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Mission statement

The mission of the IUCN SSC Crane Specialist Group is to promote the study of cranes and their threats, develop and disseminate solutions to those threats and enhance conservation of cranes and their habitats worldwide.

Targets for the 2017-2020 quadrennium

Assess

Research activities: (1) publish and disseminate research on threatened crane species and identify strategies;

(3) implement the 1000 Crane Tracking Project;

(4) set up the Research and Monitoring Working

Group, starting with crane tracking and movement studies.

Plan

Planning: (1) publish the Crane Conservation Strategy; (2) implement the Crane Conservation Strategy; (3) develop a user friendly resource of the Cranes and Agriculture document.

Policy: (1) advocate for reduced poisoning at hot spots; (2) secure or upgrade level of legal protection for three or more crane sites.

Conservation actions: (1) implement the Single Species Action Plan for Grey Crowned Cranes (*Balearica regulorum*); (2) implement the Conservation Plan for the Eastern Population of the Siberian Crane (*Leucogeranus leucogeranus*); (3) estimate the impact of power lines on threatened crane species and work with power utilities in high impact areas to reduce/mitigate their impact.

Network

Capacity building: complete four field training courses.

Synergy: hold regular meetings of species level networks for Red-crowned Crane (*Grus japonensis*), White-naped Crane (*Antigone vipio*), Hooded Crane (*Grus monacha*) and Black-necked Crane (*Grus nigricollis*).

Activities and results 2018

Assess

Research activities

i. The IUCN Crane Specialist Group published *Cranes and Agriculture: A Global Guide for Sharing the Landscape*. This has been distributed widely in electronic and hard copy format to crane, waterbird and flyway networks across the world. It brings together published literature, experiences and lessons synthesised by 59 authors from 14 countries around the world into eight chapters and 18 case studies. (KSR #43)

ii. Several poisoning incidents of Blue Cranes (*Anthropoides paradiseus*) and Grey Crowned Cranes have been investigated in South Africa by local NGOs and the relevant government conservation agency. Almost all the cases investigated confirmed organophosphates as the cause of poisoning. Unfortunately, no arrests or prosecutions were made in connection with any of the poisoning incidents. Reports in the media of deaths of Red-crowned and Siberian Cranes in China from eating poisoned grains indicate that poisoning is an important mortality factor requiring closer attention. (KSR #32)

iii. Aimed at fitting trackers to 1000 cranes to monitor movement patterns of the 15 species across the world, we are slightly behind schedule on this project as we work on improving the technology. However, most of the tracking devices have been produced and a few have been fitted on cranes. Assuming that the challenges will be resolved, we should shortly be back on track. We have received official ethics clearance on the project from an independent ethics committee linked to the Endangered Wildlife Trust, which we can now use for all permits required in Africa. (KSR #12)

iv. The concept of a Research and Monitoring Working Group was introduced at the European Crane Working Group Meeting in December 2018. Lively discussion on crane tracking and movement studies fed ideas to the organisers; these in turn will be refined and brought forward to the next North American Crane Working Group Meeting in 2020. (KSR #12)

Plan

Planning

i. The IUCN Crane Specialist Group is nearing completion of the updated *Crane Conservation Strategy* for publication and distribution in 2019. This comprehensive report assesses 19 direct and 8 indirect threats to cranes and defines objectives and priority actions to address these threats over the next five years. It also provides updated assessments of the status and conservation priorities for each of the 15 species of cranes, bringing together expertise of more than 200 specialists. (KSR #15)

Policy

i. We have established that Grey Crowned Cranes are being poisoning around the South Luangwa National Park in Zambia due to the freely available access to agrochemicals for the cotton industry. As a result, we developed a project in collaboration with local stakeholders to address this threat and are looking for funds now to implement the project. (KSR #27)

ii. Documents are completed and under review to upgrade the core Siberian Crane breeding area at Kytalyk from a provincial level wildlife refuge to a Russian Federation level national park. Negotiations are in progress with the Ministry of Environment and Tourism to upgrade the core breeding area for White-naped Cranes in the Khurkh and Khuiten River Valleys in Mongolia to a federal level wildlife reserve. In South Africa, over 32,000 ha of key crane habitat for breeding and foraging of Blue, Grey Crowned and Wattled Cranes (*Bugeranus carunculatus*) has been legally protected through South Africa's National Environmental Management: Protected Areas Act. This legislation allows for the legal protec-

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Conservation actions

i. The first International Grey Crowned Crane Working Group meeting of the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement will be held in July 2019 in Uganda. In the interim, significant progress has been made on the action plan. The International Crane Foundation/Endangered Wildlife Trust (ICF/EWT) Partnership has now established community-based crane conservation projects in the Drakensberg and Highveld regions of South Africa, around the Kafue Flats and Liuwa Plain National Park in Zambia, in western Kenya, in south-western Uganda and around Rugezi Marsh, Nyabarongo and Akanyaru Wetlands in Rwanda, with regional offices set up in South Africa (in partnership between the ICF and the d
