

TWELFTH MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF MIGRATORY SPECIES OF WILD ANIMALS: 22-28 OCTOBER 2017

The twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP12) to the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) opens today in Manila, the Philippines, and will continue through Saturday, 28 October 2017. Convening under the theme “Their Future is Our Future – Sustainable Development for Wildlife & People,” representatives from governments, inter- and non-governmental organizations as well as scientists will come together to discuss conservation threats, barriers to migration, and the need for increased cooperation across the globe.

COP12 is expected to underscore migratory species’ vital services to satisfy people’s everyday needs. It will also address, among others: proposals to amend the CMS appendices, including on chimpanzees, the Caspian seal, and the steppe eagle; strategic and institutional matters, among others the future shape and strategies of CMS; interpretation and implementation of the Convention, including review of decisions; administrative and budgetary matters; and the reports and recommendations of the subsidiary bodies of the Convention. A number of side events will also take place.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF CMS

Migratory species are vulnerable to a wide range of threats, including habitat shrinkage in breeding areas, excessive hunting along migration routes, and degradation of their feeding grounds. As a result of international concern over these threats, CMS was adopted in 1979 and entered into force on 1 November 1983. CMS, also known as the Bonn Convention, recognizes that states must be the protectors of migratory species that live within or pass through their national jurisdictions and aims to conserve terrestrial, marine, and avian migratory species throughout their ranges. CMS currently has 124 parties.

The Convention was designed to allow for expansion and revision of commitments and provide a framework through which parties may act to conserve migratory species and their habitat by: adopting strict protection measures for migratory species that have been characterized as being in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of their ranges (species

listed in Appendix I of the Convention); concluding agreements for the conservation and management of migratory species that have an unfavorable conservation status or would benefit significantly from international cooperation (species listed in Appendix II); and joint research and monitoring activities. At present, over 100 migratory species are listed in Appendix I.

CMS also provides for the development of specialized regional agreements for Appendix II species. To date, seven such agreements and 19 memoranda of understanding (MoUs) have been concluded. The seven agreements aim to conserve: populations of European bats; cetaceans of the Mediterranean Sea, Black Sea, and contiguous Atlantic area; small cetaceans of the Baltic and North Seas; seals in the Wadden Sea; African-Eurasian migratory waterbirds; albatrosses and petrels; and gorillas and their habitats. The 19 MoUs aim to conserve: the Siberian crane; the slender-billed curlew; marine turtles of the Atlantic coast of Africa; marine turtles of the Indian Ocean and Southeast Asia; the Middle-European population of the great bustard; the bukhara deer; the aquatic warbler; West African populations of the African elephant; the saiga antelope; cetaceans in the Pacific islands region; dugongs; the Mediterranean monk seal; the ruddy-headed goose; grassland birds of southern South America; high Andean flamingos; South Andean Huemul; migratory sharks; raptors (birds of prey in Africa and Eurasia); and the manatee and small cetaceans of Western Africa and Macaronesia. These agreements and MoUs are open to all range states of the species, regardless of whether they are parties to the Convention.

Eight action plans have also been concluded on the: Central Asian Flyway; Sahelo-Saharan Antelopes; Chinese Crested Tern; Black-faced Spoonbill; Spoon-billed Sandpiper; Madagascar Pond Heron; White-winged Flufftail; and Lesser Flamingo. There are also three initiatives on bycatch, Eurasian Aridland Mammals, and Houbara Bustard, as well as three Special Species Initiatives on the Central Asian Flyway, Central Asian Mammals, and Sahelo-Saharan Megafauna.

COP7: The seventh meeting of the COP (18-24 September 2002, Bonn, Germany) added 20 species to Appendix I and 21 to Appendix II, with the fin, sei, and sperm whales and the great white shark being listed on both. COP7 also adopted resolutions on: electrocution of migratory birds, offshore oil pollution, wind turbines, impact assessment, and by-catch. The COP adopted decisions on, *inter alia*: future action on the Antarctic minke, Bryde’s, and pygmy right whales; improving the conservation

status of the leatherback turtle; an agreement on dugong conservation; the American Pacific Flyway Programme; and the Central Asian-Indian Waterbird Flyway Initiative.

COP8: The eighth meeting of the COP (20-25 November 2005, Nairobi, Kenya) addressed: the review of CMS implementation; sustainable use; the target to significantly reduce the current rate of biodiversity loss by 2010; measures to improve the conservation status of Appendix I species; measures to improve the conservation status of Appendix II species; proposals for amendments to Appendices I and II; the CMS 2006-2011 Strategic Plan; the CMS Information Management Plan; and financial and administrative arrangements. The meeting added 11 species to Appendix I and 16 to Appendix II, with the basking shark, bukhara deer, and short-beaked common dolphin listed on both. MoUs on the West African elephant and the saiga antelope were also signed.

