



**CONVENTION ON
MIGRATORY
SPECIES**

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3rd MEETING OF THE SIGNATORIES (MOS3) OF THE
MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING CONCERNING
CONSERVATION AND RESTORATION OF THE
BUKHARA DEER (*Cervus elaphus bactrianus*)
Almaty, Kazakhstan, 10-11 September 2024

**Report of the Third Meeting of Signatories to the Memorandum of Understanding
Concerning Conservation and Restoration of the
Bukhara Deer (*Cervus elaphus bactrianus*) (Bukhara Deer MOU)**

Agenda item 1. Opening of the Meeting.

1. The Meeting was opened by Mr. Andrey Kim, vice-chairman of the Committee on Forestry and Wildlife of the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of the Republic of Kazakhstan. He thanked the Secretariat for organizing the meeting and noted that the Bukhara Deer, also known as Khangul or 'King's Flower' has become extinct in Kazakhstan in the 1960s as a result of habitat conversion and its reintroduction began in the 1980s. The numbers of Bukhara Deer have steadily increased in recent years in all Range States indicating the serious commitment to Bukhara Deer conservation by all Range State governments. Given that the second meeting of Signatories to the MOU could not take place due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Mr. Kim highlighted the significant opportunity provided by this in-person meeting to strengthen cooperation among governmental bodies, scientists in the Bukhara Deer Range States, and international experts, fostering joint conservation actions.
2. Ms. Clara Nobbe, Head of the Terrestrial Species Team at the Secretariat of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), thanked the Government of Kazakhstan for hosting the meeting, as well as the other Signatory States and conservation partners for their participation. In her welcoming remarks, she expressed pleasure about the presence of Ms. Olga Pereladova, the Species Focal Point for Bukhara Deer under the Central Asian Mammals Initiative (CAMI), who had facilitated the creation of the Bukhara Deer MOU in 2002, making it a great opportunity to benefit from her expertise. Ms. Nobbe explained that the MOU includes, in addition to its main text, an Action Plan intended to provide long-term goals for conserving the species, as well as an international work programme, which is updated every few years to reflect current conditions and guide the implementation of conservation actions in the shorter term. Although the current work programme, adopted by Range States via correspondence, is set to expire in 2026, the CMS Secretariat decided to hold the Third Meeting of Signatories to the MOU in 2024 to take advantage of available funding within the International Climate Initiative of the German Government. Thus, the validity period of the new work programme will begin in 2025 and continue until 2032, aligning with the revision cycles of the Programme of Work of the Central Asian Mammals Initiative.

Agenda item 2. Election of the Chair.

3. Mr. Andrey Kim was elected as the Chair of the Meeting. He explained that the meeting intends to make decisions by consensus and that in case of disagreement the Rules of Procedure of the CMS Conference of the Parties would be followed.

Agenda item 3 and 4. Objectives and Modus Operandi of the Meeting and Adoption of the Agenda.

4. Ms. Clara Nobbe provided an overview of the meeting's agenda and schedule (UNEP/CMS/BKD/MOS3/Doc.1.) and the agenda was adopted without any changes.

Agenda item 5. Report of the Secretariat.

5. Ms. Fariza Adilbekova, Associate Programme Management Officer at the CMS Secretariat, presented the Secretariat's Report (UNEP/CMS/BKD/MOS3/Doc.2). Ms. Olga Pereladova noted that, according to her monitoring data, the current total number of Bukhara Deer was 5,000 animals, rather than the 4,300 as stated in the report. She had submitted this information to the Secretariat's consultant, Mr. Stefan Michel, and copied Secretariat colleagues when the draft Overview Report was being prepared. In her view, the lower figure might have been reported in Uzbekistan's National Report because it did not yet include the results from a recent survey of Aral Paygambar Island, where a large group of about 600-800 Bukhara Deer was recently found. This group had not been included in Uzbekistan's total count. This was noted by the meeting.

Agenda item 6. Reports on MOU Implementation.

6. The Chair invited representatives of the Signatory States to present an overview of the implementation of the Programme of Work for the Bukhara Deer 2021-2026 in their countries. The presentations can be found online under the respective links:
 - [Conservation of the Bukhara Deer in Kazakhstan](#), presented by Mr. Vladimir Kertiyev, Head of Department of Development, Kazakh State Enterprise "Okhotzoprom".
 - [Conservation of the Bukhara Deer in Tajikistan](#), presented by Mr. Nurali Saidov, BNPA Specialist, Committee for Environmental Protection of Tajikistan.
 - [Conservation of the Bukhara Deer in Turkmenistan](#), presented by Mr. Jumamurat Saparmuradov, Scientist, Institute of Deserts, Flora and Fauna, Ministry of Environmental Protection of Turkmenistan. (online).
 - [Conservation of the Bukhara Deer in Uzbekistan](#), presented by Ms. Natalya Marmazinskaya, Deputy Director for Science, Zarafshon National Natural Park, Zoological Society of Uzbekistan.
7. Overall, habitat fragmentation, degradation and loss were highlighted as major threats in all Range States. The drivers included logging, the illegal practice of burning the reeds, conversion of riparian zones to agricultural land, illegal livestock grazing and hydrological changes in riparian habitats, droughts and floods caused by manipulation of the river flow, mining and climate change. The following common challenges were identified:
 - Improving the capacity, wages and equipment of protected area staff (Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan),
 - Maintaining of the hydrological conditions which are necessary to enable the existence of riparian forests (Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan),

