



**CONVENTION ON  
MIGRATORY  
SPECIES**

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14<sup>th</sup> MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES  
Samarkand, Uzbekistan, 12 – 17 February 2024  
Agenda Item 27.6

**MARINE TURTLES**

*(Prepared by the Secretariat)*

Summary:

This document reports on progress to implement Decisions 13.69 -13.70 and contains draft Decisions for adoption.

Rev.1 makes consistent the language in decisions directed to the Scientific Council.

## MARINE TURTLES

### Background

1. Six of seven globally recognized species of marine turtles are listed on CMS Appendix I, and all seven on CMS Appendix II. The conservation status of all seven species remains of serious concern, with Hawksbill and Kemps Ridley turtles categorized by IUCN as Critically Endangered<sup>1</sup>.
2. Two Memoranda of Understanding were concluded under CMS to address conservation needs of marine turtles in a regional context, namely the [Memorandum of Understanding concerning Conservation Measures for Marine Turtles of the Atlantic Coast of Africa](#) (1999), and the [Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation and Management of Marine Turtles and their Habitats of the Indian Ocean and South-East Asia](#) (2001). In addition, two Single Species Action Plans have been developed, the [Single Species Action Plan for the Loggerhead Turtle \(\*Caretta caretta\*\) in the South Pacific Ocean](#) (adopted in 2014) and the [Single Species Action Plan for the Hawksbill Turtle \(\*Eretmochelys imbricata\*\) in South-East Asia and the Western Pacific Ocean Region](#) (adopted in 2022; see [UNEP/CMS/COP14/Doc.27.6.2](#)).
3. No CMS Resolution specifically on marine turtles is currently in force. COP13 adopted two Decisions on marine turtles:

#### 13.69 Decision directed to Parties

*Parties are invited to provide funding to the Secretariat to support the implementation of this Decision.*

#### 13.70 Decision directed to Scientific Council

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

- a) *review, as far as feasible in collaboration with the Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation and Management of Marine Turtles and their Habitats of the Indian Ocean and South-East Asia (IOSEA Marine Turtle MOU) and the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles, relevant scientific information on conservation and threats to marine turtles, such as climate change;*
- b) *based on this review, develop new recommendations for the conservation of all species of marine turtle included in Appendix I or II of the Convention including the preservation of the current nesting beaches and the identification of new nesting beaches, for presentation at the 14th meeting of the Conference of the Parties;*

<sup>1</sup> Overview of CMS listing status and IUCN Red List status of marine turtles:

Common name	Scientific name	Year of Appendix I Listing	Year of Appendix II Listing	Global IUCN Red List Status and Trend <sup>1</sup>
Green Turtle	<i>Chelonia mydas</i>	1979	1979	EN (decreasing)
Loggerhead Turtle	<i>Caretta caretta</i>	1985	1979	VU (decreasing)
Hawksbill Turtle	<i>Eretmochelys imbricata</i>	1985	1979	CR (decreasing)
Kemp's Ridley Turtle	<i>Lepidochelys kempii</i>	1979	1979	CR (unknown)
Olive Ridley Turtle	<i>Lepidochelys olivacea</i>	1985	1979	VU (decreasing)
Leatherback Turtle	<i>Dermochelys coriacea</i>	1979	1979	VU (decreasing)
Flatback Turtle	<i>Natator depressus</i>	-	1979	DD

EN = Endangered; VU = Vulnerable; CR = Critically Endangered; DD = Data Deficient

- c) develop, in collaboration with the IOSEA Marine Turtle MOU, CITES, Ramsar Convention and relevant non-governmental organizations and supported by the Secretariat, a draft *Single Species Action Plan for the conservation of Hawksbill Turtles to be presented preferably at the 14th meeting of the Conference of the Parties, to address their trade and use in South-East Asia, and the adjacent Western Pacific, and taking into account the 2019 CITES Report on Status, Scope and Trends of the Legal and Illegal International Trade in Marine Turtles, its Conservation Impacts, Management Options and Mitigation Priorities, as well as the Hawksbill Assessment under preparation by the Advisory Committee of the IOSEA Marine Turtle MOU.*

