

CMS COP13 Highlights: Tuesday, 13 February 2024

The Committee of the Whole (CoW) met throughout the day to consider scientific assessments and reports, strategic and institutional matters, issues related to the Scientific Council, and matters pertaining to the interpretation and implementation of the Convention. The Budget, Avian, Terrestrial, Aquatic, and Institutional Working Groups established by the CoW met over lunch and in the evening.

Scientific Assessments and Reports

Conservation status of migratory species: The Secretariat summarized progress on reviewing the conservation status of migratory species and introduced a draft resolution and draft decisions (UNEP/CMS/COP14/Doc.21/Rev.1) calling for, among other things, regular similar reviews and an online data dashboard to inform them. The UN Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC) summarized three reports: the State of the World's Migratory Species (UNEP/CMS/COP14/Doc.21.1), an 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). The CoW considered the documents together.

PERU, COSTA RICA, and ISRAEL highlighted the importance of differentiating between lethal versus non-lethal uses, since the latter can be beneficial to conservation status. ISRAEL suggested employing the review mechanism in Decision 12.9 for cases highlighted by these assessments.

The Secretariat will produce a CRP for the CoW's consideration.

Strategic and Institutional Matters

Strategic Planning: Implementation of the Strategic Plan for Migratory Species 2015-2013: The Secretariat introduced UNEP/CMS/COP14/Doc.14.1. The CoW noted the final progress report.

New Strategic Plan for Migratory Species: The Secretariat introduced a draft resolution and associated decisions to adopt and implement the new Strategic Plan (UNEP/CMS/COP14/Doc.14.2).

COOK ISLANDS suggested including traditional knowledge. The EUROPEAN UNION (EU) raised concerns regarding the development of indicators and the reform of the national reporting template. NEW ZEALAND and the UK proposed minor amendments to clarify endorsement procedures and follow-up activities. SOUTH AFRICA emphasized that implementation requires adequate and accessible financial resources. The MALDIVES requested a reference to transboundary pollution. BRAZIL called for better recognition of the unique needs of developing countries.

The CoW referred the document to the working group on institutional and cross-cutting issues.

Scientific Council

Evaluation of the results of the restructuring of the Scientific Council: The Secretariat introduced UNEP/CMS/

[COP14/Doc.15.1](http://UNEP/CMS/COP14/Doc.15.1), which proposes amendments to the terms of reference and rules of procedure of the Scientific Council (ScC), and presents a draft decision on COP-appointed councillors.

AUSTRALIA, with NEW ZEALAND and the UK, supported the proposal for the sessional committee to have four representatives per region. The EU opposed, arguing that it was premature to enlarge the number of party-appointed councillors due to budgetary implications.

CoW Chair Colin Galbraith (UK) invited parties to seek a way forward with the Secretariat and report back to the CoW.

Scientific Council membership: The Secretariat introduced UNEP/CMS/COP14/Doc.15.2/Rev.1 on candidates for COP-appointed councillors for aquatic mammals and climate change. The issue will be addressed by regional coordination agendas and reconsidered in plenary.

Election of parties to the Standing Committee: The Secretariat introduced UNEP/CMS/COP14/Doc.16. The COP will address the item in plenary.

CMS Contribution to the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF): The Secretariat introduced UNEP/CMS/COP14/Doc.17, including a draft decision to ensure that parties include migratory species in their National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs).

SWITZERLAND suggested referencing the Bern Process on strengthening cooperation among biodiversity-related conventions. BRAZIL, supported by ARGENTINA, argued that decisions should be consistent with language adopted in the GBF. COOK ISLANDS recommended including a reference to invasive non-native species. ZIMBABWE requested language on a specific financing mechanism to implement the CMS Strategic Plan. The CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY (CBD) stressed that GBF targets that drive change, including consumption and strengthening means of implementation, are as essential as those on connectivity. The WILDLIFE CONSERVATION SOCIETY (WCS) urged parties to add reference to "ecological integrity" as well as "connectivity." BORN FREE FOUNDATION recommended including language on animal culture and social complexity. The Secretariat clarified that further guidance will be produced about integration between CMS objectives and NBSAPs. The Secretariat will produce a CRP for further consideration.