- Granting a protected area status to more riparian forest areas (Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan),
 - Strengthening inter-agency and cross-border cooperation (Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan),
 - Facilitation of natural dispersal of deer or translocation of deer (Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan),
 - Legislation to establish and protect ecological corridors (raised by Uzbekistan, but relevant for all),
 - Addressing poaching beyond protected areas (all),
 - Reduction of disturbance from nearby human settlements (Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan).
 - Research to determine additional suitable habitats and to translocate the deer to new habitats (all).
8. In addition to these common issues, representatives of the Signatory States highlighted challenges that were either country-specific or more significant in some countries than in others. In Kazakhstan, for example, concerns included the limited gene pool of re-introduced deer and increased livestock grazing due to state support for local farms. Predation by feral dogs was also mentioned as an important threat in Uzbekistan. Signatory States reported that measures were being planned or undertaken to address these issues.
9. Ms. Lizza Protas, acting director of WWF Central Asia presented information on the reintroduction of the Bukhara Deer in Kazakhstan and other projects by WWF Central Asia related to Bukhara Deer conservation in the region, including efforts in Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan (see [WWF Central Asia' presentation](#)). In the Ile-Balkhash area of Kazakhstan, the Bukhara Deer had become locally extinct 100 years ago, and Ms. Protas expressed pride in her organization's success in re-establishing a population there, which currently numbers about 150 animals. She highlighted the primary conservation needs for the near future as follows:
- a. translocation of deer from overpopulated protected areas to suitable habitats,
 - b. conservation of tugai forests,
 - c. environmentally sound water management, and
 - d. removal of Bukhara Deer from the Red Books of threatened species in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan in the next 10 years.
10. Ms. Pereladova added that Bukhara Deer was for a long time considered by IUCN as a subspecies of Red Deer (*Cervus elaphus*)¹, which is a widely distributed species. Therefore, Bukhara Deer did not receive much attention from the conservation community, although the numbers of animals had dropped significantly. However, the listing on Appendix I and Appendix II of CMS, the creation of the CMS Bukhara Deer MOU helped to change this situation by mobilizing conservation action in the Signatory States. The Action Plan and Work Programme were developed and implemented successfully across the range of the Bukhara Deer, she said, contributing to the recovery of the populations.
11. Ms. Pereladova participated in the latest IUCN expert review of the conservation status of the red deer complex, previously treated as one species *Cervus elaphus*, during which

¹ The Red Deer complex, including European and North African Red Deer (*Cervus elaphus*), Tarim Red Deer and Eastern Asian and North American Wapiti (*C. canadensis*) were considered as one species, *C. elaphus* (see [taxonomic note to *Cervus hanglu* in the IUCN Red List, 2017](#))

it was found that this complex likely includes at least three different species. One of them is the Tarim red deer *Cervus hanglu*, and the Bukhara Deer is a subspecies of *Cervus hanglu*. This was a serious breakthrough also for Bukhara Deer conservation, as it is now valued as a representative of a distinct species. Since Tarim Red Deer is currently rated as Least Concern due to the recovery of Bukhara Deer numbers, she explained that it would be reasonable to consider removing Bukhara Deer from CMS Appendix I, while at the same time keeping it on Appendix II.

Agenda item 7. Update and Review of the Conservation Status of the Bukhara Deer.

