



**CONVENTION ON
MIGRATORY
SPECIES**

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Agenda Item 21

CONSERVATION STATUS OF MIGRATORY SPECIES

(Prepared by the Secretariat)

Summary:

This document provides a summary of progress in implementing Decisions 13.17–13.18 *Application of Article III of the Convention Regarding International Trade in Appendix I-listed Species*, and Decisions 13.24 and 13.26 b) *Conservation Status of Migratory Species*, which served as the basis for the development of a set of reports: *State of the World's Migratory Species* ([UNEP/CMS/COP14/Doc.21.1](#)); *Assessment of the Risk Posed to CMS Appendix I-Listed Species by Direct Use and Trade* ([UNEP/CMS/COP14/Doc.21.2](#)); and an *In-Depth Review of the Conservation Status of Individual CMS-Listed Species* ([UNEP/CMS/COP14/Doc.21.3](#)).

This document proposes next steps for all three issue areas, which are presented as a draft Resolution and draft Decisions, in line with the recommendations by the 6th meeting of the Sessional Committee of the Scientific Council (2023).

CONSERVATION STATUS OF MIGRATORY SPECIES

Background

1. The 13th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CMS (COP13, 2020) considered a preliminary review of the conservation status of CMS-listed taxa ([UNEP/CMS/COP13/Doc.24/Rev.1](#)), which highlighted concerning trends and emerging threats to migratory species. Intentional biological resource use was identified as one of the most prevalent threats facing Appendix I taxa, along with habitat destruction and fragmentation. COP13 also considered a document regarding the direct use and trade of Appendix I taxa, particularly in the context of Article III, paragraph 5, of the Convention, which prohibits the taking of Appendix I-listed taxa except under specific circumstances ([UNEP/CMS/COP13/Doc.21](#)). A study submitted to COP13 that analysed CITES trade data over the period 2015–2018 found that “CMS Parties have engaged in trade across a range of species that are included in CMS Appendix I, both as importers and exporters” ([UNEP/CMS/COP13/Inf.37](#)).
2. As a result, COP13 adopted Decisions on assessing the conservation status of migratory species and on evaluating the threats posed to Appendix I taxa from direct use and trade, including international trade and domestic sales, which read as follows:

Decisions 13.17 – 13.18 Application of Article III of the Convention Regarding International Trade in Appendix I-listed Species

13.17 Directed to the Secretariat

The Secretariat shall, subject to the availability of resources, with the support of the Scientific Council and within the scope of the Conservation Status Report (Decision 13.24):

- a) develop criteria, in collaboration with the CITES Secretariat, to determine the scope and feasibility of assessing the impact of international trade in Appendix I species on their conservation status; and*
- b) based on these criteria, assess the impact of international trade on the conservation status of relevant Appendix I species, including but not limited to, international trade regulated by CITES.*

13.18 Directed to the Secretariat

The Secretariat shall report to the Conference of the Parties at its 14th meeting and provide any appropriate recommendations for Parties to consider.

Decisions 13.24 and 13.26 Conservation Status of Migratory Species

13.24 Directed to the Secretariat

The Secretariat, subject to the availability of resources, is requested to:

- a) further develop the preliminary review of the conservation status of migratory species submitted to the Conference of the Parties at its 13th meeting (COP13) in document UNEP/CMS/COP13/Doc.24, in close consultation with the Scientific Council and in collaboration with competent organizations;*
- b) initiate, in consultation with the Scientific Council and in collaboration with competent organizations, an in-depth review of the conservation status of individual CMS-listed species, starting with those species listed in Appendix I classified in the categories of lowest threat of extinction in the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species and whose conservation status has improved since first listed, and those species listed in Appendix*

It classified in the categories Endangered, Critically Endangered and Extinct in the Wild, with a view to determining inter alia:

- (i) differences in the conservation status of individual populations or management units;*
- (ii) the importance of the protection provided by the listing on Appendix I for the conservation of the species and its individual populations;*
- c) undertake, in consultation with the Scientific Council and in collaboration with competent organizations, and in synergy with other relevant initiatives under the Convention, an assessment of the impact of direct use on the conservation status of species listed on Appendix I;*
- d) report to the Sessional Committee of the Scientific Council at its intersessional meetings between COP13 and COP14 and to COP14 on the progress in implementing this Decision.*