COP9: COP9 (1-5 December 2008, Rome, Italy) listed 11 species on Appendix I of the Convention, including three dolphin species and the West African manatee, as well as the cheetah, with the exception of the populations of Botswana, Zimbabwe, and Namibia for which quotas are in place under the Convention on International Trade of Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). Species listed in Appendix II include the African wild dog, saiga antelope, and several dolphin populations. Following intense negotiations, mako sharks, the porbeagle shark, and the northern hemisphere population of the spiny dogfish were also listed on Appendix II. The proposal to list the saker falcon on Appendix I was withdrawn. However, a resolution was adopted that set out the direction for future work on this species, and proposed listing it at COP10, unless its conservation status improves significantly.

COP10: COP10 (20-25 November 2011, Bergen, Norway) adopted 27 resolutions, including on: synergies and partnerships; overview of the process regarding the “future shape” of CMS, budget, and enhanced engagement with the Global Environment Facility (GEF); wildlife disease and migratory species; migratory terrestrial species; global programme of work for cetaceans; and bird flyway conservation policy. The COP listed: under Appendix I, the saker falcon, the red-footed falcon, and the far eastern and bristle-thighed curlew; under Appendix II, the argali mountain sheep and bobolink; and under Appendix I and II, the giant manta ray.

COP11: COP11 (4-9 November 2014, Quito, Ecuador) adopted 35 resolutions, including on: the Strategic Plan for Migratory Species 2015-2023; the Programme of Work on Climate Change and Migratory Species; the Central Asian Mammals Initiative (CAMI); renewable energy and migratory species; the Action Plan for Migratory Landbirds in the African-Eurasian Region; management of marine debris; fighting wildlife crime and offenses within and beyond borders; and enhancing synergies and common services among the CMS Family of instruments. COP11 also listed 31 new species.

INTERSESSIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

RAPTORS MOS2: The Second Meeting of the Signatories (MoS2) to the Memorandum of Understanding concerning the Conservation of Migratory Birds of Prey in Africa and Eurasia (Raptors MoU, 5-8 October 2015, Trondheim, Norway) agreed to

amend: Annex 1 of the species list to include 12 additional vulture species and six additional raptor species; the Rules of Procedure on Credentials and Amendments to the MoU (Rule 16); and the geographic scope to include South Sudan in the range state list.

SAIGA MOS3: MoS3 to the MoU concerning Conservation, Restoration and Sustainable Use of the Saiga Antelope (28-29 October 2015, Tashkent, Uzbekistan) discussed CAMI and its programme of work; the guidelines on mitigating the impact of linear infrastructure and related disturbance on mammals in Central Asia; the update and review of the conservation status of saiga antelope within the agreement area; and review of the updated national report format.

AEWA MOP6: The sixth session of the Meeting of the Parties (MOP6) to the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (AEWA, 9-14 November 2015, Bonn, Germany) adopted 22 resolutions, *inter alia*: implementation of the AEWA Strategic Plan 2009-2017 and the Plan of Action for Africa 2012-2017; implementation and revision of the AEWA International Implementation Tasks 2012-2015; synergies within the CMS Family; International Single Species and Multi-species Action Plans and Management Plans; conservation guidelines; and amendments to the Agreement’s annexes.

SHARKS MOS2: MoS2 to the MoU on the Conservation of Migratory Sharks (15-19 February 2016, San José, Costa Rica) decided to: amend the MoU with respect to sections on decision-making, budget, cooperating partners, and the Advisory Committee; amend Annex 1 of the MoU to add 22 additional shark and ray species; amend Annex 3 (the Conservation Plan); approve the 2016-2018 budget and Trust Fund; and approve terms of reference for the Advisory Committee, the Conservation Working Group, and cooperating partners. MoS2 also agreed on a format for national reporting and approved the creation of a list of experts.

FLAMINGOS MOS1: MoS1 to the MoU on the Conservation of the High Andean Flamingos and their Habitats (26-28 April 2016, Cusco, Peru) addressed the draft action plan and other issues related to the coordination of the MoU and the conservation of high Andean wetlands.

CMS STANDING COMMITTEE 45: The 45th Meeting of the Standing Committee (9-10 November 2016, Bonn, Germany) discussed: new accessions to the Convention and resource mobilization; progress on the Strategic Plan for Migratory Species, including the outcomes of the associated working group; the future structure and Strategies of CMS and the CMS Family; enhancing synergies and common services among CMS Family instruments; a review process for the implementation of the convention; and a review of decisions.

DUGONG MOU MOS3: MoS3 to the MoU on the Conservation and Management of Dugongs and their Habitats throughout their Range (13-14 March 2017, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates) agreed on a number of decisions, including on: amendments to the rules of procedure; review of CMS procedures regarding proxy signature of letters of credentials; the Dugong and Seagrass Research Toolkit; the CMS Dugong MoU Questionnaire and the GEF-5 Dugong and Seagrass website; and a target for voluntary contributions by signatories of a minimum of US\$120,000 annually.