12. The Chair asked Mr. Stefan Michel, consultant of the CMS Secretariat for the meeting, to present the draft Overview Report on the Conservation Status and Implementation of the Bukhara Deer MOU (hereafter 'draft Overview Report') (UNEP/CMS/BKD/MOS3/Doc.3). Before providing an overview of the structure and content of the report, Mr. Michel noted that it was not yet scientifically proven that Bukhara Deer was a separate sub-species, but he agreed with Ms. Pereladova, that this would, most likely, be the case.
13. When presenting an overview of the current Bukhara Deer population numbers, Mr. Michel highlighted some uncertainties in the population estimates. Specifically, he pointed to the large confidence interval for the population in the lower reaches of the Amu Darya (1,320–3,344 animals) and uncertainty regarding population counts in the Zarafshon River valley on the border between Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. Ms. Marmazinskaya added that, in her opinion, the reported numbers for the Zarafshon area were underestimated. She explained that the deer primarily aggregate on an island in the border zone between Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, where no population counts are being conducted due to the area's special status, meaning these aggregations were not included.
14. Mr. Michel expressed uncertainty whether bringing Bukhara Deer to the Ile-Balkhash protected area in Kazakhstan was really a re-introduction or rather an introduction of the animals. In the document UNEP/CMS/BKD/MOS3/Doc.3, he referred to it as introduction, because he did not find a reference proving historical occurrence of the Bukhara Deer in the Ile-Balkhash area. He asked the meeting participants to share such a reference with him, if they were aware of one. He further noted that the list of scientific studies described in the report was limited to those mentioned in national reports and suggested that, in fact, more studies had likely been published.
15. The Secretariat informed that it had received corrections to the report from Tajikistan. Ms. Fariza Adilbekova on behalf of the Secretariat invited the participants to propose any changes to the report, if necessary, and explained the procedure of introducing changes.
16. Mr. Aibat Muzbay, representing the NGO Naturschutzbund Deutschland (NABU), noted that sections 3.1 and 3.2 of the report on the implementation of the Bukhara Deer Work Programme 2021-2026 described the completion of fewer than half of the planned measures and provided no information on the remaining measures. He suggested that this might be due to the shorter implementation period (about four years instead of the intended six) and the ambitious nature of the work programme. He recommended that the new Programme of Work focus on a smaller set of specific actions to make implementation and monitoring of the implementation easier.
17. Mr. Michel confirmed that the low level of implementation of the Programme of Work 2021–2026 was likely due to a shortened implementation period, including the COVID-

- 19 pandemic, during which many activities could not take place. He noted that missing information in the draft Overview Report was due to the late submission of National Reports from several Signatory States and the reporting format's structure, which does not align with the Work Programme. Ms. Fariza Adilbekova informed participants that the issue of the National Report Format would be discussed on the second day of the meeting.
18. Mr. Muzbay then asked Mr. Michel to clarify why the draft Overview Report indicated an expansion of the Bukhara Deer's range, despite ongoing habitat degradation and significant habitat loss, as seen in Uzbekistan, for example. Mr. Michel explained that the range had expanded, for instance, in the Ile River valley, where the Bukhara Deer had not been observed in the previous reporting period, while habitat degradation figures were drawn from a long-term historical perspective.
 19. Mr. Nurali Saidov added that the reporting form should have clearly specified the period for which habitat degradation should be estimated, suggesting that historical habitat loss be measured against the baseline of the 1930s. Ms. Marmazinskaya explained that in Uzbekistan, a 50% habitat loss for the Bukhara Deer was estimated based on the earliest available historical maps.
 20. Mr. Michel reminded participants to provide a reference for the historical occurrence of Bukhara Deer in the Ile-Balkhash area. Mr. Kertiyeu speaking on behalf of Kazakhstan, responded that representatives of the Institute of Zoology might have this information and should be asked directly when they join the meeting.
 21. Ms. Marmazinskaya proposed a change to paragraph 14, explaining that a previously unaccounted-for tugai forest area between the Vakhsh and Kafirnigan estuaries had been identified. She expressed confidence that Bukhara Deer inhabit this forest and recommended that it be listed as Bukhara Deer habitat and included in future population monitoring. Mr. Saidov, on behalf of Tajikistan, agreed that this area should be considered for monitoring.
 22. Regarding her written comments on paragraph 15, she noted the need to specify further tugai forest areas, such as Tallyk and Dzhumurtau in the lower reaches of the Amu Darya, where Bukhara Deer are present and require attention.
 23. Then in paragraph number 19, Ms. Marmazinskaya specified the locations of additional tugai forest areas. Mr. Michel commented that it was difficult to follow descriptions of the area without maps and suggested that Signatory States provide their maps of Bukhara Deer habitat to the Secretariat after the meeting.
 24. He noted that the comments made by Ms. Marmazinskaya in the report added specific information on the occurrence of Bukhara Deer and their habitats. The Secretariat suggested that these could be integrated without being reviewed in detail during the meeting, the text would then be made available to the meeting participants so that they would have an opportunity to review it before the final discussion and adoption the following day. Kazakhstan agreed and there were no objections to this proposal.
 25. Mr. Sklyarenko, Science Director at the Association for the Conservation of Biodiversity of Kazakhstan (ACBK), requested that a table be included in the report, listing all locations along with GPS coordinates to help readers accurately identify each site. Mr.

