protection of the saiga in the Stepnoi Sanctuary by improving the capacity of the inspectors, including logistical support (action 2.2) and training (action 2.4). Two poachers were arrested and prosecuted in Kalmykia in March 2007, and there have been interceptions of smuggled horns in Russia, Taiwan and Kazakhstan (action 2.3; see articles above).

In Mongolia, a ranger refresher training course was held in September 2006 (WWF-Mongolia, see *Saiga News* issue 4; action 2.4).

Section 3. Sustainable use and trade

In June 2007, the saiga antelope was discussed at the meeting of the CITES Animals Committee, and an update on the situation was given by the CITES secretariat, including the results of an trade survey in consumer and producer countries conducted by TRAFFIC and the Wildlife Conservation Society. See: <http://www.cites.org/eng/cop/14/doc/E14-56.pdf> (action 3.6).

Section 4. Human factors

In addition to existing projects, the following new actions have taken place in the period:

In Uzbekistan, new projects have begun on participatory monitoring and setting up a "Saiga Friends" network, carried out by the SCA and Institute of Zoology, and funded by FFI/BAT and WCN (see above; actions 4.2 and 4.3).

In Kalmykia, a survey of attitudes to saiga conservation and the effectiveness of conservation projects was carried out in Oct-Nov 2007 by the Centre for Ecological Projects and Imperial College London, funded by the Darwin Initiative (action 4.2). A project funded by the

Association of Religions in Society and led by the Dharma Centre, Kalmykia, is involving religious groups in saiga conservation (action 4.3).

In Kazakhstan, FFI initiated a second phase of its small grants programme in Bosoi, Ustiurt, in October 2006 (action 4.1; see *SN* issue 4).

Section 5. Awareness

In addition to existing projects, the following new actions have taken place in the period:

WWF-Mongolia organised a children's art competition in October 2006 (see *Saiga News* issue 4; action 5.2).

In Uzbekistan, awareness-raising has been carried out through art competitions, supporting a craft club and production of publicity materials (see articles above; action 5.2).

In Kazakhstan, a 15-minute saiga cartoon was shown in October 2007, supported by NABU (see *Saiga News* issue 4; action 5.2). There has been some press coverage of saiga issues (e.g. *SN Issue 4*, action 5.1).

In Kalmykia, saiga conservation has been featured in the local press on a number of occasions (action 5.1), a children's art competition has taken place (May 2007) and a number of new sets of publicity materials have been distributed by members of the SCA, supported by a number of grants including from the Darwin Initiative and DEFRA's Small Ecological Project Scheme (action 5.2).

The Saiga Conservation Alliance is launching a new website at www.saiga-conservation.com in June 2007, and continues to expand the *Saiga News* mailing list (actions 5.3 and 5.4).

Section 6. Mapping distributions

In Kazakhstan, the Association for the Conservation of the Biodiversity of Kazakhstan has appointed a new GIS officer, Stefan Zucker, with the responsibility of collating data on saiga distributions and ecology, funded by the German government (actions 6.1 and 6.3).

In Kalmykia, a computer database of saiga distributions, herd size and structures in the Chernye Zemli Biosphere Reserve and Stepnoi Sanctuary from 2003 onwards has been collated, funded initially by INTAS (action 6.1).

In Mongolia, several saigas were satellite-collared in August 2006 by the Wildlife Conservation Society and Mongolian Academy of Sciences (see *SN* issue 4; action 6.2).

Section 7. Protected areas.

No new progress to report in this area. In Kazakhstan, the Altyn-Dala Conservation Project continues to be active in planning and other activities (action 7.1).

Section 8. Monitoring

In Kazakhstan, aerial censuses of all three saiga populations were carried out in April-May 2007 (action 8.1). An evaluation of the aerial survey monitoring procedures with recommendations for future developments was carried out by independent consultants in April 2007 on the request of the Committee for Forestry and Game Ranching, and financially supported by Frankfurt Zoological Society (action 8.3).

In Kalmykia, monitoring of saiga demography, calving, herd size and structure and distribution has continued to be carried out as in previous years (actions 8.1, 8.2, 8.7; see articles above).

In Uzbekistan, a pilot participatory monitoring programme has been set up (see articles above; action 8.6).

In Mongolia, a saiga population count was carried out in January 2007, suggesting a population size of at least 2000 individuals (action 8.1).

Section 9. Captive breeding

The Centre for Wild Animals of the Republic of Kalmykia has been active in transferring its expertise to other, more newly established, captive breeding centres in Russia (in Rostov and Astrakhan provinces and Moscow Zoo). Several calves were taken from the Stepnoi Sanctuary in May 2007 in order to improve the captive breeding stock in these breeding centres (actions 9.3, 9.7).

Sections 10-14. Population-specific measures

North-west Precaspian: Work on actions 10.2-10.4 (monitoring and conservation activities) has continued (see articles above and in *SN 4*).

Ural: No known progress to report against any of these actions.

Ustiurt: The pilot-scale public engagement projects have continued in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan (12.4). There has been work with law enforcement authorities in Uzbekistan (12.8) and attempts have been made to engage with infrastructural developers (12.9).

Betpak-dala: ACBP has engaged a GIS officer with responsibility for saiga data collation, and saiga conservation is being fully considered in the planning process of the Altyn-Dala Conservation Project (13.1). Funding for anti-poaching patrols has continued (13.2).

Mongolia: Inadequate information available to assess progress, although small-scale initiatives have been started by a number of organisations on action points 14.1-14.5.

Compilation of the progress report

The full text of the MTWP, for cross-referencing with this report, can be found at http://www.cms.int/species/saiga/1st_saiga_range_states_meeting.htm. If any new activities in fulfilment of the MTWP, which occurred during the reporting period Sept 06-June 07, have not been included in this round-up, please send us details and we will include them in the next round-up. We can't include activities that we have not been informed about. If you want to know more about any activity reported here, contact either the author of the Saiga News article which expands on the activity or the editorial team member for the country in question.