

# NATURAL HERITAGE CONVENTIONS

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### AGENDA

Expert Workshop on the 2010 Biodiversity Indicators and Post-2010 Indicator Development  
*6 - 8 July 2009. Reading, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland*

South-South-Exchange Meeting on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Forest Biodiversity  
*8 - 10 July 2009. Montréal, Canada*

Ramsar Evenings  
*3 October 2009. Schiltigheim, France*

Ramsar Evenings  
*21 November 2009. Weisweil, Germany*

Calendar of SCBD Upcoming Meetings  
*Organizers: Convention on Biological Diversity*

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### PUBLICATIONS

“A Bird’s Eye View on Flyways - A brief tour by the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals” now available

## NEWS

### **World Day to Combat Desertification 2009: Conserving land and water = Securing our common future**

This year's World Day to Combat Desertification, celebrated on 17 June under the theme "Conserving land and water = Securing our common future", is particularly relevant for the Convention on Biological Diversity. The pressures on the World's natural functions have reached such levels that ecosystems' ability to satisfy the needs of future generations is being seriously compromised. We are currently facing two major challenges which are interconnected : desertification and biodiversity loss. These challenges have further implications for sustainable development, and their impacts are compounded by climate change.

### **GEF and CBD join forces to raise awareness for the 2010 International Year of Biodiversity**

The Global Environment Facility, (GEF) the largest multilateral donor protecting global biodiversity and a pioneer in supporting innovative tools and mechanisms to ensure sustainable conservation, will join forces with the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) to spur binding action by decision-makers to conserve and sustainably use biodiversity, stop species loss, and maintain vital ecosystem goods and services.

### **The GEF joins forces with the Convention for the celebration of the United Nations International Year on Biodiversity**

The Council of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) approved this week a special initiative to support the objectives of the 2010 International Year of Biodiversity (IYB). Budgeted at US\$ 895,000, this is the most significant initiative for the IYB agreed to date. The GEF activities on IYB will be undertaken in consultation with the Convention Secretariat taking in to account relevant decisions of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention.

Activities within the initiative include:

- A special forum on the GEF contribution to biodiversity conservation, sustainable use, and access to genetic resources and benefit-sharing organized at the GEF Assembly in May 2010 in partnership with the Convention Secretariat;
- International events and workshops on topics related to the 2010 biodiversity target and other emerging biodiversity issues;
- Special events on private sector involvement on biodiversity conservation;
- GEF Media Reporting Awards on Biodiversity.

Commenting on the support, Monique Barbut, CEO and Chairperson of the GEF, said, "*What we do in 2010 could be the tipping point needed to galvanize public opinion and to spur decision-makers around the globe to take the necessary steps to reduce and halt the loss of biodiversity.*"

Ahmed Djoghlaif, Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity noted, "*The GEF Council decision to provide substantial financial support to achieve the objective of IYB is yet another demonstration of the sound partnership which exists between the Convention and its financial mechanism, and I applaud the GEF CEO and the Council for this initiative and call on others to follow this lead.*"

The International Year of Biodiversity will begin with a high-level event hosted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in Paris on 21-22 January 2010. The event will include a new exhibition on biodiversity that will travel around the world during the year. Following the event, UNESCO will hold a scientific conference from 25 to 29 January focusing on a number of topics identified by the Conference of the Parties as requiring scientific attention. An event of major significance during the year

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will be a high-level meeting to be held in conjunction with the sixth-fifth session of the United Nations General Assembly in September 2010 and focusing on issue of biodiversity for development. In December, Kanazawa Prefecture in Japan will host an event to close the International Year.

The Global Environment Facility, designated to operate the financial mechanism of the Convention, has evolved to be the principal multilateral agency that provides financial support to global biodiversity efforts, and is uniquely positioned to mobilize its funding partners to increase global recognition about biodiversity.

For ideas and technical support on how to actively participate in the International Year of Biodiversity, readers are encouraged to write to [IYB2010@cbd.int](mailto:IYB2010@cbd.int).

A joint press-release issued by GEF and the CBD Secretariat is available at: [http://www.thegef.org/interior\\_right.aspx?id=26074](http://www.thegef.org/interior_right.aspx?id=26074).

### Convention on Biological Diversity supports Green Economy Initiative

More than 21 United Nations agencies, including the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, have backed the call for a world-wide transition to a low carbon, resource-efficient Green Economy able to deliver multiple economic, social and environmental opportunities in the 21st century, including halting the degradation of multi-trillion dollar ecosystem services and the underlying biodiversity...

### GORILLAS – Gentle Giants in Need: International Experts Issue

*Frankfurt Declaration to Call for Better Protection of Gorillas*

Under the title “Gentle Giants in Need” 160 government officials, experts, corporate representatives and conservationists from 20 countries attended a conference in Frankfurt, 9-10 June to mark the UN Year of the Gorilla, a global campaign to help implement the gorilla agreement. In the “Frankfurt Declaration” they highlighted major threats to gorillas and their habitats, as well as the strategies available for the conservation of the second closest relative to humankind.