- Michel responded that if he received such data from the participants, he could produce the table, or a GIS map of all locations mentioned in the report after the meeting.
26. Mr. Michel then asked the Russian-speaking participants to review the translation of the term 'other area-based conservation measures. Mr. Berber, representing the NGO 'Zhivaya priroda Kazahstana', said that the translation shown on the screen was incorrect. The Secretariat suggested using the official translation of the term as used by the Convention on Biological Diversity to which there were no objections.
 27. Mr. Michel requested clarification on the number of animals reported in the transboundary area between Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, as noted in Paragraph 22 of the draft Overview Report (UNEP/CMS/BKD/MOS3/Doc.3). Ms. Marmazinskaya explained that the count of 600–800 animals applied only to these two countries, while any animals along the Afghanistan-Turkmenistan border (50–100 in the draft Overview Report) should be counted separately. Regarding the animals along the riparian zone at the Afghanistan-Turkmenistan border, Mr. Michel noted the possibility that Uzbek population estimates might already include some of these animals and suggested that this be reflected in the text. Mr. Saparmuradov, speaking on behalf of Turkmenistan, agreed with Mr. Michel's suggestion, adding that although he lacked precise data, this information could be obtained from colleagues later.
 28. Then the meeting considered the comment made by Ms. Marmazinskaya regarding Paragraph 30 of the draft Overview Report, which described the necessity to maintain the deer population at a level below or at the carrying capacity of the habitat in the lower reaches of the Amu Darya. Ms. Marmazinskaya commented that the following methods of managing the population were necessary: capture and relocation and sustainable hunting. However, she did not request any change to the paragraph.
 29. Concerning the transboundary population between Tajikistan and Uzbekistan in the Zarafshon River valley, Mr. Michel explained that a recent survey organized by the Michael Succow Foundation (MSF) indicated that the Bukhara Deer were unable to cross the border. Ms. Marmazinskaya agreed that this had been the case in recent years but noted that the situation could change in the near future with improved cooperation between the two countries. The Chair asked Mr. Michel to consult individually with Ms. Marmazinskaya on how to incorporate her suggestions. There were no objections from the meeting participants.
 30. Regarding Tajikistan's comments inserted in Paragraph 60 of the draft Overview Report, as well as other similar comments, Mr. Michel suggested that these would be more suitable in section 3, "Implementation of the Work Programme for the Bukhara Deer." Tajikistan agreed with this suggestion, and their edits were moved to section 3.
 31. With respect to Paragraph 101, Ms. Marmazinskaya explained that staff at the Zarafshon Zakaznik in Tajikistan conduct regular Bukhara Deer counts in winter, as she learned during an exchange visit to the area. This information was included in the draft Overview Report.
 32. On a different topic, Mr. Sklyarenko pointed out that the information about a grant from the Government of Kazakhstan to the Ile- Balkhash National Park was missing from the draft Overview Report. Mr. Michel asked for this information to be submitted to him in written form so that it would be added promptly.

33. The Secretariat then asked the Meeting to review Table 1, "Bukhara Deer Population Trends," in the draft Overview Report. Ms. Pereladova commented that the numbers were lower than she had expected because animals in temporary enclosures were excluded from the total count of Bukhara Deer in each country. Only wild-living animals were included in the draft Overview Report, making the populations appear smaller than in previous years, when both wild and captive animals had been counted together. Mr. Michel clarified that animals kept in enclosures or fenced hunting areas were not excluded but instead listed separately in brackets.
34. The Secretariat responded that wild-living animals should be shown separately from captive animals in the report, but that both numbers should be provided. The Chair then announced that all comments received so far would be incorporated into the draft Overview Report, and the final draft would be distributed to participants in the evening for final review and endorsement the following day.

Agenda item 8. Review of the Study ‘Mapping Transboundary Conservation Hotspots for the Central Asian Mammals Initiative’.

35. Ms. Polina Orlinskiy, coordinator of the Central Asian Mammals Initiative at the CMS Secretariat presented the study titled ‘Mapping Transboundary Conservation Hotspots for the Central Asian Mammals Initiative’ (UNEP/CMS/BKD/MOS3/Inf.1). The recommendations of the study were taken into account when preparing the draft Programme of Work for the Bukhara Deer. The meeting participants took note of the study without any discussion.

Agenda Item 9. Review of the Study ‘Potential for Community-based Wildlife Management of CAMI Species’.

36. Ms. Orlinskiy presented the study “Potential for Community-based Wildlife Management of CAMI Species” (UNEP/CMS/BKD/MOS3/Inf.2), which will be published after review by CMS National Focal Points from the study’s target countries. One of the study’s recommendations regarding the Bukhara Deer was to remove the species from CMS Appendix I while retaining it on Appendix II. The Chair asked representatives of the Bukhara Deer MOU Signatory States to share their opinions on this recommendation. Uzbekistan responded that the Government was open to discussing this possibility with the Secretariat and would need its support in preparing the necessary proposal to amend Appendix I.
37. Tajikistan stated that they did not object to this suggestion. Kazakhstan noted that although the species is listed in the Red Book of Kazakhstan as an endangered species the Government would consider supporting the proposal of Uzbekistan, should it be prepared. Turkmenistan asked for more time to discuss this option internally.

