



Strasbourg, 14 November 2025

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CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE
AND NATURAL HABITATS

Standing Committee

45th meeting

Strasbourg, 8 – 12 December 2025

8th Meeting of the Group of Experts on the Conservation of Wild Birds

15-16 May 2025, in Bonn and online

- Meeting Report -

Document prepared by the Secretariat

The Standing Committee is invited to:

- take note of the report of the 8th meeting of the Group of Experts on the conservation of wild birds, which took place on 15-15 May 2025 in Bonn (and online);
- take note of the good practices in bird conservation in the development of renewable energy infrastructures, according to the guidance tool submitted by the Secretariat;
- take note of the priority topics proposed by the Group for its further activities, related to the negative impact on birds resulting from:
 - lead poisoning
 - persistent chemicals in the environment
 - light pollution
 - invasive small carnivores, with special attention to feral cats and small islands with seabird breeding populations
- take note of the proposal to prepare a recommendation on addressing the effects of persistent environmental pollutant on birds' ecology, physiology and behaviour, with particular attention to pesticides and the lead poisoning due to the use of lead ammunition in sport and hunting.

1. Opening remarks

The Chair, Mr Burak Tatar, presented himself and thanked the organisers of the field trip on 15 May, which brought the participants of the Joint CMS and Bern Convention Meeting on IKB and the Group of Experts on Wild Birds to one of the first protected areas in Germany and a European Diploma holding site (Siebengebirge Nature Reserve).

The Chair reminded the participants of the previous work and past meetings of the Group (see [here](#)).

2. Introduction to the meeting

The Secretariat provided technical information, listed meeting objectives and expected results, referring in particular to the need to collect feedback on the draft guidance document on wild birds and renewable energy infrastructure development, review the Terms of Reference of the Group and recommendation on powerlines, in view of their heavy negative impact on birds, and discuss topical issues of most concern to the protection of wild birds other than those stemming from IKB, which could guide the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention and be included in the scope of further work of the Group.

3. Adoption of the agenda

The Chair presented the agenda, which was adopted unchanged.

4. The threats of windfarms, solar panels and other renewable energies to wild birds.

A draft *Guidance tool for good practices in bird conservation in the development of renewable energies* was presented to the Group of Experts and discussed. Relevant feedback, further examples and references to existing resources were collected, helping the authors to further improve, enrich and consolidate the document. It was convened that the CMS Energy Taskforce would be consulted, to avoid duplicating efforts and best take stock of the existing guidelines.

A debate on further action needed on this topic ensued, including a possibility of drafting a dedicated Bern Convention Standing Committee Recommendation. The Bureau of the Bern Convention Standing Committee would be consulted on the best way ahead. Once finalized, the guidance tool¹ is to be shared with the Standing Committee in December.

5. Protecting birds from electrocution and collisions with powerlines (Recommendation No. 110 (2004))

Recommendation No. 110 (2004) on minimising adverse effects of above-ground electricity transmission facilities (power lines) on birds, adopted by the Standing Committee on 3 December 2004, was considered in need of updating. It could not be discussed in greater detail due to time constraints but some of the aspects covered were already addressed in the guidance tool on birds and renewable energies (agenda point above). The topic may be further considered later.

6. Sharing examples of good practice concerning single- and multi-species Action Plans

Due to insufficient time, exchange on national Action Plans was postponed to the next meeting of the Group.

7. Proposals to the Standing Committee to the Bern Convention – work ahead, including:

- Protecting birds from lead poisoning
- Light pollution
- Small carnivores, in particular on small islands

Exchange on the needs for further action.

The participants formed thematic groups, which addressed the above-mentioned topics and a fourth one, poisoning by pesticides and other chemical substances, also heavily impacting bird populations across the continent.

¹ The finalized version of the guidance tool is available [here](#).

Conclusions of the thematic groups were presented in plenary, including the online group, which briefly addressed all topics.

Working group on protecting birds from lead poisoning

Currently there is no Bern Convention recommendation regarding the problem of lead shots. However, other international conventions have adopted legally binding texts banning the usage of lead shots in wetlands in the signatory states of the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds ([AEWA](#)) and in the EU - since the entry into force of the COMMISSION REGULATION (EU) [2021/57](#) concerning the *Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals (REACH) as regards lead in gunshot in or around wetlands*, banning lead gunshot in or within 100 meters of wetlands as defined by the Ramsar Convention. However, a discussion on expanding this ban to habitats other than wetlands has been ongoing, as the current, restricted ban is not functional. Lack of will to implement the EU regulations was also stressed, as illustrated by examples from Croatia, where half of 17 raptors checked for the lead contaminants contained sublethal or lethal doses of the metal. Examples from the UK should also be examined.

