



With breaking stories and  
newswire products from

**UN NEWS CENTRE**



## **Central Asian States boost UN-backed efforts to help endangered species**



Bukhara deer in Uzbekistan

23 November 2011 –

Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan agreed today at a United Nations wildlife conference to step up their efforts to protect endangered species in their region, such as the Bukhara deer, the Bactrian camel and the Asiatic wild ass.

The meeting in Bergen, Norway, focused on the conservation of the Bukhara deer – a species endemic to Central Asia – which had previously disappeared from forests due to uncontrolled hunting, logging and unsustainable agricultural practices, but which has since been reintroduced as a result of governments' conservation measures.

While efforts in the past few years to protect the Bukhara deer have been successful, the degradation of riparian forest ecosystems still represents a major threat to the long-term survival of the deer species.

In addition, the UN Environmental Programme ([UNEP](#)) stressed that habitat degradation caused by climate change, overgrazing, natural disasters, and unsustainable irrigation systems among other factors are increasingly threatening other species such as wild camels, wild asses, antelopes, gazelles, sheep, goats, yaks and snow leopards.

Infrastructure projects linked to exploitation of oil, gas and mineral reserves also threaten migratory species as they divide important habitats and create barriers for animals whose populations are split into smaller groups, exposing them to a higher risk of extinction.

UNEP also [warned](#) that environmental degradation is affecting people's livelihoods as well, multiplying its damaging economic and social impact in Central Asian countries.

To tackle this issue, governments at the meeting agreed on the development of a new UNEP-backed action plan to protect endangered species. Under the plan, wildlife agencies and park rangers will be trained and strengthened, and economic incentives will be provided to encourage people to manage natural resources responsibly, for example, through sharing income from controlled hunting and eco-tourism in local communities.

The plan, which falls under the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), also includes protecting the lowland riparian forests that can be found along the river basins of the Amudaria and Syrdaria, which are a critical habitat for the Bukhara deer. It also covers the Pamir and Tian Shan mountain ranges, home to the markhor sheep and the snow leopard, and bans poaching and illegal trade.

“The CMS plan provides a first strategy for increased transboundary collaboration among Governments, nature conservation agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and local communities to enhance research, wildlife law enforcement and information exchange,” said CMS Executive Secretary Elizabeth Maruma Mrema.

News Tracker: past stories on this issue

[Atlas provides view from space of endangered UNESCO heritage sites](#)