Agenda Item 10: Review of the Draft Work Programme for the Bukhara Deer 2025-2032.

1.0 Measures affecting several or all populations

38. Mr. Michel presented the proposed structure of the Work Programme of the Bukhara Deer. He explained that the new structure followed the mandate given by the 14th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Migratory Species of Wild

Animals (CMS) (Decision 14.167 d). There were no objections to the revised structure of the Work Programme. The Secretariat then invited the meeting to review the draft work programme in plenary.

39. While reviewing the distribution map of Bukhara Deer populations, Mr. Sklyarenko noted that the deer inhabiting the area above the dam on the Ile River and Kapshagai Reservoir (KZ1) were separated from KZ3 and KZ4 by a natural barrier and should be considered separate populations. However, Mr. Erlik Baidavletov recommended treating KZ1, KZ3, and KZ4 as a single population, as the animals might be able to overcome these obstacles in the future. Mr. Michel and Ms. Pereladova agreed to this approach.
40. Mr. Michel asked Tajikistan to clarify whether the Bukhara Deer in Romit, Sarikhosor, Khutalon were wild-living or kept in captive conditions. They confirmed that these populations were fenced in enclosures. In some locations, they kept together with Sika Deer (*Cervus nippon*). Mr. Michel expressed concern that these could hybridize with Bukhara Deer. However, Mr. Saidov and Ms. Pereladova responded that these two species did not hybridize, despite having been kept together for decades in some locations.
41. Ms. Pereladova, Mr. Saidov, Ms. Marmazinskaya and Mr. Michel briefly discussed the relevance of agricultural poplar plantations as potential habitat for the Bukhara Deer. They concluded that this was relevant for Zarafshon area in Uzbekistan (Dzhumurtau forest plantation), but not in Tajikistan. As a result, it was agreed to replace the poplar plantations by “tree and shrub plantations”.

2.0 Lower Amu Darya

42. Within the Lower Amu Darya populations on the border between Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, several clarifications of geographical areas were made and translation inaccuracies corrected. Possibility of migration of Bukhara Deer from Uzbekistan into Turkmenistan was discussed. According to Ms. Marmazinskaya, there were currently no deer close to the border and no migrations were possible. But if the deer were to disperse (or could be translocated) to suitable habitats along the border, then migration from Uzbekistan to Turkmenistan would occur. Activities to enable transboundary migrations were added (see UNEP/CMS/BKD/MOS3/Outcome 2, Activities 2.1 and 2.2).
43. Furthermore, Ms. Marmazinskaya proposed an activity to re-introduce Bukhara Deer in the new special reserve Sudochoye-Akpetki in Uzbekistan near the border with Kazakhstan with a prospect of creating a transboundary population between Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan in the future (see UNEP/CMS/BKD/MOS3/Outcome 2, Activity 2.6).

3.0 Middle Amu Darya

44. Turkmenistan requested the deletion of draft Activity 3.6, as it was obsolete due to the inclusion of Eradzhi zakaznik as part of a recently inscribed UNESCO World Heritage Site.
45. Activity 3.7 of the draft Work Programme, which involves developing, coordinating, and implementing measures to prevent injury and death of deer during transboundary

migration between Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan in the middle reaches of the Amu Darya River (UNEP/CMS/BKD/MOS3/Doc.4), was extensively discussed. Turkmenistan expressed doubt that the border fence, which is located solely within Turkmenistan, was impacting the deer, as no Bukhara Deer had been observed near the fence. Ms. Marmazinskaya agreed with her Turkmen colleague regarding the area near the Kyzylkum Zapovednik; however, she suggested that along the national border between the Amu Darya and Kyzylkum zapovedniks in the middle reaches of the Amu Darya, migration barriers could pose an issue. She had no information on whether a fence existed in that area, but noted that if it did, it would likely affect the Bukhara Deer population.

46. Mr. Michel suggested that this activity should remain as a precautionary measure to make sure that any existing or future barriers are mitigated. Ms. Marmazinskaya supported the suggestion, while there was no objection from other participants. The priority level was raised from 3 to 2.

