



## CONVENTION ON MIGRATORY SPECIES

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### THE ROLE OF ECOLOGICAL NETWORKS IN THE CONSERVATION OF MIGRATORY SPECIES

Adopted by the Conference of the Parties at its Tenth Meeting  
(Bergen, 20-25 November 2011)

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*Recognizing* that habitat destruction and fragmentation are among the primary threats to migratory species, and that the identification and conservation of habitats of appropriate quality, extent, distribution and connectivity are thus of paramount importance for the conservation of these species in both the terrestrial and marine environments;

*Recognizing in particular* that opportunities for dispersal, migration and genetic exchange among wild animals depend on the quality, extent, distribution and connectivity of relevant habitats, which support both the normal cycles of these animals and their resilience to change, including climate change;

*Further recognizing* that sites that perform a critical role in a wider system, such as core areas, corridors, restoration areas and buffer zones, may be linked by strategies that, through a concept of ecological networks, address habitat fragmentation and other threats to migratory species;

*Considering* that the designation of protected areas across very large areas is not always possible and that additional wider landscape measures usually need to be applied in order to address and mitigate anthropogenic changes at the wider landscape scale;

*Acknowledging* that the practical approach to the identification, designation, protection and management of critical sites will vary from one taxonomic group to another or even from species to species, and that the flyway approach provides a useful framework to address habitat conservation and species protection for migratory birds along migration routes;

*Further acknowledging* that flyways constitute a specific type of migration corridor, that migratory birds depend on widely separated areas for their survival, and that measures designed to conserve these networks should focus on the breeding grounds, stop-over sites, non-breeding areas and feeding and nesting places;

*Noting* that the Convention text makes specific reference to habitat conservation, for example in Article III.4, Article V.5e and Article VIII.5e;

*Aware* that several initiatives aimed at promoting ecological networks are in existence already at different scales, including bird flyway initiatives, protected area programmes under the auspices of relevant Multilateral Environmental Agreements, and initiatives that extend to areas that are not protected;

*Further aware* that the success of many of these initiatives and programmes depends fundamentally on, *inter alia*, effective international cooperation, including transboundary cooperation, among governments, different conventions, Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and other actors;

*Considering* that migratory species merit particular attention in designing and implementing initiatives aimed at promoting ecological networks, in order to ensure that the areas selected are sufficient to meet the needs of such species throughout their life cycles and migratory ranges;

*Recalling* Target 11 of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets 2020 approved by the Convention on Biological Diversity in 2010, which states “By 2020, at least 17 per cent of terrestrial and inland water, and 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services, are conserved through effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well connected systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, and integrated into the wider landscapes and seascapes”, is especially relevant for the conservation of terrestrial and marine migratory species;

*Acknowledging* that functional networks of habitats encompassing full regional variation can assist migratory species in adapting to climate change in line with Resolution 10.19 and can strengthen conservation strategies where the response of species to climate change is uncertain;

*Also acknowledging* that marine species habitat is not a stationary resource for many coastal species and most oceanic species listed on the CMS Appendices;

*Further acknowledging* that processes, workshops and tools are underway within the Convention on Biological Diversity that can assist in identifying habitats important for the lifecycles of migratory marine species listed under CMS Appendices;

*Aware* of the importance for the conservation of migratory species of integrating approaches to ecological networks in national environmental planning, including plans currently being developed under the auspices of other Multilateral Environmental Agreements, such as National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (under the Convention on Biological Diversity), as recognized by UNEP/CMS/Resolution10.18, and National Adaptation Plans (under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change);

*Also aware* of the importance of promoting cooperation through the competent international and regional organizations where appropriate to seek the adoption of conservation measures to support ecological networks in the marine environment;

*Welcoming* the progress described in Document UNEP/CMS/Conf.10.33 on bird flyway conservation policy, as well as Resolution UNEP/CMS/10.10 on guidance on global flyway conservation and options for policy arrangements;

*Recognizing* the increasing number of national and regional migratory species-related networks globally and *welcoming* the two CMS-linked ecological networks to promote conservation of migratory waterbirds and their habitats: the Western/Central Asian Site Network for the Siberian Crane and other Migratory Waterbirds under the UNEP/GEF Siberian Crane Wetland Project to further implement the MOU concerning the Siberian Crane, as an important step to establish a network to protect migratory waterbirds in this region, and the East Asian - Australasian Flyway Partnership and its East Asian – Australasian Flyway Site Network (as recognized by Resolutions 9.2 and UNEP/CMS/Res.10.10);

*Noting with pleasure* the widespread recognition of the recently developed Critical Site Network Tool under the African-Eurasian Flyways GEF Project, also known as Wings over Wetlands, as an innovative and effective instrument for underpinning the management of important sites for waterbirds in the African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement area, and which *inter alia* sets those sites in their flyway context;

*Welcoming* global databases such as MoveBank which make tracking data available to conservation planners and to the public, and which are likely to assist in the identification of critical conservation sites; and

*Acknowledging* that the ability to track small animals globally will greatly enhance the knowledge base for informed conservation decision making, and that this could be achieved by new space-borne global tracking initiatives such as ICARUS (International Cooperation for Animal Research Using Space), planned for implementation on the International Space Station by the European Space Agency (ESA);