### 30th Anniversary of the Bonn Convention (UNEP/CMS)

*Bonn, 23rd June 1979 - 2009*

Representatives of over 100 countries as well as many intergovernmental agencies and non-governmental organisations met in Stockholm, Sweden in June 1972 to discuss the state of the world’s environment at the UN Conference on the Human Environment. One major outcome of the Conference was the decision to establish the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). The Conference also recognized the special threats faced by migratory species on their often arduous journeys across political boundaries. The delegates agreed that an international instrument to protect migratory species was necessary.



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### 30 years of Bonn Convention: Russia supports the protection of the Saiga antelope

On the occasion of the 30th Anniversary of the Bonn Convention, the Russian Federation has enhanced its support for the conservation of the Saiga antelope by signing the relevant agreement established in the framework of the Convention. The Saiga antelope is one of most rapidly declining land mammal species worldwide. While one million of the ungulates still traveled through the Eurasian steppe as recently as the early 90s, their populations have dwindled to less than

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100,000 animals today. Illegal hunting and ecosystem changes are the main threats. There is a high demand for Saiga horn in traditional Chinese medicine, which is not only used in the Far East, but has also established markets in Europe. In addition, antelope meat serves as a protein source in particular for the poorer sections of the society across the Saiga's range.

### International Day of Biodiversity - Do we have the energy to save the gorilla?

An omnipresent yet invisible threat to gorillas and their habitats, as well as to countless other species, is the ever-growing human demand for energy and its consequences. Charcoal production is a major threat to gorilla forests in many areas, not least the Mountain Gorilla habitat in Virunga National Park, Democratic Republic of Congo. To reduce this threat, solar cookers, tree-planting on farms and the spread of fuel-efficient stoves are needed. The Year of the Gorilla (YoG) is supporting a project in the Mountain Gorillas' range which enables local residents to purchase highly fuel-efficient stoves for a low price, thereby enabling them to use less firewood, which is often taken from the very same forests that are home to the gorillas.

### International Biodiversity Day - Migratory Species and Invasive Alien Species

"Invasive Alien Species (IAS)" is this year's theme for International Day for Biological Diversity (IDB), an international public awareness event, proclaimed by the United Nations, focusing every year on a different biodiversity issue. The message of this year's IDB aims to highlight that IAS are one of the major direct drivers of biodiversity loss and to give a clear signal to world leaders that much can be and needs to be done to tackle this problem. All components of biodiversity, including migratory species, show signs of being affected by plants, animals, pathogens and other organisms that are introduced and/or spread outside their natural habitats.

### Montenegro accedes as the 111th Party to CMS (Convention on Migratory Species)

Among the most appealing aspects of the biodiversity of Montenegro are the numerous bird species, some of which are the focus of special CMS programmes and agreements. The Balkans region has an enormous diversity of fauna, including many migratory species. The Imperial Eagle (*Aquila heliaca*), the Great Bustard (*Otis tarda*), the Lesser Kestrel (*Falco naumanni*) and numerous terrestrial mammals are some of the animals that regularly cross Montenegro's borders; hence the importance of the country's accession to CMS.

### Uganda designates famous "Mountains of the Moon" (Ramsar Convention)



In a brief ceremony during the opening session of the 40th meeting of the Standing Committee, Paul Mafabi, commissioner of the Wetlands Management Department in Uganda's Ministry of Water and Environment, accepted the Ramsar site certificate for Uganda's newest Wetland of International Importance – "Rwenzori Mountains Ramsar site" (99,500 hectares, 00°25'N 030°00'E). The new site, within a National Park and World Heritage Site, is located in the west of the country, ranging from 1,600 to 5,100 meters above sea level in mountains that are home to one of only three glaciated areas in Africa (with Mounts Kenya and Kilimanjaro) and contiguous with the Ramsar site "Parc national des Virunga" in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

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Uganda's new designation, effective 13 May 2009, has been supported significantly by WWF – Uganda and WWF International's Freshwater Programme.

According to Cynthia Kibata, Ramsar Assistant Advisor for Africa, based on the Ramsar Information Sheet submitted with the designation, Rwenzori Mountains Ramsar site was noted by the geographer Ptolemy in AD 300 as the Lunis Montae ("Mountains of the Moon") and has continued to fascinate ever since. The entire Afro-alpine ecosystem (between 1,600 and 5,100 meters asl.) is unique; with the contribution of high rainfall and the melting of snow from the peaks, various wetland types are present such as peatlands, freshwater lakes, and tundra, amongst others. The mountains are known to support 21 species of small mammals, including the endemic and vulnerable Ruwenzori Shrew. Other species of global conservation concern include L'Hoest's monkey, Horseshoe bat, and Rockefeller's Sunbird. With the distribution of fish varying with altitude, several indigenous fish species are found within the site, with the most common Cyprinid species including *Varicorhinus rwenzorii*.

The Rwenzori Mountains continue to face challenges from increasing population pressure resulting in increased demand for agricultural land, growing tourism, and climate change, despite the stringent protection measures in place within the Park. Through its designation as a state-owned National Park, it is covered by a management plan that allows activities such as tourism, firewood collection, research, etc., to be carried out in zoned areas only.