4.0 Upper Amu Darya

47. In the Upper Amu Darya reaches, it was agreed to lower the priority of draft activities in Afghanistan, as their feasibility was currently uncertain. Measures to ensure water flow in the Beshai Palangon Zapovednik were discussed. Ms. Pereladova emphasized that cleaning the canals of excess sediment to maintain water flow remained a necessary measure. Some of this work was supported by WWF through a Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund grant. Tajikistan also reported that canal cleaning was being conducted as part of a World Bank-sponsored project. As a result, the relevant Activity was updated to reflect the current conservation needs (see Activity 4.3 in UNEP/CMS/BKD/MOS3/Outcome 2). Smaller corrections and adjustments were made to other Activities to reflect changed priorities and address translation inaccuracies.
48. Mr. Saidov stated that Activity 4.4 in the draft Programme of Work, which aimed at analyzing the feasibility of adjusting hydropower plant and dam operation to reduce the impact on river flow in Beshai Palangon was not possible to implement due to the associated costs and should be deleted. Mr. Michel responded that, in his opinion, new hydropower plants could offer an opportunity to better regulate river flow for the benefit of riparian forests, and that such options should be explored. However, Mr. Saidov disagreed, noting that proposing such an activity would require more thorough analysis and the involvement of experts with a hydrological background, which was beyond the scope of the meeting. As a result, draft Activity 4.4 was deleted.
49. Mr. Saidov then requested that Activity 4.6 of the draft Programme of Work is removed, as it concerned the Parkhar region on the border of Tajikistan, which was currently only being used by border service and would not be accessible for conservationists in the near future. Geographical areas of Bukhara Deer distribution in Uzbekistan were specified in several other activities for the upper Amu Darya reaches.

5.0 Zarafshon

50. On the Zarafshon river populations, Tajikistan informed that a transboundary project between Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, supported by the World Bank had started. It aims to create a transboundary protected area in the Bukhara Deer habitat. Activity 5.6 was

rephrased to reflect these plans (see UNEP/CMS/BKD/MOS3/Outcome 2, Activity 5.6). Both Tajikistan and Uzbekistan suggested raising the priority level of this Activity from 3 to 1.

51. Mr. Kholmatov, representing the Tajik Nature Foundation, stated that the development and application of agreed and comparable methodologies to estimate Bukhara Deer population numbers would be necessary both within and between countries. Mr. Michel agreed with this suggestion and proposed that it be integrated into Activity 1.2, which addresses all Bukhara Deer populations. Activity 1.2 was subsequently adjusted accordingly (UNEP/CMS/BKD/MOS3/Outcome 2, Activity 1.2).

Agenda Item 7. Update and Review of the Conservation Status of the Bukhara Deer.

52. The Chair requested the Secretariat to come back to the review of the draft Overview Report (UNEP/CMS/BKD/MOS3/Doc.3) and to show any feedback received overnight. The Secretariat showed revised *Table 1* of the draft report with corrected population numbers and a clear distinction between wild populations and those living in fenced enclosures. There were no objections to these changes.
53. The Secretariat also presented a comment from Ms. Pereladova for discussion. She suggested that the IUCN Red List status be included in the section on the legal status of the Bukhara Deer. Ms. Pereladova explained that governments often consider the IUCN Red List status when determining national protection measures, alongside the state of national populations of the Bukhara Deer, whereas listings in international conventions hold less weight. However, all the representatives of the Range State disagreed with this view. They asserted that the legal status should reference the listings in relevant international conventions ratified by the Bukhara Deer Range States, while the IUCN Red List status, as scientific information, would be more appropriately included in the section on the species' conservation status. Then the Overview Report was adopted by the Meeting (UNEP/CMS/BKD/MOS3/Outcome 1).

Agenda Item 10. Review of the Draft Work Programme for the Bukhara Deer 2025-2032.

6.0 Syr Darya

54. The Chair asked the Secretariat to come back to the revision of the Work Programme, starting from Section 6, the Syrdarya river valley in Kazakhstan. Mr. Michel suggested that Uzbekistan should also be added to the heading of this Section as the river also was present in Uzbekistan.
55. Commenting on Activity 6.1 of the draft Programme of Work (UNEP/CMS/BKD/MOS3/Doc.4), Mr. Michel asked Kazakhstan whether it was still relevant given that some protected areas were created in this area in Kazakhstan already. Mr. Kim responded that the activity should not be to establish protected areas, but *to consider the feasibility of developing the protected area system in the riparian forests of Syr Darya* (Activity 6.1 in UNEP/CMS/BKD/MOS3/Outcome 2).
56. Draft activities 6.3 and 6.6 (UNEP/CMS/BKD/MOS3/Doc3) relating to the re-introduction of the Deer in the Syr Darya valley were extensively discussed by the Kazakh government representatives and two national scientists, Mr. Ryspek Baidavletov and Mr. Sklyarenko. Corrections were made with respect to the state of preparations for re-introduction and appropriate geographical locations resulting in Activity 6.3 in UNEP/CMS/BKD/MOS3/Outcome 2.

