



‘Power lines and migratory birds’

UNEP/CMS/Resolution 10.11 (UNEP/CMS/Conf 10.29, 10.30, Inf 10.38)

Why this resolution deserves support

1. Migratory birds are at risk due to above-ground electricity grids worldwide

- There is a high and large-scale bird mortality from above-ground power lines in much of the African-Eurasian region and beyond.
- Particularly large bird species like storks, raptors and owls are affected in two main ways: (1) electrocution (short circuit or ground short) when dangerous designs of medium-voltage transmission lines lead to birds bridging the gap between two energized components, and (2) collision with above ground high-voltage lines and especially multi-level arrangements.
- Additionally power lines may have negative impacts through disturbance and habitat loss, particularly when they cross open landscape, wetlands, nature reserves, staging or wintering areas.
- Protecting birds from power lines is a global issue which can't be solved by single states; as migrants ignore national boundaries their future depends on minimising the risks due to above-ground electricity grids across flyways.
- In efforts to combat climate change there is an immediate and growing need to source energy from renewables and electricity networks will need to accommodate this expansion, which will include more transmission lines.
- There is an imperative need to integrate biodiversity considerations into both the existing grid of power lines and planned expansion of the electricity grid.
- The basis for all such efforts, besides upholding legal provisions and international agreements and requirements for strategic spatial planning and strategic environmental assessments, is up-to-date guidelines for bird-friendly configurations and effective mitigation techniques against bird losses from electricity grids together with monitoring.

2. CMS is the ‘father’ of international efforts to protect birds from power lines

- With Resolution 7.4 (2002) CMS was the first multilateral environmental agreement to adopt guidelines for the prevention or mitigation of bird losses due to electrocution.
- The Bern Convention developed the pioneering work of CMS for European wildlife in 2004 expanding the targets to (1) non-migratory species, (2) collisions and (3) habitat loss and degradation.
- CMS represents worldwide expertise.

3. There is a strong need to update Res. 7.4 (2002)

- It is of major importance to ensure ongoing state-of-the-art provision of guidance on minimizing the problem of power lines for birds to avoid the risk of electricity utilities and range states using outdated and/or insufficient mitigation measures. UNEP/CMS/Conf.10.30 provides for an easier implementation of mitigation measures in all member states.
- Coordinated action is needed to provide regular updates of the original guidance. The timely adoption at COP 10 of the guidelines laid down in UNEP/CMS/Conf.10.30 and their application provides an excellent opportunity for Parties to CMS to help avoid or mitigate the impact of electricity power grids on migratory birds.

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