The group suggested that the Bern Convention should promote the total ban of lead bullets. To be successful, this should be agreed by hunters' societies. Producers of ammunition may tend to reject such a measure, especially local ones, but arguments exist to convince them to switch to unleaded ammunition as soon as possible (see the European Chemicals Agency ([ECHA](#)) resources). The reasons behind the resistance to change to unleaded shots are cultural rather than economical. As a conclusion, recommendation should be drafted suggesting a smart, smooth transition from lead to non-lead shots. Such a recommendation could focus on the political dimension rather than technical aspects, covered by other existing international agreements like AEWA or the Commission Regulation (EU) 2021/57. The Bern Convention should reach out to ECHA and consider proposing an information session about its work.

Also sports shooting must be included in the Recommendation banning lead ammunition. An information document can be prepared and sent to IOC (International Olympics Committee), although the authority is the national shooting federations.

The European Commission is working on restricting lead in ammunition and fishing tackle under the so-called REACH Regulation. The proposal has been under discussion in the EU REACH Committee since February 2025, where Member States and the Commission have been examining the implications for hunters, sport shooters, and anglers. The proposal was split into two strands: one covering lead in fishing tackle and the other - in ammunition, in view of complexity and political sensitivity of the ammunition file. Majority of Member States do not support the Commission's proposal, due to the wide-ranging socio-economic impacts and influential lobby against the prohibition. Discussions at the REACH Committee should be considered before proposing the Bern Convention recommendation.

Leaders of transition to non-lead alternatives faced threats, and many hunters object the transition advancing a fallacious argument that there is already a great amount of lead in the environment and unless it is removed – adding some more would have a marginal effect.

The Recommendation should invite countries to develop their national plans of phasing out lead ammunition, especially those Parties that have no dedicated legal instruments nor action plan yet. Also, the text should refer to effects on human health and encourage creating synergies with other agreements relevant to tackling this topic.

Working group on poisoning by pesticides and other chemical substances

Many biocides have shown negative impacts on bird populations and their trophic chain. The group encouraged the Bern Convention to take that issue into account in future actions and proposed to:

- 1) identify the contaminants of concern to birds in terms of their effect on reproduction, cognition, sex ratio, breeding success, food resource availability, migration and survival,
- 2) clarify the measures that could be applied to reduce the threats to bird populations,

3) define a way forward and solutions.

Diverse challenges arise across the different regions under the Bern Convention due to differences in legislation. Different exposure along the flyways exposes birds to a cocktail of contaminants with potentially synergetic, antagonistic or additive effects.

Although strict regulations typically govern the use of biocides in protected areas, they may still experience environmental contamination due to adjacent land use or through atmospheric and waterborne transport. Thus, no pristine environment is left and an approach at a large scale is needed to address the effects of contaminant exposure at the population levels, especially of migratory birds.

In addition, biocides including pesticides used on crops but also veterinary pharmaceuticals (such as antiparasitic drugs in cattle) are contributing to the major invertebrate crisis which is an important food resource to many bird species.

The group recommends including potential exposure to contaminants in environmental impact assessment frameworks. Environmental risk assessment should not only focus on the regulated persistent contaminants but also on nonregulated emerging contaminants such as most of the Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, known as PFAS, for which the body of literature is still limited. Neonicotinoids are also still a concern both on invertebrates and birds as it has been proven to affect bird metabolism and thus their migration. Pharmaceuticals, including veterinary pharmaceuticals, have also raised concerns and can create important collapse in populations (e.g. non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs such diclofenac on vulture populations).

The cost associated to the ecotoxicological analyses are high, thus adapted sample collection strategies must be put into place. The situation requires assessing, finding solutions and regulating when and where populations are affected.

Working group on light pollution

There was an agreement in both groups, discussing in person and online, that information on this topic is limited, and more research is needed to evaluate how substantial is the danger to birds posed by light pollution. An example from Portugal referred to intensive olive oil production, which operates by night using powerful light focuses to illuminate the machinery, with the result of many birds being killed, lured by the intense nocturnal light. The Germany Ornithological Union has the topic high on its agenda. Some examples of mitigation measures adopted during critical periods of the life cycle of birds like migration were presented. In some coastal areas of Mediterranean France, city or town lights are switched off or mitigated to avoid attracting the juvenile petrels fledging the breeding colony by night at the end of the breeding season. This is a common problem in the Canary Islands and to a lesser extent in the Balearic Islands. Lights are also switched off at some wind energy production facilities during critical migration periods.