57. Ms. Marmazinskaya added an Activity in Uzbekistan to consider re-introduction in Dalverzin hunting area and further dispersal of the Bukhara Deer in the middle reaches of Syrdarya river in Uzbekistan (Activity 6.5 in UNEP/CMS/BKD/MOS3/Outcome 2).
58. Activity 6.4 of the draft Work Programme was adjusted by Kazakhstan. The following was removed from the draft Activity as an unnecessary clarification: *without land alienation, but with the provision of a favourable regime for occurrence and migration of BD*, resulting in Activity 6.6 of UNEP/CMS/BKD/MOS3/Outcome 2.
59. Mr. Michel, Ms. Marmazinskaya, Mr. Sklyarenko, Mr. Kertiyev and Mr. Erlik Baidavletov and Mr. Ryspek Baidavletov discussed the potential and necessary re-introduction sites for creating a transboundary population between Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan in the lower reaches of Syrdarya and the old riverbed called Zhanadarya. This was reflected in the new Activity 6.4 of UNEP/CMS/BKD/MOS3/Outcome 2.
60. Kazakhstan addressed draft Activity 6.5, which concerns the potential for hunting Bukhara Deer. Mr. Kim explained that, even if the Bukhara Deer were to be removed from CMS Appendix I, it is currently listed in Kazakhstan's Red Book, which prohibits hunting the species. Mr. Michel noted that, in many countries, regulated hunting is permitted even within protected areas and can be managed to support species conservation. However, Mr. Erlik Baidavletov raised a concern that changing the legal status of the Bukhara Deer could affect protected area budgets, as state funding in Kazakhstan may depend on the presence of protected species within these areas. Mr. Kim added that the Institute of Zoology would be consulted, and any decisions would be based on a scientific assessment and should include considerations related to protected area funding.
61. Mr. Sklyarenko suggested that the activity be carefully phrased to consider the potential introduction of sustainable hunting for Bukhara Deer if it is removed from CMS Appendix I and if its national legal protection status permits. Such wording would allow Kazakhstan to explore the possibility of regulated hunting and to prepare accordingly, should populations stabilize and grow in the future. Ms. Pereladova recommended that this activity be defined at a general species level rather than only for the Syrdarya population, as hunting may become relevant in Uzbekistan before it is considered in Kazakhstan. The Chair then invited feedback from the Signatory States on the proposal of Mr. Sklyarenko.
62. Turkmenistan stated that the Bukhara Deer is strictly protected within its borders and will remain so. The Secretariat clarified that, should Range States agree to remove the species from CMS Appendix I, it would still be listed on Appendix II. This would make hunting possible, but any Range State could adopt stricter protection measures at the national level. Turkmenistan expressed concern that hunting of transboundary populations, particularly in Uzbekistan, could impact the Bukhara Deer population within its own territory. Kazakhstan suggested the need for an activity aimed at establishing a common position among Range States regarding the CMS listing of the Bukhara Deer and invited Signatory States to share their views on this matter.
63. The Meeting, including all Range States agreed on the following two activities, concerning all populations:
1.6 Agree on the common position of the Range States regarding the delisting of Bukhara Deer from the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) Appendix I and prepare a joint proposal for the 15th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP15).

1.7 Consider changing the national legal status for enabling sustainable hunting in suitable areas in the context of population control and for creating incentives for protection from poaching and for coexistence of local communities and Bukhara Deer outside of protected areas.

64. The Kazakh Government and scientists discussed draft Activity 7.3 to increase the territory of the Ile-Balkhash reserve. It was decided to change the phrasing to consider the feasibility of increasing the territory as the participants disagreed in terms of how feasible this would be. Geographical area names were specified in several activities.
65. Activity 7.5 was amended, replacing 'introduce Bukhara Deer' by 'create enabling conditions for the natural dispersal of Bukhara Deer' as suggested by Mr. Michel and supported by Mr. Ryspek Baidavletov and Mr. Sklyarenko. The geographical area was updated (see Activity 7.5 in UNEP/CMS/BKD/MOS3/Outcome 2).
66. Kazakhstan commented on Activity 7.7 of the draft Programme of Work: *Consider in appropriate areas, such as Karachingil Game Management Area, the introduction of sustainable hunting in the context of population control and for creation of incentives for protection from poaching and coexistence of farmers and deer outside of core zones.*
67. Mr. Kim explained that currently this was not feasible for any free-living population of the species given that the Bukhara Deer is under state protection. He suggested that there was no point in this specific activity before the new activity 1.6 and 1.7 are implemented. Mr. Berber agreed with Mr. Kim stating that this activity will not be useful, as in Karachingil and similar territories only captive-bred animals in enclosures could be hunted in accordance with national legislation, but not free-ranging animals. Draft Activity 7.7 was deleted.

8.0 Groups outside of the native habitat and native range, introduced as semi-captive and free ranging

68. In relation to draft Activity 8.3, Turkmenistan noted that the areas identified in the activity as potential Bukhara Deer habitat were not suitable habitat for relocating the deer there. Therefore, Mr. Saparmuradov suggested removing this activity and instead including one on re-introduction of Bukhara Deer in the Upper reaches of Amu Darya in the valleys of Murghab and Tejen rivers. The suggestion was supported by Ms. Pereladova and Mr. Michel and was included as Activity 4.9 in UNEP/CMS/BKD/MOS3/Outcome 2.