Synergies and Partnerships

Synergies and Partnerships: The Secretariat reported on progress on enhancing the relationship between CMS and civil society as specified in Resolution 11.10 (Rev.COP13), and introduced proposals to amend the Resolution and two new draft decisions (UNEP/CMS/COP14/Doc.18.1).

AUSTRALIA, supported by the UK and NEW ZEALAND, noted the importance of integrating traditional knowledge of Indigenous Peoples and local communities (IPLCs). ISRAEL noted that some traditional practices can be harmful to migratory species. The EU called for engagement with youth groups and suggested referencing the BBNJ Agreement in the amended Resolution 11.10 (Rev.COP13). BRAZIL requested changing "synergies" to "complementarity." The PHILIPPINES requested Secretariat assistance in encouraging cooperation among

subnational and local governments; NEW ZEALAND opposed, noting this is the responsibility of parties. The CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES OF WILD FAUNA AND FLORA (CITES) highlighted the roles of the Bern Process and the CITES-CMS memorandum of understanding (MOU) in implementing both Conventions' mandates. BIRDLIFE INTERNATIONAL suggested widening the scope of the Resolution to allow interested parties and stakeholders to shape synergies with other institutions and instruments.

MOU signing ceremony: Amy Fraenkel, CMS Executive Secretary, and Grethel Aguilar, Director-General, International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), signed a MOU to support priority work on commitments under the African Carnivore Initiative (ACI).

Cooperation with the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES): The Secretariat introduced [UNEP/CMS/COP14/Doc.18.2/Rev.1](#). IPBES welcomed ongoing collaboration with CMS and highlighted IPBES-11 in December 2024. The UK, supported by NEW ZEALAND, proposed amendments to establish a process for CMS to respond to IPBES reports. The Secretariat will produce a CRP.

Communications, Outreach and Information Management: The Secretariat introduced [UNEP/CMS/COP14/Doc.19](#) and [UNEP/CMS/COP14/Inf.19](#). EGYPT stressed the importance of speaking "one communication language" across Conventions. The CoW noted the document and forwarded the draft decisions to plenary for adoption.

Scientific Assessments and Reports

Atlas on Animal Migration: The ScC introduced [UNEP/CMS/COP14/Doc.20](#). The EU proposed amendments around reporting burdens. BAHRAIN, supported by INDIA, expressed interest in developing an Atlas for the Central Asian Flyway. The Secretariat will produce a CRP.

Interpretation and Implementation of the Convention

Crosscutting conservation issues: Intentional take: Priorities for addressing illegal and unsustainable taking of migratory species: The Secretariat introduced [UNEP/CMS/COP14/Doc.30.1.1/Rev.1](#), including a proposed amendment to Resolution 11.31 on fighting wildlife crime and defining illegal taking and sustainability.

NIGERIA, with ISRAEL and EGYPT, noted that "use" of species should not inherently imply sustainability. KAZAKHSTAN, with ISRAEL, recommended aligning with CITES' approach to handling confiscated wildlife specimens. The UK, with ISRAEL, suggested widening the scope of training on illegal, unsustainable use to include judicial bodies. KYRGYZSTAN called for cooperation with local law enforcement and judicial institutions on monitoring. KENYA recommended community-led approaches. The EU requested a reference to marine migratory species. WCS encouraged collaboration with relevant UN organized crime and corruption enforcement bodies. The Secretariat will prepare a CRP for consideration by the CoW.

Aquatic wild meat: The Secretariat introduced [UNEP/CMS/COP14/Doc.30.1.2/Rev.3](#). The BENIN ENVIRONMENT AND EDUCATION SOCIETY (BEES), also on behalf of Ocean Care, welcomed the action plan to protect aquatic species in west Africa; and, alongside SENEGAL, urged parties to ensure its timely implementation at the national level. The EU encouraged further dialogue on food security. The Secretariat will produce a CRP.

Terrestrial and avian wild meat: The Secretariat introduced [UNEP/CMS/COP14/Doc.30.1.3](#); comments from the ScC ([UNEP/CMS/COP14/Doc.30.1.3/Add.1](#)); and a report on the impacts of taking, trade, and consumption of terrestrial migratory species for wild meat ([UNEP/CMS/COP14/Inf.30.1.3](#)). The EU and WCS supported the proposed actions, providing comments in writing. The Secretariat will produce a CRP.