Working group on the effect of introduced small carnivores on birds, especially on small islands

There was an agreement that the problem exists in many countries, affecting different species and not only on small islands.

Many national examples of such negative effects were presented and examined by the group:

- Morocco: predation of stray dogs on seabird nesting colonies on the mainland coast.
- Poland: extensive predation happens on sand islands in rivers, concerning e.g. *Charadrius hiaticula* on the Vistula River. Feral cats are not considered of concern compared with the racoon, the racoon dog and the American vison as the main invasive small carnivores in the country. They are decreasing the breeding success of some species like curlews, so a specific conservation project has been put in place.
- Greece: a growing concern with uncontrolled packs of feral dogs, like in Türkiye; number of feral dogs have boosted after the Covid pandemic, becoming a problem also for the people.
- Montenegro: a specific Action Plan against mongoose, apparently introduced in the country to control snakes.

- Germany-Euronatur: foxes (not an invasive species), Raccoon and Raccoon dogs are preying on *Circus pygargus*. American mink and feral dogs are problematic species too. A task force on Recovery of Birds was created in response.
- Croatia: the black rat *Rattus rattus* is a species of main concern, present on many of the numerous islands in the Adriatic, causing intense predation suffered by seabird during the breeding season. The presence of rats is being controlled on many of the islands, without necessarily eradicating the species. Feral cats and mongooses are also a problem on islands.
- Bulgaria: since a new law imposed removing stray dogs from the streets, the number of feral cats increased steeply, as they are not controlled by dogs anymore, although jackals seem to have a control effect now on the feral cat numbers, as well as the wolves on Raccoon dogs, which are also present in the country. Control of small, introduced carnivores seem to rely on local medium size predators, hence remains unpredictable.
- Georgia: Raccoon, racoon dog and jackal (not an invasive) are the most problematic species. Although legal responsibility relies on the Ministry of Environment, the control of these species is delegated to the municipalities, that use hunting quotas as the system of control. Feral cats are managed as domestic cats.
- The United Kingdom: grey squirrels and American vison as the most problematic species.
- Finland: carnivores are a hot topic. When confronting the problem, authorities must be careful to distinguish between invasive and native small carnivores, and between control and eradication campaigns; the latter should focus exclusively on invasive species in a very professional way, to guarantee that other components of local fauna are not affected. An additional problem is that for different reasons private landowners are not supportive of control operations, while it is crucial when setting up a control program on private land.

Some participants proposed that the focus should be on controlling the commerce of exotics.

Finally, an increased influence of active Animal Rights groups against eradication campaigns was discussed, in particular regarding feral cats and dogs. This conflict of interest has become a common and growing problem in many countries, compromising the control or eradication of small invasive carnivores, not only on islands, as animal welfare associations generally lobby against any control program of small carnivores, especially eradication campaigns of feral cats. Overall, a generalised conflict between animal welfare associations and the administration in charge of wildlife management needs attention, communication and seeking common ground.

8. Mandate of the Group

The mandate/terms of reference of the Group would be the topic of a follow-up online meeting to be held with the Group in due time, in view of updating/revising it.

9. Next meeting of the Group of Experts

A follow-up, online meeting of the Group of Experts in the second part of 2025 was evoked as a possibility to address all the outstanding issues, in particular the terms of reference of the Group and the topics to be prioritised in the further work of the Group. It was also envisaged that a further completed and consolidated version of the guidance tool on birds and renewable energies could be further discussed at such a meeting².

10. Any other business

No other points were raised.

11. Conclusions

The Chair concluded the meeting stating that half a day did not offer sufficient time to cover all items on the agenda of the Group. Nevertheless, relevant feedback was collected on the guidance tool on birds and renewable

² At the time of finalising the report of the meeting it was clear that such a follow-up meeting could not be organised due to staff shortage and intense workload of the Secretariat.

energy infrastructures and many valuable reflections, experiences and ideas were shared in thematic groups. They would be captured in the report of the meeting.

The above-mentioned follow-up, online meeting of the Group of Experts in the second part of 2025 could offer a possibility to exchange on the terms of reference of the Group and the topics to be prioritized in its further work.

12. Closing of the meeting

The Chair and the Secretariat thanked the participants for their active involvement and wished safe travels back home after a very intense week.