13.26 Directed to the Scientific Council

The Scientific Council is requested, subject to the availability of resources, to:

- a) provide support and guidance to the Secretariat in undertaking the activities foreseen in Decision 13.24 (a) - (c);*
- b) consider the reports submitted by the Secretariat pursuant to this Decision and formulate recommendations to the 14th meeting of the Conference of the Parties on conservation actions underpinned by the reports as appropriate.*

Activities to implement Decisions 13.17 and Decisions 13.24 and 13.26

3. Fundraising activities by the Secretariat after COP13 to support the implementation of Decisions 13.17 and 13.24 succeeded in raising significant resources. Notable contributions were provided by the Government of Australia (Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment), the Government of Switzerland (Federal Office for the Environment), and by the Government of the United Kingdom (Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs). Thanks to these contributions, the Secretariat was able to establish an agreement with the UNEP–World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP–WCMC) to assist with the activities foreseen in Decisions 13.17, 13.24 (a)–(c) and 13.26.

Review of the conservation status of migratory species

4. As an initial step, the CMS Secretariat and UNEP–WCMC developed a framework for a review of the conservation status of migratory species that could serve as a basis for the compilation of a report for COP14. A draft of the framework ([UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC5/Doc.5/Rev.1/Annex 1](#)) was submitted to the 5th meeting of the Sessional Committee of the Scientific Council (ScC-SC5, 2021), which reviewed and endorsed it.
5. Based on the established framework, UNEP–WCMC, in close consultation with the Secretariat, developed a draft *State of the World's Migratory Species* report, which was submitted to ScC-SC6 (2023), in line with Decision 13.24 d) and 13.26 b). The Scientific Council was given two weeks to provide comments and advice on: i) possible factual inaccuracies in the report; ii) any clarification that may be required concerning the content of the report; iii) advice on the possible future iterations of a report on the conservation status of migratory species, including its desirable frequency; iv) possible conclusions to be drawn and recommendations to be brought to the attention of COP14, including any gaps to be filled; and v) any other advice concerning the finalization of the report and its submission to COP14.

6. The Scientific Council requested the Secretariat to finalize the report, taking into account, as appropriate, the comments made during ScC-SC6 and those submitted in writing to the Secretariat by 4 August 2023. Moreover, it requested the Secretariat to prepare a document for the consideration of COP14, including recommended actions, a draft Resolution and draft Decisions.
7. Therefore, following ScC-SC6, UNEP–WCMC, in close consultation with the Secretariat, finalized the *State of the World’s Migratory Species* report, which is contained in the document [UNEP/CMS/COP14/Doc.21.1](#) and will be launched at COP14.

Assessment of the risk posed to CMS Appendix I-listed species by direct use and trade

8. As an initial step, the CMS Secretariat and UNEP–WCMC developed, in collaboration with IUCN, a methodology for a rapid assessment of Appendix I-listed taxa to provide further insights on the impact of direct use and trade on their conservation status. Pursuant to Decision 13.25 a), a draft of the methodology ([UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC5/Doc.5/Rev.1/Annex 3](#)) was submitted to ScC-SC5 (2021), which reviewed and endorsed it.
9. Based on the agreed methodology, UNEP–WCMC, in close consultation with the Secretariat, conducted a draft rapid assessment of the risk posed to CMS Appendix I-listed species by direct use and trade. A first draft of the assessment was submitted to the members of the Sessional Committee of the Scientific Council for consultation and advice in July 2022. A final draft of the report was submitted to ScC-SC6 for consideration, in line with Decision 13.24 d) and 13.26 b). The Scientific Council was given two weeks to provide comments and advice on: i) possible factual inaccuracies in the report; ii) any clarification that may be required concerning the content of the report; and iii) possible conclusions to be drawn and recommendations to be brought to the attention of COP14, including any gaps to be filled.
10. The Scientific Council requested the Secretariat to finalize the report, taking into account, as appropriate, the comments made by ScC-SC6 and those submitted in writing to the Secretariat by 11 August 2023. UNEP–WCMC, in close consultation with the Secretariat, finalized the *Assessment of the Risk Posed to CMS Appendix I-Listed Species by Direct Use and Trade* report, which is contained in the document [UNEP/CMS/COP14/Doc.21.2](#). The report provides a descriptive summary of the results of the rapid assessment, as well as additional reflections on international trade and domestic use and sales of Appendix I taxa.

