**AQUATIC WILD MEAT**

**AND** **ACTION PLAN TO ADDRESS AQUATIC WILD MEAT HARVESTS IN WEST AFRICA**

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*(Prepared by the COW)*

DRAFT RESOLUTION

**ACTION PLAN TO ADDRESS AQUATIC WILD MEAT HARVESTS IN WEST AFRICA**

*Aware* that across most of West Africa, aquatic wild animals, including marine mammals, marine turtles, crocodiles, and Appendix I-listed sharks and rays, are hunted or taken opportunistically, and the meat, body parts and/or eggs are consumed for local subsistence, used for traditional purposes, or as a source of income,

*Concerned* that, even though some wild meat harvests have been sustained for millennia, serving as an important source of nutrition, income and cultural identity for some communities, exploitation of wildlife at higher levels has led to unsustainable and/or illegal exploitation of some CMS-listed species,

*Recalling* Resolution 12.15 *Aquatic Wild Meat*, which recommends increased cooperation between Parties, non-Party Range States and other stakeholders, including non-governmental organizations, to increase collaboration and information-sharing to better understand and monitor aquatic wild meat harvests, and to increase scientific knowledge and understanding of the impacts of subsistence use of CMS-listed species as aquatic wild meat on the survival and regeneration of these species, in the context of growing human populations and pressures on wildlife resources and ecosystems,

*Further recalling* the request to the Aquatic Wild Meat Working Group of the Scientific Council to develop a sub-regional aquatic Wild Meat Action Plan for the Gulf of Guinea for consideration by Range State Parties in the region, and *thanking* the Aquatic Wild Meat Working Group for addressing this mandate,

*Recognizing* the support of OceanCare in the implementation of COP mandates related to aquatic wild meat, including leadership on the dialogue process with Range State governments to finalize this Action Plan,

*Noting* the linkages between the Action Plan and other CMS instruments in the region, in particular the Memorandum of Understanding concerning Conservation Measures for Marine Turtles of the Atlantic Coast of Africa, the Memorandum of Understanding concerning the Conservation of the Manatee and Small Cetaceans of Western Africa and Macaronesia, and the Single Species Action Plan for the Atlantic Humpback Dolphin (*Sousa teuszii*),

*Further noting* the link to the work of the Convention on terrestrial and avian wild meat, and to the broader issues of unsustainable and illegal exploitation of CMS species,

*Affirming* the need to address the threat posed to CMS-listed species from use as aquatic wild meat in close collaboration with the Convention for the Co-operation in the Protection and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the West and Central African Region (Abidjan Convention),

*The Conference of the Parties to the*

*Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals*

1. *Adopts* the Action Plan to Address Aquatic Wild Meat Harvests in West Africa contained in the Annex with the goal of making tangible progress towards the sustainable management of aquatic wild meat harvesting across West Africa and securing the conservation status of all impacted CMS-listed species;
2. *Urges* Parties and *invites* non-Party Range States to implement its relevant provisions;
3. *Calls on* Parties to strive for active collaboration between governmental and non-governmental stakeholders within each range country to maximize the effective use of resources and expertise, to ensure that the results of research and awareness-raising activities can support the design and implementation of effective policy and management;
4. *Further calls on* Parties and other stakeholders to facilitate regional collaboration between stakeholders across the area of application of the Action Plan to ensure that knowledge and experience gained in one country can be used to most effectively implement conservation action in another;
5. *Encourages* Parties and non-Party States to provide technical and/or financial support to activities outlined in the Action Plan;
6. *Invites* other relevant intergovernmental frameworks, in particular the Convention for the Co-operation in the Protection and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the West and Central African Region (Abidjan Convention) and the African Union to take into account the provisions of the Action Plan in the consideration of their activities and to support implementation of relevant Action Plan activities that fall within their mandate, as appropriate;
7. *Instructs* the Secretariat to bring the Action Plan to the attention of all Range States and relevant intergovernmental organizations, and to monitor the implementation of the Action Plan.

DRAFT DECISIONS

**AQUATIC WILD MEAT**

***Directed to Parties***

14.AA Parties are requested to

1. Provide technical and capacity-building support to Range States of the Action Plan to Address Aquatic Wild Meat Harvests in West Africa for the implementation of activities outlined in the Action Plan, as well as support as required to the activities of the Aquatic Wild Meat Working Group;
2. Consider the development of action plans to reduce aquatic wild meat hunting and consumption in East, South-East, and South Asia, Latin America, and the Pacific Islands Region.

