

## CMS COP15 Highlights: Saturday, 28 March 2026

The Committee of the Whole (CoW) of the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP15) to the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) approved in-session documents and proposals for Concerted Actions (CA) for the Triennium 2026-2029.

### Review of In-Session Documents

Several conference room papers (CRPs) were approved, in some cases with minor amendments, and forwarded to COP for adoption, including on: conserving seamount ecosystems; conservation priorities for cetaceans; freshwater fish; European Eel; species that meet the criteria for listing on CMS appendices; flyways; underwater noise; priorities for area-based conservation of marine management; vessel strikes; transfrontier conservation areas; guidelines for preparing and assessing proposals for the amendment of CMS Appendices; resource mobilization; the Samarkand Strategic Plan for Migratory Species 2024-2032; proposal for a CA for the Giraffe; wildlife health; illegal and unsustainable taking of migratory species; and renewable energy.

A CRP on insect decline generated discussion over the inclusion of [Rio Declaration](#) language, with BRAZIL underscoring that the key question concerned the inclusion of a reference to Principle 15 of the Declaration (the Precautionary Approach) or including the Declaration in its entirety. They underscored the Rio Declaration as an important dimension of sustainable development and relevant to CMS issues such as insect decline. Brazil further noted the opposition of other Parties to Global South delegations' efforts to raise the principle of common but differentiated responsibility (CBDR). They expressed their preference for referencing the entire Rio Declaration without specifically naming principles, and for reopening the resource mobilization CRP, which was supported by ECUADOR and CHILE.

The EU called for removing the reference to Principle 15 and including a reference to the entire Declaration in the preamble of the CRP. The UK supported removing both references, also supported by AUSTRALIA, NORWAY, and MONACO, who urged against reopening discussions on resource mobilization. BRAZIL supported the proposal to delete both references, and the CoW forwarded the CRP on insect decline to the COP for adoption.

Consideration of the CRP on the budget was delayed until the CoW on Sunday morning.

### Concerted Action Proposals

**Sperm Whale (*Physeter macrocephalus*):** The Secretariat introduced the proposal ([UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.31.3.6](#)) to continue the CA on the Sperm Whale of the Eastern Tropical Pacific already listed in Appendices I and II. They noted that it contributes to Resolution 11.23 (Rev.COP12), on the conservation implications of animal culture and social complexity, and that lack of financial support for research is among the main obstacles to implementation.

OCEANCARE supported the proposal, and the CoW recommended the proposal to the COP for adoption.

**Franciscana Dolphin (*Pontoporia blainvillei*):** URUGUAY introduced the proposal for renewing the CA ([UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.31.3.7](#)), underlining the importance of scaling up the efforts already underway. DOMINICAN REPUBLIC, BRAZIL, INTERNATIONAL WHALING COMMISSION (IWC), ANIMAL WELFARE INSTITUTE, on behalf of several non-governmental organizations, and OCEANCARE supported the proposal, with IWC highlighting that the renewed CA would complement the associated conservation management plan for this species.

The CoW forwarded the proposal to the COP.

**Lahille Bottlenose Dolphin (*Tursiops truncatus gephyreus*):** URUGUAY presented the proposal for a CA on the species, which is already listed in Appendices I and II ([UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.31.3.8](#)). BRAZIL, IWC, FUNDACIÓN CETHUS on behalf of several non-governmental organizations, OCEANCARE, and WORLD WIDE FUND FOR NATURE (WWF) supported the proposal.

BRAZIL also noted their intention to propose a CA for the Amazon River Dolphin (*Inia geoffrensis*) at COP16 as part of ongoing efforts to broaden CMS membership to other Amazonian basin countries.

The CoW forwarded the proposal to the COP.

**Antipodean Albatross (*Diomedea antipodensis*):** NEW ZEALAND introduced the proposal for a CA for this species, which is already listed in Appendix I ([UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.31.3.9](#)).

The SECRETARIAT OF THE PACIFIC REGIONAL ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME and the AGREEMENT ON

THE CONSERVATION OF ALBATROSSES AND PETRELS (ACAP) supported the proposed CA, and the CoW submitted it to the COP for adoption.

**Flesh-footed Shearwater (*Ardenna carneipes*):** NEW ZEALAND introduced the proposed CA ([UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.31.3.10](#)), emphasizing the need for scaled-up action on the threat posed by bycatch. ACAP supported the CA, noting it was “well-overdue.”

The CoW forwarded the proposal to the COP for adoption.

**Peruvian or Humboldt Pelican (*Pelecanus thagus*):** PERU introduced the proposal for a CA on this species already listed on Appendices I and II ([UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.31.3.11](#)), and with co-proponents CHILE and ECUADOR, stressed the threats posed by climate change, highly pathogenic avian influenza, and El Niño events.

The CoW recommended the proposal for adoption by the COP.

**Magellanic plover (*Pluvianellus socialis*):** CHILE introduced the proposal for a CA on this species already listed on Appendices I and II ([UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.31.3.12](#)), noting it was aligned with the One Health approach. The CoW accepted the proposal.

**Sand Tiger Shark (*Carcharias taurus*):** BRAZIL introduced the proposal for a CA on this species already listed on Appendices I and II ([UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.31.3.13](#)), noting the proposal seeks to update the species’ Regional Conservation Action Plan. PANAMA, URUGUAY, and WILDLIFE CONSERVATION SOCIETY, on behalf of several observer organizations, expressed support. The CoW accepted the proposal.

**Basking Shark (*Cetorhinus maximus*):** The IRISH BASKING SHARK GROUP introduced the proposal for a CA on this species already listed on Appendices I and II ([UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.31.3.14/Rev.1](#)), and suggested factual amendments, thereby striking references to the UK and Cayman Islands in the “Relevance” section. The CoW accepted the proposal as amended.

**Blue Shark (*Prionace glauca*):** The MARINE RESEARCH AND CONSERVATION FOUNDATION introduced the proposal

for a CA on this species already listed on Appendix II ([UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.31.3.15/Rev.1](#)). The CoW accepted the proposal.

**Devil and Manta Rays (*Mobulidae spp.*):** MANTA TRUST introduced the proposal for a CA on these species already listed on Appendices I and II ([UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.31.3.16/Rev.1](#)). ECUADOR, a co-proponent, expressed support. The CoW accepted the proposal.

### In the Corridors

It was the “happy COP” that almost wasn’t.

With Queen’s “I Want to Break Free” piping through the plenary hall, smiling delegates streamed out of Saturday’s morning—and surprisingly only—session of the CoW for the day. Most were thrilled to have an opportunity, at last, to enjoy Brazil’s spectacular natural and cultural attractions. Some took part in a high-level tree-planting ceremony that added to the list of COP15 outcomes, sowing the seeds of tomorrow’s habitats for migratory species.

Yet it all could have gone another, perhaps less joyful way. The budget was the final outstanding item remaining at the end of the morning session, and the CoW initially anticipated returning in the afternoon to finish that work. Thankfully for the exhausted delegates, Brazil took to the floor and proposed that this item be considered in a less rushed manner during the shorter CoW session scheduled for Sunday morning. This, Brazil underscored, would achieve the goal of delivering a “happy COP,” which drew smiles, cheers, and applause from the assembled delegates.

So with the mood of the room strongly leaning toward the happier of two options, the CoW concluded its business for the day and set everyone free.

The *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* summary and analysis of COP15 will be available on Wednesday, 1 April 2025, at: [enb.iisd.org/conference-parties-convention-migratory-species-wild-animals-cms-cop15](http://enb.iisd.org/conference-parties-convention-migratory-species-wild-animals-cms-cop15)



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