In-depth review of the conservation status of individual CMS-listed species

11. The work on the in-depth reviews started with a focus on Appendix I-listed taxa. As an initial step, the CMS Secretariat and UNEP–WCMC developed, in collaboration with IUCN, (i) a methodology for a rapid assessment of Appendix I-listed taxa, with a view to, inter alia, help determine which individual CMS-listed taxa may be good candidates for an in-depth review as described in Decision 13.24; and (ii) a template for a set of case studies providing an in-depth assessment of the conservation status of specific Appendix I species. Pursuant to Decision 13.26 a), drafts of the methodology ([UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC5/Doc.5/Rev.1/Annex 3](#)) and of the template ([UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC5/Doc.5/Rev.1/Annex 2](#)) were submitted to the ScC-SC5 (2021), which reviewed and endorsed them.
12. Subsequently, UNEP–WCMC, in close consultation with the Secretariat, conducted a draft rapid assessment of the conservation status of CMS Appendix I-listed taxa. The draft was submitted to the members of the Sessional Committee of the Scientific Council

for consultation and advice in July 2022. The rapid assessment was used as a basis for identifying 16 taxa categorized as 'Least Concern' or 'Lower Risk/conservation dependent' in the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species as potential candidates for in-depth review. Given the available budget, the following five taxa were selected, in consultation with the Sessional Committee of the Scientific Council:

Tadarida brasiliensis (Mexican Free-Tailed Bat);
Vicugna vicugna (Vicuña);
Pelecanus onocrotalus (Great White Pelican);
Haliaeetus albicilla (White-Tailed Sea-Eagle);
Podocnemis expansa (South American River Turtle).

13. With additional funding provided by the Government of Australia, which became available at a later stage, an in-depth review could also be initiated for Appendix II-listed taxa. Following a rapid assessment of the conservation status of CMS Appendix II-listed taxa, taxa were assigned to five conservation priority groups based on their IUCN Red List category, population trend and biological vulnerability. Fifty-two taxa were classified as 'very high priority', 127 taxa as 'high priority', 265 taxa as 'medium priority' and 554 taxa as 'low priority'. Twelve taxa were classified as having 'insufficient' information.
14. Given the available resources, 5 of the 52 'very high priority' taxa were considered for in-depth assessment, using an adapted version of the template used for Appendix I-listed taxa:

Loxodonta cyclotis (African Forest Elephant);
Phoebastria irrorata (Waved Albatross);
Galeorhinus galeus (Tope Shark);
Sphyrna lewini (Scalloped Hammerhead);
Anguilla anguilla (European Eel).

15. Final drafts of the rapid assessments of Appendix I and of Appendix II species were provided to ScC-SC6 as [UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC6/Inf.7.3a](#) and [UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC6/Inf.7.3b](#).
16. UNEP–WCMC prepared the in-depth reviews of the conservation status of the ten Appendix I-listed taxa (paragraph 12) and Appendix II-listed taxa (paragraph 14). Preliminary versions of the reviews were shared with individual members of the Sessional Committee of the Scientific Council and, in the case of shark species, with members of the Advisory Committee of the CMS Sharks MOU. The final drafts of the reviews were made available to ScC-SC6 for discussion (Annex to [UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC6/Doc.7.3](#)). The Scientific Council was given three weeks to provide comments and advice on: i) possible factual inaccuracies in the reviews; ii) any clarification that may be required concerning the content of the reviews; iii) a confirmation of the suitability of the approach followed with a view to the possible continuation of the in-depth review of the conservation status of individual CMS-listed species, including the format and content of the reviews, or suggestions for any revision of the approach; and (iv) any recommendations to be brought to the attention of COP14 in relation to the species assessed.
17. The Scientific Council requested the Secretariat to finalize the report, taking into account, as appropriate, the comments made by ScC-SC6 and those submitted in writing to the Secretariat by 11 August 2023. UNEP–WCMC, in close consultation with the Secretariat, then finalized the *In-depth Review of the Conservation Status of Individual CMS-Listed Species* report, which is contained in document [UNEP/CMS/COP14/Doc.21.3](#).