***Directed to the Scientific Council, through its Aquatic Wild Meat Working Group***

14.BB The Scientific Council, through its Aquatic Wild Meat Working Group, is requested to:

1. Develop criteria for considering if some Appendix II-listed sharks and rays should be included within the scope of the Working Group;
2. Collect and present information about seabird harvests as aquatic wild meat in collaboration with the Task Forces on illegal take established by Resolution 11.16 (Rev.COP13);
3. Collaborate with the relevant IUCN Specialist Groups to present a case to the Scientific Council for the assessment of the migratory nature of crocodylians (Genera: Gavialis, Crocodylus, Mecistops, Caiman, Melanosuchus) and freshwater chelonians, and the relevance of CMS to their conservation and management, including whether or not they may fit the criteria for inclusion in the Appendices;
4. Support, as capacity allows:
	1. studies of the human dimensions of aquatic wild meat use, which are critical for designing effective conservation and management programmes that favour sustainable over unsustainable uses, including:
		1. contemporary and historical socio-cultural aspects of harvesting and consuming aquatic wild meat, including the role of taboo systems, to provide insights or management measures that can be respectful of the cultural practices of Indigenous Peoples, and local communities;
		2. the drivers of the harvest and consumption of aquatic wild meat;
		3. the nutritional roles aquatic wild meat provides, the strengths and weaknesses of alternatives, and the health risks from both;
		4. food security and safety of aquatic wild meat use;
	2. increased quantitative assessments of consumption and trade in aquatic wild meat to better understand demand and trade pathways;
	3. increased efforts to assess the efficacy of existing legislation with regard to specific aquatic wild meat uses, and the degree to which enforcement capacity alone can address unsustainable aquatic wild meat harvests;
	4. implementation of environmental education programmes to raise awareness of the importance and benefits of migratory megafauna, and laws concerning them;
	5. analysis of the extent of discard cases and their impact on the availability of aquatic wild meat
5. Encourage the establishment of networks of appropriate experts to foster collaborative efforts to develop regional action plans for reducing unsustainable aquatic wild meat harvests;
6. Ensure dissemination of information on its work on aquatic wild meat and the resulting recommendations by:
7. sharing information with the International Whaling Commission and participating in future Small Cetacean Subcommittee meetings with a focus on aquatic wild meat;
8. continuing to provide advice to the CMS Secretariat to input to the Collaborative Partnership on Sustainable Wildlife Management;
9. extending collaboration to include COMFAUNA, CIMFAUNA, the Sustainable Wildlife Management (SWM) Programme, and the WILDMEAT Project;
10. supporting efforts for coordination between CMS and CITES for improved regulation and sustainable management of trade in aquatic wild meat species;
11. publishing consolidated papers in their individual expert capacity about aquatic wild meat harvests, and drawing these to the attention of the Scientific Council.

***Directed to the Scientific Council***

14.CC The Scientific Council is requested to:

1. Consider the recommendations of the Aquatic Wild Meat Working Group submitted to the 7th meeting of the Sessional Committee and address any matters requiring broader Scientific Council attention;
2. Consider the recommendations of the Aquatic Wild Meat Working Group submitted to the 8th meeting of the Sessional Committee, and provide advice to the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

***Directed to the Secretariat***

14.DD The Secretariat shall:

1. Consult with the Aquatic Wild Meat Working Group of the Scientific Council regarding information that should be shared with other international forums, such as theCollaborative Partnership on Sustainable Wildlife Management and CITES;
2. Support the work of the Aquatic Wild Meat Working Group.

**ACTION PLAN TO ADDRESS AQUATIC WILD MEAT HARVESTS IN WEST AFRICA**

***Directed to Parties***

14.EE Parties that are Range States to the Action Plan to Address Aquatic Wild Meat Harvests in West Africa are requested to:

1. As a matter of priority, address actions marked for immediate implementation, and those for delivery by 2025 and 2026;
2. Set up the structures required, for example through the formation of national working groups, to ensure active collaboration between stakeholders within each range country to maximize the effective use of resources and expertise;
3. Provide a brief report on the implementation of the Action Plan in time for the last meeting of the Sessional Committee before the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP15) using a template provided by the Secretariat.

***Directed to the Scientific Council, through its Aquatic Wild Meat Working Group***

14.FF The Scientific Council, through its Aquatic Wild Meat Working Group, is requested to:

1. Support the Secretariat in the development of a simple reporting template designed to gather basic information on the implementation of the Action Plan;
2. Review information provided by Parties on the implementation of the Action Plan and prepare a brief summary and analysis;
3. Make recommendations on the further implementation of the Action Plan at the last meeting of the Sessional Committee of the Scientific Council prior to COP15.

***Directed to the Scientific Council***

14.GG The Scientific Council is requested to:

1. Consider the information provided by Parties on the implementation of the Action Plan, as well as the summary and analysis and the resulting recommendations of the Aquatic Wild Meat Working Group;
2. Provide guidance on the further implementation of the Action Plan to COP15.

***Directed to the Secretariat***

14.HH The Secretariat shall develop a simple reporting form in collaboration with the Scientific Council, through its Aquatic Wild Meat Working Group, enabling assessment of progress in the implementation of the Action Plan, and disseminate this to Parties that are Range States to the Action Plan to enable reporting sufficiently in advance of the last meeting of the Sessional Committee of the Scientific Council prior to COP15.