*The Conference of the Parties to the  
Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals*

1. *Calls on* Parties and Signatories of CMS Memoranda of Understanding to consider the network approach in the implementation of existing CMS instruments and initiatives;
2. *Encourages* Parties and other Range States, when identifying areas of importance to migratory terrestrial, avian and aquatic species, to take into account and make explicit by description, schematic maps or conceptual models the relationship between those areas and other areas which may be ecologically linked to them, in physical terms, for example as connecting corridors, or in other ecological terms, for example as breeding areas related to non-breeding areas, stopover sites, feeding and resting places;
3. *Invites* Parties and other Range States and relevant organizations to collaborate to identify, designate and maintain comprehensive and coherent ecological networks of protected sites and other adequately managed sites of international and national importance for migratory animals while taking into account resilience to change, including climate change, and existing ecological networks;
4. *Urges* Parties and other Range States and partners to make full use of all existing complementary tools and mechanisms for the identification and designation of critical sites and site networks for migratory species and populations, including through further designation of Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Sites) for migratory waterbirds and other migratory wetland-dependent taxa;
5. *Highlights* the added value of developing ecological networks under CMS where no other network instruments are available, as for example with the West Central Asian Flyway Site Network and the East Asian-Australasian Flyway Site Network, and *urges* Parties and *invites* Range States to strengthen management of existing network sites and their further development through designation and management of additional sites;
6. *Further encourages* Parties and relevant organizations, when implementing systems of protected areas, and other relevant site- and area-based conservation measures, to:
  - (i) select areas in such a way as to address the needs of migratory species as far as possible throughout their life cycles and migratory ranges;

- (ii) set network-scale objectives for the conservation of these species within such systems, including by restoration of fragmented and degraded habitats and removal of barriers to migration; and
- (iii) cooperate internationally for the achievement of such objectives;

7. *Invites* Parties, in collaboration with other Multilateral Environment Agreements (MEAs), NGOs and other stakeholders, as appropriate, to enhance the quality, monitoring, management, extent, distribution and connectivity of terrestrial and aquatic protected areas, including marine areas, in accordance with international law including UNCLOS, so as to address as effectively as possible the needs of migratory species throughout their life cycles and migratory ranges, including their need for habitat areas that offer resilience to change, including climate change, taking into account the wider landscape and seascape;

8. *Further invites* Parties and other States as well as relevant international fora, as appropriate, to explore the applicability of ecological networks to marine migratory species, especially those that are under pressure from human activities such as over exploitation, oil and gas exploration/exploitation, fisheries and coastal development;

9. *Requests* the Scientific Council, in conjunction with the Secretariat and in consultation with relevant organizations and key stakeholders, to conduct a strategic review to:

- (i) assess the extent to which and the manner in which existing major protected area systems and initiatives aimed at promoting ecological networks address the needs of migratory species throughout their life cycles and migratory ranges, including the issue of resilience to climate change and taking into account the significant difference in ecology and behaviour between terrestrial and aquatic species;
- (ii) identify among CMS Agreements and other CMS instruments the current use and potential future use of ecological network concepts and approaches;
- (iii) identify opportunities for enhancing the effectiveness of and synergies between relevant initiatives and programmes on protected areas and ecological networks in respect of the conservation needs of migratory species; and
- (iv) report the results, including recommendations, to the Conference of the Parties at its eleventh Meeting;

10. *Requests* the Secretariat to compile existing case studies that are relevant to migratory species representative of the different taxonomic groups and/or groups related to major ecosystem types and report the results, including recommendations, to the Conference of the Parties at its eleventh meeting to illustrate the practical application of the approaches described in the present Resolution and to support the sharing of experience among Parties;

11. *Further requests* the Secretariat, subject to availability of resources, to work with Parties and the Scientific Council and other international and regional organizations, including the Convention on Biological Diversity, in organizing regional and sub-regional workshops to promote the conservation and management of critical sites and ecological networks among Parties;

12. *Requests* Parties and *invites* relevant funding agencies to provide adequate, predictable and timely financial support for the work of the Scientific Council and the Secretariat in pursuit of the work defined in the present Resolution;
13. *Invites* the Global Environment Facility (GEF) in making its funding disbursement decisions to give support to activities that will assist in taking forward the areas of work defined in the present Resolution, in particular, to support improved habitat management at the site level through the use of tools and resources developed specifically for the conservation of migratory species in their flyway, migratory path or ecological network context, and to support the sharing of information and experience;
14. *Calls on* MEAs, other intergovernmental organizations and relevant Non-Governmental Organizations to support the implementation of the present Resolution, including by sharing information and by collaborating in the technical work described above;
15. *Urges* Parties, the scientific community and other organizations to support the use of existing databases for research aimed at scientifically based conservation decisions within the CMS framework and other policy fora; and
16. *Urges* CMS National Focal Points and Scientific Councillors to work closely with relevant organizations such as the European Space Agency and its Focal Points to support new technology developments such as the ICARUS experiment to track the movement and fate of migratory animals globally.