Discussion

18. This document proposes the next steps for all three issue areas. Following the recommendations by ScC-SC6, the Secretariat prepared a draft Resolution (contained in Annex 1 of this document) on possible future iterations of the *State of the World's Migratory Species* report, including any data gaps to be filled, the report format and possible development into an online tool or a database, as well as the frequency of possible future updates of the report. The Secretariat proposes developing a single report on the conservation status of migratory species in the future, which would include specific case studies, as well as additional 'spotlight' sections on specific topics or issues of importance, as appropriate, and as identified by the Conference of Parties and the Scientific Council.
19. The Secretariat has also prepared a set of Decisions, 14.AA –14.DD, contained in Annex 2 of this document, to guide the implementation of the recommendations from the current reports, and to prepare the next edition of the report.

Recommended actions

20. The Conference of the Parties is recommended to:
 - a) adopt the draft Resolution contained in Annex 1 of this document;
 - b) adopt the draft Decisions contained in Annex 2 of this document;
 - c) take note of the *State of the World's Migratory Species* report contained in document UNEP/CMS/COP14/Doc.21.1;
 - d) take note of the *Assessment of the Risk Posed to CMS Appendix I-Listed Species by Direct Use and Trade* contained in document UNEP/CMS/COP14/Doc.21.2;
 - e) take note of the *In-Depth Review of the Conservation Status of Individual CMS-Listed Species* contained in document UNEP/CMS/COP14/Doc.21.3.

ANNEX 1

DRAFT RESOLUTION

STATE OF THE WORLD'S MIGRATORY SPECIES REPORT

Recalling Article II (1) of the Convention whereby Parties acknowledge the importance of migratory species being conserved and of Range States agreeing to take action to this end whenever possible and appropriate, paying special attention to migratory species the conservation status of which is unfavourable, and taking individually or in cooperation appropriate and necessary steps to conserve such species and their habitat,

Recognizing the need to regularly review information on the status of and threats to migratory species, as well as on knowledge and implementation gaps, to help inform ongoing and future actions by CMS Parties and the wider global community to conserve these species,

Highlighting the importance of such a regular review of the conservation status of migratory species for the objectives defined in the Strategic Plan for Migratory Species 2024–2032,

Recalling Decisions 13.17–13.18 *Application of Article III of the Convention Regarding International Trade in Appendix I-listed Species*, and Decisions 13.24 and 13.26 b) *Conservation Status of Migratory Species*,

Noting the reports considered by the 14th meeting of the Conference of the Parties: *State of the World's Migratory Species* (UNEP/CMS/COP14/Doc.21.1); *Assessment of the Risk Posed to CMS Appendix I-Listed Species by Direct Use and Trade* (UNEP/CMS/COP14/Doc.21.2); and *In-Depth Review of the Conservation Status of Individual CMS-Listed Species* (UNEP/CMS/COP14/Doc.21.3),

Concerned by the conservation status of many CMS-listed species, of which 22 per cent are globally threatened with extinction, including the majority (82 per cent) of the species listed in CMS Appendix I,

Concerned that human activities leading to habitat loss, degradation and fragmentation, overexploitation, climate change, pollution, and the spread of invasive species and disease represent major threats to migratory species,

Underscoring the fact that the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals is a unique global agreement that addresses the conservation of migratory species and their habitats, and provides a vital means for Parties, non-Party governments and stakeholders to cooperate on conservation solutions to address the conservation needs of migratory species and their habitats,

*The Conference of the Parties to the
Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals:*

1. *Welcomes* the first-ever State of the World's Migratory Species report, provided by the Secretariat for the consideration of COP14;