Appendix I – Agenda

Timings	Agenda points	<p><i>Documents</i></p> <p>-----</p> <p>Expected outcomes</p>
Thursday, 15 May		
14.00	Field trip	
Friday, 16 May		
9.00	<p>1. Opening remarks</p> <p>The Chair reminds of the previous work and past meetings of the Group and invites to a brief round of introductions.</p>	Opening remarks by Mr Burak Tatar, Chair of the Group of Experts and tour de table
9.20	<p>2. Introduction to the meeting</p> <p>The Secretariat provides technical information, meeting objectives and expected results.</p>	Participants are informed of the objectives and expected results of the meeting, as well as technical information.
9.25	<p>3. Adoption of the agenda</p> <p>The Chair presents the agenda, invites for its adoption or comments.</p>	<p><i>T-PVS/Agenda(2025)13</i></p> <p>-----</p> <p>The meeting agenda is adopted.</p>
9.30	<p>4. The threats of windfarms, solar panels and other renewable energies to wild birds.</p> <p>Discussion on further action needed, including a Bern Convention Standing Committee Recommendation and/or a guidance tool on the subject.</p>	<p><i>Initial draft of the Guidance tool for good practices in bird conservation in the development of renewable (wind and solar) energies (for internal use only, please)</i></p> <p>-----</p> <p>A proposal of a guidance document is presented and discussed, further steps are agreed on.</p>
10.00	<p>5. Protecting birds from electrocution and collisions with powerlines (Recommendation No. 110 (2004))</p> <p>Exchange on the implementation of the Recommendation No. 110 (2004) on minimising adverse effects of above-ground electricity transmission facilities (power lines) on birds, adopted by the Standing Committee on 3 December 2004.</p>	<p><i>Recommendation No. 110(2004) of the Standing Committee on minimising adverse effects of above-ground electricity transmission facilities (power lines) on birds</i></p> <p>-----</p> <p>The Group discusses the relevance, impact and the potential need for a (revision of the) Recommendation</p>
10.20	Break	
10.40	<p>6. Sharing examples of good practice concerning single- and multi-species Action Plans</p> <p>Presentations and discussion on the preparation, implementation and monitoring of Action Plans.</p>	Participants are informed of good examples of practice in conservation of birds through single- and multispecies actions plans at national and international level
11.30	<p>7. Proposals to the Standing Committee to the Bern Convention – work ahead, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protecting birds from lead poisoning • Light pollution • Small carnivores, in particular on small islands <p>Exchange on the needs for further action.</p>	The Group agrees on issues to be addressed in its work in 2025 and beyond.
12.30	<p>8. Mandate of the Group</p> <p>The Group will exchange on its current mandate and considerations for reviewing it.</p>	<p><i>Terms of reference</i></p> <p>-----</p> <p>Proposals for going ahead with revising the mandate of the Group are collected.</p>

12.45	9. Next meeting of the Group of Experts 10. Any other business	Date and venue for the next meeting of the Group of Experts are agreed on.
12.55	11. Conclusions	
13.00	12. Closing of the meeting	

Appendix II – List of Participants

National Representatives:

Contracting Party	Attendee
Albania	Klodiana MARIKA Ministry of Tourism and Environment Edit VARDHAMI Ministry of Tourism and Environment
Bulgaria	Valeri GEORGIEV Ministry of Environment and Water
Croatia	Vlatka DUMBOVIĆ MAZAL (online) Ministry of Economy & Sustainable Development Maja POLIĆ State Inspectorate
Cyprus	Panicos PANAYIDES Game and Fauna Service, Ministry of the Interior
Finland	Maria WESTERMAN (online) Unit for Biodiversity, Ministry for the Environment
France	Olivier PATRIMONIO (online) Ministry of Ecological Transition
Georgia	Maia CHKHOBADZE Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture Salome NOZADZE (online) Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture
Greece	Kalomoira AGAPITOU Ministry of Environment and Energy
Hungary	András SCHMIDT Ministry of Agriculture
Ireland	Niamh O'KEEFFE (online) National Parks & Wildlife Service, CITES MA and Wildlife Crime Unit