#### Activities to implement Decision 13.70

4. Paragraphs a) and b) of Decision 13.70 could not be addressed in the current triennium due to a lack of funds and capacity. In addition, there is an ongoing global review of Regional Management Units (RMUs) for marine turtles, based on the work published in Wallace et al. (2010)<sup>2</sup>. Once the results of this review have been published, it will form an excellent basis for the review of relevant scientific information on conservation and threats to marine turtles foreseen in Decision 13.70 a), as well as the development of recommendations as requested in Decision 13.70 b). Further, the Protected Species Climate Vulnerability Assessment (PSCVA) methodology recently developed by the United States National, Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA Fisheries) provides an excellent tool for evaluating the vulnerability of different turtle stocks and efforts should be made to integrate this approach into CMS work on the subject.
5. It is therefore proposed to renew this Decision with slightly amended text, as proposed in the Annex to this document.
6. Paragraph c) of Decision 13.70 was fully implemented, and a *Single Species Action Plan for the Hawksbill Turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*) in South-East Asia and the Western Pacific Ocean Region* has been finalized. Please refer to [UNEP/CMS/COP14/Doc.27.6.2](#). It is therefore proposed to delete this paragraph of the Decision.

#### Turtle Bycatch Mitigation Initiative

7. There is no current global overview of available bycatch mitigation measures for marine turtles for all types of fisheries. Accordingly, the Advisory Committee of the IOSEA Marine Turtle MOU identified the need for more focus on this key threat, starting with an overview of the status of knowledge regarding turtle bycatch mitigation, similar to what had been produced regarding marine mammal bycatch mitigation as presented in [UNEP/CMS/COP13/Inf.11](#), solo disponible en inglés. Details on a proposed way forward, which foresee this as a joint initiative between CMS and the IOSEA Marine Turtle MOU, are presented in [UNEP/CMS/COP14/Doc.27.1.1](#) *Bycatch* and the associated draft Decisions.

#### Discussion and analysis

8. Given the concerning conservation status of all marine turtle species, developing science-based and region- and species-specific recommendations for conservation measures, and addressing critical knowledge gaps, remain priorities. Therefore, the review foreseen in Decision 13.70 a) and b) is still warranted.

<sup>2</sup> Wallace et al. (2010). Regional Management Units for Marine Turtles: A Novel Framework for Prioritizing Conservation and Research across Multiple Scales. PLOS ONE 5(12): e15465. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0015465>

Recommended actions

9. The Conference of the Parties is recommended to:
  - a) Adopt the draft Decisions as contained in the Annex of this document;
  - b) delete Decision 13.69 and 13.70.

## ANNEX

## DRAFT DECISIONS

## MARINE TURTLES

***Directed to Parties***

14.AA (13.69) Parties are requested ~~invited~~ to provide funding to the Secretariat to support the implementation of this Decision ~~secure the external expertise required to develop a draft review and recommendations for the consideration of the Scientific Council as foreseen in Decision 14.BB.~~

***Directed to the Scientific Council***

14.BB (13.70) The Scientific Council is requested to, subject to the availability of external resources:

- a) review, as far as feasible in collaboration with the Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation and Management of Marine Turtles and their Habitats of the Indian Ocean and South-East Asia (IOSEA Marine Turtle MOU) and the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles, relevant scientific information on conservation and threats to marine turtles in a region- and species-specific context, ~~such as including their vulnerability to climate change; and~~
- b) based on this review, develop new recommendations for the conservation of all species of marine turtle included in Appendix I or II of the Convention including the preservation of the current nesting beaches and the identification of new nesting beaches, for presentation at the 14<sup>th</sup> ~~15<sup>th</sup>~~ meeting of the Conference of the Parties;
- ~~c) develop, in collaboration with the IOSEA Marine Turtle MOU, CITES, Ramsar Convention and relevant non-governmental organizations and supported by the Secretariat, a draft Single Species Action Plan for the conservation of Hawksbill Turtles to be presented preferably at the 14<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Conference of the Parties, to address their trade and use in South East Asia, and the adjacent Western Pacific, and taking into account the 2019 CITES Report on Status, Scope and Trends of the Legal and Illegal International Trade in Marine Turtles, its Conservation Impacts, Management Options and Mitigation Priorities, as well as the Hawksbill Assessment under preparation by the Advisory Committee of the IOSEA Marine Turtle MOU.~~

***Directed to the Secretariat***

14.CC The Secretariat shall, subject to the availability of external resources:

- a) facilitate the review to be undertaken by the Scientific Council by securing necessary funding and external expertise to develop drafts for review by the Scientific Council; and
- b) report to the Scientific Council at the 7<sup>th</sup> meeting of its Sessional Committee on the progress in implementing this decision.