9.0 Captive breeding groups

69. The meeting then discussed draft Activity 9.3 *Strengthen cooperation among Range States and with WAZA and EAZA on captive breeding of Bukhara Deer (including exchange of animals for maintaining optimum genetic diversity and herd structures)*. Ms. Marmazinskaya suggested that collaboration with zoos was not relevant due to the limited number of Bukhara Deer kept in captivity for conservation purposes. Mr. Michel clarified that the activity also included the exchange of technical knowledge and methodologies for managing captive-bred populations. Ms. Pereladova noted that in Europe, some Bukhara Deer hybrids with other deer species have been misidentified and kept as Bukhara Deer in zoos, cautioning against releasing zoo animals of unconfirmed genetic identity into the wild. Mr. Michel agreed that there was no need to introduce zoo animals from Europe into the region. He emphasized the importance of strengthening cooperation among Range States on captive breeding efforts and suggested raising the priority of this activity from 3 to 2. This suggestion was approved

by the meeting participants. The activity was rephrased to increase the emphasis on the cooperation among Range States, as follows:

Strengthening cooperation among Range States, including on the exchange of animals, for maintaining optimum genetic diversity and herd structures, and with the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA) and the European Association of Zoos and Aquaria (EAZA) on captive breeding of Bukhara Deer. (See Activity 9.3 in UNEP/CMS/BKD/MOS3/Outcome 2.)

Adoption of the Work Programme

70. After completing the review of the draft Work Programme, the Meeting turned to the Annex of document UNEP/CMS/BKD/MOS3/Doc.4. This Annex includes measures from the previous 2021-2026 Programme of Work for the Bukhara Deer, deemed suitable for incorporation into the CAMI Programme of Work in line with Decision 14.167 d). Mr. Michel invited participants to assess these activities and determine if they remain relevant for inclusion in the CAMI Programme of Work, suggesting that some might need to be reinstated in the Bukhara Deer-specific Work Programme. For example, he noted that poaching to prevent crop damage by Bukhara Deer may be unique to this species and different from poaching of Argali, which occurs for other reasons. Ms. Polina Orlinskiy countered, pointing out that other CAMI species also face poaching related to crop raiding, which could be addressed in the CAMI POW.
71. Ms. Orlinskiy explained that these activities were included in an annex because the CAMI POW should encompass measures needed for all or groups of species, whereas the Work Programmes for individual species, like the Bukhara Deer, should focus on the specific conservation needs of each species and population. The Meeting Chair suggested following the structure proposed by the Secretariat in the draft document (UNEP/CMS/BKD/MOS3/Doc.4) and postponing the review of the Annex to future CAMI meetings. The Signatory State representatives agreed to this proposal. Following the Chair's invitation, the Signatory States formally adopted the Work Programme for the Bukhara Deer 2025-2032.

Agenda Item 11. Revision of the National Report Format.

72. Opening the agenda item, Ms. Adilbekova explained that the existing reporting format available to Signatory States does not align with the structure of the Work Programme and requested a mandate for the Secretariat to develop a new reporting form, which would be approved via correspondence. In response to a request from Tajikistan, the Secretariat clarified that the new form would be available within the next 3-4 years, depending on funding availability for a Mid-Term Review of CAMI.

Agenda Items 12-15. Next Steps and Closure of the Meeting.

73. Ms. Nobbe outlined the next steps, including the Third Meeting of Range States to CAMI, where a distribution map of CAMI species would be used to help develop measures addressing threats to multiple species within shared habitats. Regarding funding for implementing the Work Programme, she explained that the Secretariat has no dedicated funds but is available to assist Range States and NGOs in fundraising efforts by providing letters of support or collaborating on joint funding proposals. She thanked participants for the cooperative atmosphere and a successful meeting.
74. The Meeting Chair expressed gratitude to the Secretariat for organizing the meeting and to the participants for their valuable contributions. He highlighted the high level of expert discussion and the active involvement of participants from all Range States. He affirmed Kazakhstan's commitment to continued cooperation with the Governments represented

in the meeting on Bukhara Deer conservation and other conservation efforts under CMS and other conventions. He then invited other Bukhara Deer MOU Signatories to share their concluding remarks.

75. Turkmenistan thanked the meeting organizers and expressed hope for closer future cooperation with all participants. Uzbekistan commended the Secretariat's efficiency in organizing and facilitating the meeting, which concluded ahead of schedule, and thanked Kazakhstan for hosting and for fostering discussions on Bukhara Deer conservation. Tajikistan also thanked the Secretariat and the host government for organizing the meeting, expressing hope for strengthened collaboration with the Secretariat on future Bukhara Deer conservation efforts.
76. Mr. Stefan Michel thanked the Secretariat and all participants for constructive discussions and a successful meeting.

Annex: List of Participants of the Third Meeting of Signatories to the Bukhara Deer MOU.

Bukhara Deer MOU Signatory State Representatives

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Multilateral Environmental Agreements

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