



Convention on the Conservation of  
European Wildlife and Natural Habitats

Standing Committee

**Recommendation No. 59 (1997) on the Drafting and Implementation of Action Plans of Wild  
Fauna Species**

*(Adopted by the Standing Committee on 5 December 1997)*

The Standing Committee of the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats, acting under Article 14 of the Convention,

Noting that integrated ecosystem management and habitat protection have great advantages for the preservation of biodiversity and should go hand in hand with species protection efforts;

Aware that the identification of processes and categories of activities which have or are likely to have significant adverse impact on the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity (as stated in Article 7 of the Convention on Biological Diversity) are also of utmost importance for the preservation of threatened species;

Aware that in many instances wild species which have an unfavourable conservation status (particularly those listed in Appendix II of the Convention) may require special conservation efforts to acquire a population level which corresponds to their ecological requirements, as stated in Article 2 of the Convention;

Aware that Species Action Plans (of which Species Recovery Plans are a particular case) may be appropriate conservation tools to restore threatened populations in some circumstances;

Aware that Species Action Plans cannot be considered as the only effective method to preserve species protected under the Convention and that they should be applied selectively and only when very solid measures can be recommended and implemented;

Noting that Species Action Plans often draw on many financial and human resources of Conservation Agencies and that an excess of Species Action Plans may prove difficult to manage and implement for those Agencies;

Recognising that the report on Guidelines for Action Plans for Animal Species (T-PVS (97) 20) prepared by Mr Antonio Machado and the report of the Workshop on Drafting and Implementing Action Plans for Threatened Species held in Navarre, Spain from 5 to 7 June 1997 (T-PVS (97) 35 Bil.) constitute a valuable beginning to the Convention's contribution to the implementation of Action Theme 11 of the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy;

Noting that, in the framework of this recommendation the term "species" will be understood to cover also subspecies and populations, as Species Action Plans may be designed for a whole species, a subspecies, a meta-population or a population, depending on the biological characteristics of the species concerned and the geographic range where it applies;

Recommends that Contracting Parties and Observer States, as appropriate take into consideration the appended Guidelines while drafting and implementing action plans for wild fauna species:

## **Guidelines on the Drafting and Implementation of Action Plans of Wild Fauna Species**

### **1. Legal aspects and administrative arrangements: finances and long term involvement**

- 1.1. Consider giving an appropriate legal and administrative framework to Species Action Plans;
- 1.2. Provide adequate (short, medium and long term) administrative and financial means for the implementation of Species Action Plans; associate formally the scientific and conservation community, the managers of natural areas of natural interest and, where appropriate, the local and regional authorities and relevant interest groups;

### **2. International co-operation**

- 2.1. Collaborate with other states, in the framework of the Bern Convention, in the framework of the European Action Programme on Threatened Species (Action Theme 11 of the pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy) and in whatever other appropriate framework, in the drafting, implementation and follow-up, as appropriate, of Species Action Plans, especially for those species whose conservation requires the co-operation of several states, and promote such co-operation;
- 2.2. Consult relevant neighbouring states while planning and carrying out Species Action Plans of transboundary populations;

### **3. Identification of species requiring special conservation attention, including, if appropriate, Action Plans**

- 3.1. Assess the conservation status of the species of the main taxonomic groups within their jurisdiction by a thorough process conducted strictly in biological terms. Create a national catalogue (or red list or red book) of threatened species, using, wherever appropriate, the IUCN Categories of Threat; collaborate with relevant scientific institutions and private conservation bodies in that context;
- 3.2. Identify species requiring Species Action Plans; define the appropriate geographic area to which the Plan is to apply, depending on the biological characteristic of the species concerned and on other relevant factors, including legal and administrative ones;
- 3.3. While assessing candidate species for Action Plans, use threat (risk of extinction) as main criteria; other additional criteria not related to threat that may be used are the following:
  - responsibility of the state in the global conservation of the species (e.g. the species is endemic or a significant percentage of the world population is in its territory);
  - the species occur mainly in rare or vulnerable habitats, which would also benefit from conservation actions taken in favour of the species;
- 3.4. Consider, if appropriate, drafting and implementing multi-species Action Plans;
- 3.5. Avoid a proliferation of Species Action Plans where it may exceed the management capacity of the Conservation Agencies responsible for their implementation, as it may be counter-productive; avoid, in general, drafting Species Action Plans for species that, although they may be threatened, they are unlikely to benefit significantly from the existence of an Action Plan; avoid "inflation" of Action Plans so that they remain relatively few in number, thus having greater chances of success, and conservation efforts are not dispersed;