Italy	Arianna ARADIS Italian Institute for Environmental Protection and Research / Ministry of Environment and Energy Security Capt. Laura M. PIUSSI (online) Carabinieri
Morocco	Mohamed NOAMAN National Agency for Water and Forests
Poland	Wiktor WYŻYŃSKI General Directorate for Nature Protection
Portugal	João LOUREIRO Institute of Nature Conservation and Forests Rui ARÊDE Institute of Nature Conservation and Forests
Spain	Rubén MORENO-OPO (online) Wildlife Service, Ministry for the Ecological Transition and the Demographic Challenge
Türkiye	Burak TATAR, the Chair of the Group of Experts General Directorate of Nature Conservation and National Parks, Ministry of Agriculture and Forest
United Kingdom	Hannah WHEATLEY Joint Nature Conservation Committee

Experts from intergovernmental organisations:

Organisation	Attendee
African Eurasian Waterbird Agreement (AEWA)	Nils BUNNEFELD (online) AEWA Technical Committee member, professor at University of Stirling, UK
Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS)	Fernando Iván RAMIREZ Foteini (Claire) PAPAZOGLU Ximena CANCINO ORDENES Tine LINDBERG-RONCARI
Europol	Amelie FREY
UNEP/CMS African-Eurasian Migratory Landbirds Working Group	Olivier BIBER

Observer Organisations:

Organisation	Attendee
ANUU Migratoristi for Conservation - FACE Italy	Ferdinando RANZANICI
Association Biom / BirdLife Croatia	Marija MARTINKO IVANOV Bolesław SŁOCIŃSKI
BirdLife International	Lilla BARABAS Willem VAN DEN BOSSCHE
Bustards without borders (BWB) and TB Raab Ltd.	Rainer RAAB (online)
European Federation for Hunting and Conservation (FACE)	Cy GRIFFIN (online)
LIFE EUROKITE Project (TB Raab Ltd.)	Hannah BÖING (online)
Migratory Birds of the Western Palearctic (OMPO)	Céline ARZEL
Protection and Preservation of Natural Environment in Albania (PPNEA)	Marina XHAHO (online)

Invited experts (online):

Name	Position
Justo MARTÍN	JMM Consultant, Biodiversity and Environmental Consultant
Alejandro LOPEZ	Biodiversity Node
Eladio GARCIA DE LA MORENA	Biodiversity Node

Council of Europe Secretariat:

Name	Position
Marta MEḂLIŃSKA	Programme Manager Bern Convention
José (Pep) AMENGUAL	Policy Advisor Bern Convention

Appendix III

Information and resources shared by the participants online:

- France creates recently a new Renewable Energy and Biodiversity Observatory which is responsible for:

1° Synthesizing the knowledge available through existing studies and data on the impact of terrestrial renewable energies on biodiversity, soils and landscapes, and on the effectiveness of avoidance, reduction and compensation measures accompanying the development of renewable energies;

2° The dissemination of all these summaries of knowledge, studies, expertise and data to the public and stakeholders.

The mission is carried out on the basis of scientific literature and data from the monitoring of renewable energy production facilities. The Observatory may also carry out, or request the carrying out of, specific and targeted studies and expert appraisals on subjects of interest, in line with its missions.

shared by Olivier Patrimonio, MTE, France

- Especially for some species - like Great or Little Bustard - collision is the real topic - not only electrocution.

As we hear now from Italy there are a lot of overhead power lines already existing. Burying of medium voltage power lines is possible and very helpful for bird protection especially in sensitive areas. Of existing and of new build power lines.

shared by Dr. Rainer Raab

- Multi Species Action Plan (MsAP) for all 26 bustard species of the world, including mitigation of collision on power lines (and also wind power stations) as an important topic, is being finalized and should be adopted at COP 15 in Brazil next March.

shared by Dr. Rainer Raab, as member of the Coordination unit of Bustards Without borders

- 2009 follow up - Follow-up of Recommendation No. 110 (2004) on minimising adverse effects of above-ground electricity transmission facilities (power lines) on birds:

<https://rm.coe.int/16807462c3>

shared by Cy Griffin, FACE

- International Association for Falconry and Birds of Prey (IAF):

<https://birdelectrocution.org/quick-guidance-preventing-electrocution-on-birds/>

shared by Cy Griffin, FACE

- An interesting link regarding wind power:

<https://www.naturschutz-energiewende.de/fachwissen/probabilistik-in-der-signifikanz-bewertung/> (in German)
<https://predictbird.de/en/>

shared by Hannah Böing (LIFE EUOKITE)

- Some documents on light pollution, from CMS and IUCN:

https://www.cms.int/sites/default/files/publication/cms_light_pollution_guidelines_complete_0.pdf

<https://iucn.org/resources/issues-brief/light-pollution>

shared by João LOUREIRO, Institute of Nature Conservation and Forests, Portugal