Conservation Planning and Management

Ecological connectivity: policy and technical aspects: The ScC introduced the relevant documents ([UNEP/CMS/COP14/](#)

[Doc.30.2.1.1](#); [UNEP/CMS/COP14/Inf.Doc.30.2.1.1](#); and [UNEP/CMS/COP14/Doc.30.2.1.2](#)) on policy and technical aspects of ecological connectivity. The EU, the UK, and EGYPT supported the consolidation of Resolutions 12.26 (Rev.COP13) and 12.7 (Rev.COP13), and, alongside BIRDLIFE INTERNATIONAL and the WORLD WILDLIFE FUND (WWF), provided amendments in writing. WCS requested the Secretariat to further examine linkages between ecological connectivity, resilience, and integrity. EGYPT emphasized the need for guidance on these terms. The Secretariat will produce a CRP.

Transfrontier Conservation Areas: The Secretariat introduced [UNEP/CMS/COP14/Doc.30.2.2/Rev.2](#), including draft decisions on the implementation of the UNEP-WCMC pilot transboundary tool. ZIMBABWE requested deferring the adoption of the draft decisions due to insufficient consultation with Southern African Development Community (SADC) member states. UGANDA emphasized the need for capacity building in the use of the tool. The UK proposed amendments to widen reporting timeframes. EGYPT called for clarity in terminologies used by CMS. The CoW Chair referred this item to the institutional and cross-cutting working group.

Community Participation and Livelihoods: The Secretariat introduced [UNEP/CMS/COP14/Doc.30.2.3](#), including a draft resolution and decisions on key guiding principles for community involvement. The UK and EU proposed amendments recognizing the relevance of different communities. EGYPT suggested that community participation be cross-cutting. CONSERVATION FORCE called for greater participation of IPLCs in CMS decision-making. BORN FREE FOUNDATION suggested amendments to acknowledge the role of CMS in fostering collaboration of all stakeholders along migration routes. The Secretariat will produce a CRP.

Infrastructure: Infrastructure and impact assessment: The Secretariat introduced [UNEP/CMS/COP14/Doc.30.3.1/Rev.1](#). The UK requested flexibility on how parties deliver their commitments, especially on cumulative impacts, which can be assessed differently. The EU requested that parties consider ecological connectivity and restoration in their planning. The UNITED ARAB EMIRATES (UAE) proposed eliminating specific mechanisms for public disclosure from the text, allowing for transparency according to national circumstances. The issue was referred to the institutional and cross-cutting working group.

Renewable energy and powerlines: The Secretariat introduced [UNEP/CMS/COP14/Doc.30.3.2](#). The EU called for the energy sector to reduce negative impacts on biodiversity. The item was referred to the institutional and cross-cutting working group.

Wildlife disease: The ScC introduced [UNEP/CMS/COP14/Doc.30.4.3](#). Many parties supported the document, urging CMS to further consider and implement the One Health Approach, and provided amendments in writing. ISRAEL, alongside BORN FREE FOUNDATION and WCS, requested reference to pathogen spillover. ISRAEL, supported by the UK, further noted that parties' national focal points should drive engagement with the World Health Organization (WHO), drawing attention to the need for interministerial dialogues between ministries of environment and health. The CoW referred further deliberations to the working group on institutional and cross-cutting issues.

In the Corridors

Microphone problems and mistaken identity plagued the second day of COP14, where delegates reflected on the importance of communication, synergies, and partnerships, particularly with other conventions. However, as one delegate noted, the CMS is "behind" in passing the mic to other partners, particularly IPLCs and youth. The proposed new Strategic Plan will be an important mechanism for engagement. Yet many delegates stressed that successful implementation will depend on adequate resourcing. In a time of worldwide fiscal restraint, financing discussions will be more challenging to resolve than the—hopefully now fully functional—conference centre's technical system. Still, as one delegate passionately held forth, "the species themselves are asking for action." In the coming days, delegates will have ample opportunity to ensure that nature's microphone is heard loud and clear.