### **4. Drafting action plans**

#### **4.1. Scientific aspects**

4.1.1. Ensure that action plans are based on sound studies on the biology of the population or species concerned, while avoiding unnecessary delays in implementation of the plans and the taking of conservation measures;

4.1.2. Ensure that, in order to avoid academically biased or unrealistic recommendations, experienced conservation managers participate in the preparation of the Species Action Plans;

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### **4.2. Ensure that the plan takes into consideration the following aspects:**

4.2.1. Biological data, including distribution, habitat, population size estimates, trend, and other demographic data, migratory and dispersal patterns (if applicable), genetics, taxonomy, and ecological and ethological studies;

4.2.2. Present and past causes of the decline of a species, and forecast as to how the factors having caused the decline are likely to evolve in the future;

4.2.3. Evaluation of the habitat requirements of the species, including the assessment of whether present areas occupied by the species are able to support genetically viable populations;

4.2.4. Habitat conservation and habitat restoration in the natural range of the species (including present sites and those in which the species was present in recent times); while designing areas for conservation, corridor areas permitting genetic flow among neighbouring populations should be taken into account;

4.2.5. Legal status of the species; IUCN category of threat, presence in lists (including appendices or annexes of International Conventions);

4.2.6. Need and viability to carry out captive breeding and re-introduction programmes;

4.2.7. Risk analysis of those factors that could jeopardise the full implementation of the action plan;

4.2.8. Feasibility of the Action Plan, including social and economic background in which the Species Action Plan is to be implemented; consider impact of measures proposed on economic, cultural or recreational activities or how they may be perceived by affected interest groups; evaluation of the social acceptance of the measures proposed is essential to its ongoing success;

### **4.3. Goals, setting of priorities and funding**

4.3.1. Set-up precise and measurable goals that may be used to evaluate the performance of the action plan;

4.3.2. Set-up a precise time schedule for the different actions to be taken;

4.3.3. Identify the institutions that are supposed to carry them out;

4.3.4. Ensure that enough financial resources are available to implement and monitor the Action Plan;

4.3.5. Prioritise actions and ensure that cost estimates reflect the priorities expressed;

4.3.6. Avoid, as far as possible, that species recovery efforts for one species become a permanent, ever-lasting activity, favouring in the objectives the maintenance and conservation of the natural processes that ensure a good conservation status of the species;

## **5. Implementation, monitoring, update and follow-up**

5.1. Ensure the professional implementation of Species Action Plans, avoiding confusion regarding who hold responsibility for the carrying out of the different tasks involved, and recruiting or training adequate professional staff;

5.2. Ensure that monitoring is an integral part of the Species Action Plan and that the funds and means are provided for it;

5.3. Update periodically Species Action Plans to integrate the new information obtained during the implementation phase;

5.4. Associate international organisations in the follow-up of Species Action Plans, particularly by using more efficiently governing bodies of biodiversity-related Conventions and their technical groups; inform, in particular, relevant expert groups of the Bern Convention on the progress of the implementation of Species Action Plans examined under the framework of the Convention;

## **6. Participation of NGOs; public information and educational aspects**

6.1. Ensure that the appropriate public participation mechanisms are set, particularly when Species Action Plans are likely to be cause conflict or have socio-economic impacts of some importance;

6.2. Recognise the catalytic role played by non-governmental organisations, and associate them in the implementation and follow-up of Species Action Plans, and, where relevant, in their drafting;

6.3. Involve, as appropriate, local and regional authorities in all the process of Species Action Plans;

6.4. Use species subject to Action Plans as flagship species in educational campaigns;

6.5. Involve traditional or occasional users of the area where the Species Action Plan is to be implemented, in order to avoid, as far as possible, conflicts.