

SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL COMMENTS
(arising from ScC-SC6)

SEAGRASS

UNEP/CMS/COP14/Doc.27.4.3

(ScC-SC6 Agenda Item 9.4.3)

RECOMMENDATIONS TO COP14

ScC-SC6 recommended the draft Resolution and Decisions for adoption.

GENERAL COMMENTS ON THE DOCUMENT

- It was noted that not only did migratory species benefit from seagrass ecosystems, but seagrass ecosystems benefited of migratory species. Accordingly, wording was proposed to the draft Resolution and draft Decisions.
- It was noted that there are recent peer-review articles on the effect of ocean noise on seagrass, such as Solé, M., Lenoir, M., Durfort, M. et al. *Seagrass Posidonia is impaired by human-generated noise*. Commun Biol 4, 743 (2021). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s42003-021-02165-3>. Therefore, reference to noise pollution was suggested to be added to the draft Resolution.

COMMENTS ON SPECIFIC SECTIONS/ INCLUDING POSSIBLE PROPOSALS FOR TEXT REVISION

Draft Resolution

- Page 4, first preambular para.:

Highlighting the importance of seagrass ecosystems as important habitats for migratory marine species, including [dugongssirenians](#), [cetaceans](#), [sea marine](#) turtles and [sharkselasmobranchs](#),

- Page 4, sixth preambular para.:

Acknowledging the significant threats to seagrass ecosystems, including habitat degradation, pollution, [including noise pollution](#), climate change, overfishing, [bottom trawling](#), dredging and coastal development, which have resulted in the global decline of seagrass habitats and their associated biodiversity,

- Page 5, amend OP. 1:

Urges Parties to recognize the importance of seagrass ecosystems as important habitats for migratory marine species such as [dugongssirenians](#), [cetaceans](#), marine turtles and [sharkselasmobranchs](#);

- Page 5, add OP. 1 bis:

Urges Parties to recognize the contribution of migratory species to the maintenance and functioning of seagrass ecosystems and as such enhance the ability of these ecosystems to provide nature-based solutions to climate change;

- Page 5, amend OP. 2:

Urges Parties to strengthen conservation and restoration measures for seagrass ecosystems and associated migratory species, including implementing and enforcing effective legal and regulatory measures to conserve and manage seagrass ecosystems such as including seagrass ecosystems in marine protected areas, locally managed marine areas, or other effective area-based conservation measures, ~~and~~ integrating seagrass and associated migratory species conservation into relevant coastal and marine spatial planning processes, and in strategies to address climate change;

- Page 5, amend OP. 4:

Encourages Parties to conduct regular monitoring, research and data-collection on seagrass ecosystems to better understand their status, trends, economic value and ecological functions as well as their role in supporting migratory species and how those migratory species support healthy seagrass ecosystems and to use this knowledge to inform decision-making and management actions for seagrass conservation and restoration;

- Page 5, amend OP. 8:

Encourages Parties to recognize the importance of seagrass ecosystems and associated migratory species, as carbon sinks and to include them in national climate change mitigation strategies, including Nationally Determined Contributions to the Paris Agreement;

Draft Decisions

- Page 6, amend para. 14.AA a):

identify, at the national level, an inventory of migratory species that use seagrass meadows, the most important seagrass meadows for migratory species, the most important ongoing threats to seagrass and drivers of seagrass loss, the main historical reasons that have resulted in the loss of seagrass beds, the most important activities that prevent their recovery, and the conservation actions necessary to reduce seagrass loss and restore it, including the conservation of migratory species that support healthy seagrass ecosystems;

- Page 6, amend para. 14.CC a):

provide technical support to Parties to identify an inventory of migratory species that use seagrass ~~meadows~~ ecosystems and those that contribute to their functioning, the most important seagrass meadows for migratory species globally, the most important past and extant threats to seagrass and drivers of seagrass loss, and the conservation actions necessary to reduce seagrass loss and restore it.