2. *Decides* to regularly review the conservation status of migratory species at alternate meetings of the Conference of the Parties, starting at COP16;
3. *Requests* the Secretariat, subject to the availability of resources, to develop, in consultation with the Scientific Council and in collaboration with competent organizations, a State of the World's Migratory Species report for each alternate meeting of the Conference of the Parties. The State of the World's Migratory Species report should:
 - a. Follow a 'state-pressure-response' structure, and, where feasible, align with key metrics needed to assess progress on the implementation of the Convention. The overall report should be succinct, present findings in a visual format and provide clear recommendations for future actions;
 - b. Include key data and indicators on the conservation status and trends of migratory species, and on key pressures on these species and their habitats, as well as illustrative examples of the efforts under way to conserve and promote the recovery of these species. The reports should also identify threatened migratory species that may benefit from listing in the CMS Appendices;
 - c. Include, as appropriate and feasible, additional 'spotlight' sections on specific topics or issues of importance and relevance and in-depth case studies;
4. *Requests* the Secretariat, subject to the availability of resources, to develop and maintain an online data dashboard to compile key, high-level statistics on CMS-listed and other migratory species and their habitats to inform the review of the conservation status of migratory species and to support the monitoring of the implementation of the Convention. The online CMS Data Dashboard should:
 - a. Be informed by the State of the World's Migratory Species report;
 - b. Include visual representations of key data sets, indicators and/or statistics from relevant data providers;
 - c. Directly link, where feasible, to the key data sets so that the dashboard is kept up to date;
5. *Requests* the Scientific Council to provide guidance to the Secretariat on format, content and any additional 'spotlight' sections on specific topics or issues of importance for the State of the World's Migratory Species reports, as well as on the development of the online CMS Data Dashboard;
6. *Urges* Parties, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to provide the in-kind and financial means and technical support required to develop the State of the World's Migratory Species report, and to develop and maintain an online data platform on CMS-listed and other migratory species and their habitats, as well to compile and update the underlying biodiversity data sets that provide key insights.

ANNEX 2

DRAFT DECISIONS

CONSERVATION STATUS OF MIGRATORY SPECIES

Directed to the Parties

- 14.AA The Parties are invited to:
- a) consider the findings and recommendations of the reports considered at COP14: *State of the World's Migratory Species; Assessment of the Risk Posed to CMS Appendix I-Listed Species by Direct Use and Trade; and In-Depth Review of the Conservation Status of Individual CMS-Listed Species*,
 - b) identify the implications of these reports on their efforts to implement the Convention,
 - c) take additional actions as needed to address the findings and recommendations of these reports at the national level.
14. BB The Parties shall report progress in National Reports on implementing Resolution 14.XX, to the 14th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

Directed to the Scientific Council

- 14.CC The Scientific Council, supported by the Secretariat, is requested to:
- a) provide guidance to the Secretariat on format, content and any additional 'spotlight' sections on specific topics or issues of importance for the second edition of the *State of the World's Migratory Species* report,
 - b) provide guidance to the Secretariat on the development of the online CMS Data Dashboard,

Directed to the Secretariat

- 14.DD The Secretariat is requested, subject to the availability of resources, to:
- a) disseminate the reports on the *State of the World's Migratory Species, Assessment of the Risk Posed to CMS Appendix I-Listed Species by Direct Use and Trade*, and an *In-Depth Review of the Conservation Status of Individual CMS-Listed Species* to the relevant stakeholders, and raise awareness of them, and their findings and recommendations, in appropriate forums,
 - b) develop and maintain an online data dashboard to compile key, high-level statistics on CMS-listed and other migratory species and their habitats,
 - c) review the findings and recommendations of the reports and consider their implications for setting priorities for implementation of the Programme of Work to be adopted by COP14,
 - d) during the intersessional period prior to COP15, identify any major developments regarding the conservation status of migratory species, including emerging trends or threats, and prepare a summary for the 8th meeting of the Sessional Committee and for the attention of COP15,
 - e) identify possible issues that could be the subject of spotlight sections.