### Kazakhstan names two important lake systems (Ramsar Convention)



The government of Kazakhstan has designated two new Wetlands of International Importance, effective 7 May 2009 -- Koibagar-Tyuntyugur Lake System (58,000 hectares, 52°39'N 065°45'E) and Kulykol-Taldykol Lake System (8,300 hectares, 51°23'N 061°52'E) -- bringing that country's Ramsar sites total to four sites covering 531,141 hectares. Both are lake complexes in the Kostanay oblast in the northern part of the country. Both have also been designated in the Western/Central Asian Site Network for Siberian Cranes and

Other Globally Endangered Wetland Bird Species in the framework of the Convention on Migratory Species and, for both of them, RIS site information has been developed with the assistance of the UNEP/GEF Siberian Crane Wetlands Project. Ramsar's Assistant Advisor for Asia/Oceania, Ann Aldersey, has provided brief site descriptions based on the RIS information.

**Koibagar-Tyuntyugur Lake System** (58,000 hectares, 52°39'N 065°45'E) comprises five river-fed, freshwater lakes characterized by a diversity of habitats including extensive shoreline reedbeds, open water and seasonal floodplain wet meadows. The lake system is of great importance for Anseriformes during all periods; up to 200,000 moulting individuals have been recorded during favourable conditions, and as many as 500,000 waterbirds during the period of autumn passage. The site supports 13 bird species on the IUCN Red List, including the Siberian Crane (*Grus leucogeranus*) and Sociable Lapwing (*Vanellus gregarius*), and over 1% of the populations of 12 waterbird species. The area surrounding the lakes is used for agriculture, including grain cropping and animal husbandry. Koibagar and Tyuntyugur lakes are used for commercial fishing, and associated boating activities cause disturbance to bird nesting and migration. Goose hunting, vegetation trampling, and fires also pose threats to the ecological character of the site.

**Kulykol-Taldykol Lake System** (8,300 hectares, 51°23'N 061°52'E) is a wetland complex comprising two large lakes, Kulykol and Taldykol, and several smaller lakes. The complex is highly significant for waterbirds. It is habitat for 12 bird species on the IUCN Red List, including the Siberian Crane (*Grus leucogeranus*), and supports tens of thousands of Anseriformes during migration and moulting, as well as over 1% of the populations of 12 species of waterbird. 45 species of wetland birds are reported to nest at the site. The lake system has a range of habitats including open water, damp meadows and shoreline reedbeds. Lake depth and salinity fluctuates seasonally. The site is surrounded by agricultural land – including grain crops attractive to large numbers of geese – and is used for hunting and small-scale fishing by local residents.

## AGENDA

### Expert Workshop on the 2010 Biodiversity Indicators and Post-2010 Indicator Development

6 - 8 July 2009. Reading, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Organizers: Convention on Biological Diversity

Contact: [tristan.tyrrell@unepwcmc.org](mailto:tristan.tyrrell@unepwcmc.org)

More info: <http://www.cbd.int/doc/?meeting=EMIND-02>

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### South-South-Exchange Meeting on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Forest Biodiversity

8 - 10 July 2009. Montréal, Canada

Organizers: Convention on Biological Diversity

Contact: [tristan.tyrrell@unepwcmc.org](mailto:tristan.tyrrell@unepwcmc.org)

More info: <http://www.cbd.int/doc/?meeting=BMSSC-01>

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### Ramsar Evenings

3 October 2009. Schiltigheim, France

Organizers: Alsace Nature

Contact: [siegeregion@alsacenature.org](mailto:siegeregion@alsacenature.org)

More info: [http://www.actu-environnement.com/ae/agenda/manif/veillees\\_ramsar\\_10879.php4](http://www.actu-environnement.com/ae/agenda/manif/veillees_ramsar_10879.php4)

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### Ramsar Evenings

21 November 2009. Weisweil, Germany

Organizers: Alsace Nature

Contact: [siegeregion@alsacenature.org](mailto:siegeregion@alsacenature.org)

More info: [http://www.actu-environnement.com/ae/agenda/manif/veillees\\_ramsar\\_10880.php4](http://www.actu-environnement.com/ae/agenda/manif/veillees_ramsar_10880.php4)

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### Calendar of SCBD Upcoming Meetings

Organizers: Convention on Biological Diversity

Contact: [secretariat@cbd.int](mailto:secretariat@cbd.int)

More info: <http://www.cbd.int/meetings/>

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## PUBLICATIONS



### **“A Bird’s Eye View on Flyways - A brief tour by the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals” now available**

This structured guide on global conservation of avian migrants sheds light on available monitoring and preservation methods. Migratory birds have a considerable economic, ecological and cultural value. Birdwatching activities, such as the World Migratory Bird Day for instance, provide a turnover of billions of US\$ each year. If we want to continue profiting from, and enjoying, migratory birds, their ecological requirements will need to be met throughout their lifecycles, and all along their flyways. The numbers of many migratory bird species have gone down significantly, by 40% on average, due to a variety of threats. In order to halt this downward trend, effective measures have to be implemented.