

4th Meeting of the Sessional Committee of the CMS Scientific Council (ScC-SC4)

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CLIMATE CHANGE AND MIGRATORY SPECIES – NEXT STEPS

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in consultation with the Secretariat)*

Summary:

This short paper highlights the need for further action in relation to climate change and migratory species. It identifies the need for consideration of the issues involved by the Session Committee of the Scientific Council and specifically requests that the Session Committee consider, at its 4th meeting, the following:

- what are the key research questions that need to be addressed now in relation to climate change and migratory species and what long-term data sets are available that might be used to address these gaps?
- the implementation of the interpretation of *Article I (1) (c) (4) of the Convention as outlined in Operative Paragraph 9 of Resolution 12.21.*

The Session Committee is also requested to support the actions highlighted for 2020 (following CMS COP 13), including

- the preparation of an overview document on climate change and migratory species;
- a workshop of the CMS Climate Change Working Group to consider in detail the actions required to facilitate adaptation to climate change; and
- the attendance of a representative of CMS (possibly as part of a side-event) at COP 26 of the Convention on Climate Change to be held in November 2020.

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Background

1. The issue of climate change has been an important focus of the work of CMS for some time, most recently with the adoption of Resolution 12.21 on *Climate Change and Migratory Species* by the Conference of the Parties at its 12th meeting (COP12, Manila, October 2017), which highlighted the need for action to tackle the growing threat to migratory species and to consider what measures might be necessary to help facilitate species adapt to current and future climate change. Importantly, the Resolution included as an Annex the “Programme of Work on Migratory Species and Climate Change”, which detailed the work required to take the consideration of climate change forward.
2. Specifically, Resolution 12.21:
Reaffirms the “Programme of Work on Climate Change and Migratory Species” (the POW) adopted through Resolution 11.26 as annexed to this resolution and urges Parties and Signatories to the CMS instruments and encourages non-Parties to put in place, as appropriate, legislative, administrative, management or other measures necessary to implement actions set out in this POW,....

Key issues

3. Whilst there are many areas requiring rapid action in the POW, importantly two operative paragraphs from the Resolution point to the need for further consideration by the Session Committee of the Scientific Council.
4. Firstly, Operative Paragraph 5:
Requests the Scientific Council and the Working Group on Climate Change to promote work to address key gaps in knowledge and future research directions, in particular through the analysis of existing long-term and large-scale datasets;
5. In particular, it would be useful for the Session Committee to consider what the key research challenges are at the global level and to suggest what long-term data sets exist and how they might be analysed to provide a better insight into the nature and scale of change being seen.
6. Secondly, Operative Paragraph 9
*Agrees that Article I (1) (c) (4) of the Convention, on the definition of “favourable conservation status” could be interpreted as follows in light of climate change, and invites the governing bodies of relevant CMS instruments to also approve this interpretation:
According to Article I (1) (c) (4) of the Convention, one of the conditions to be met for the conservation status of a species to be taken as “favourable” is that: “the distribution and abundance of the migratory species approach historic coverage and levels to the extent that potentially suitable ecosystems exist and to the extent consistent with wise wildlife management”. Whereas there is a continued need to undertake conservation action within the historic range of migratory species, such action will increasingly also need to be taken beyond the historic range of species in order to ensure a favourable conservation status, particularly with a view to climate-induced range shifts. Such action beyond the historic range of species is compatible with, and may be required in order to meet the objectives and the obligations of Parties under the Convention;*

Actions for 2020

7. It is clear that given the nature and scale of climate change that Parties and others will need to take action, probably involving innovative approaches, in order to assist the adaption by migratory species. It would be useful for the Session Committee to discuss the issues involved and to provide examples of where such actions are already assisting adaptation. It would be useful for the Session Committee to also support the need for a workshop in 2020 to discuss adaptation in more detail and to consider in detail the ongoing implementation of the POW.
8. It is important to understand better the actions that Parties and others are already taking in relation to climate change, and specifically in relation to adaptation. In order to gain such an understanding it will be necessary to contact Parties and others directly through 2020 to build up a picture of what is already being done, and in particular to clarify if there are generic characteristics of successful actions that might be applied in other circumstances.
9. It is hoped that an overview document on migratory species and climate change can be produced that highlights the need for further action; outlines research needs and gives examples of particular case studies of the impact of climate change and of the actions being taken by Parties and others. This document could include also examples of the work previously done under CMS in developing series of “Dossiers” on species issues and on the ecosystems that support migratory species around the world.
10. If resources are available, then it is hoped that this document could be produced for COP 26 of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change to be held in November 2020. It would be particularly useful for CMS to have a presence at this event, possibly as part of a side event, highlighting the issues surrounding migratory species and climate change.

Recommended actions

11. The Sessional Committee is recommended to discuss and support these proposed actions for 2020.