



# SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FOR WILDLIFE AND PEOPLE

Sarus Cranes - Photo: © Santanu Sen/Flickr.com

## MIGRATORY SPECIES AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The conservation of migratory species and their habitats is essential for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Migratory species are an integral part of all ecosystems and provide a wide variety of many direct and indirect benefits for human needs.

Migratory animals serve key functions in the interconnected systems that keep nature healthy, including pollination, pest regulation and seed dispersal. They generate millions of dollars and jobs from various economic activities including commercial fisheries and tourism, and also have cultural and spiritual values, especially for local communities. The COVID 19 pandemic shined a spotlight on the linkages between human health and the destruction of habitat and overuse of wild animal species.

Migratory species often travel across national boundaries, which means that countries must work together for their conservation. CMS provides a unique global platform for governments and stakeholders to work together to conserve migratory species and their habitats for a sustainable future that benefits people and the planet. CMS also is at the forefront of promoting ecological connectivity as a core aspect of conservation, essential for migratory species while also contributing to the objectives of land restoration and climate change.

While the conservation of migratory species and their habitats most notably contributes to **SDG14, Life below Water and SDG 15 Life on Land**, CMS contributes to the achievement of many other goals and targets. Some key examples are described below.

## Sustainable Infrastructure and Ecological Connectivity

### SDG 9 Industry, Innovation & Infrastructure

The World Economic Forum projects \$100 trillion in global infrastructure investments by 2030 to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. But the choices of **what** infrastructure is needed, **how** it is designed and **where** it is located, are essential. Often, decisions are made without a full consideration of options for achieving the desired services, and without a full cost benefit assessment of the impacts on the natural environment. It is critically important that these elements be part of high-level investment decisions, and in upstream planning processes, sometimes referred to as Strategic Environment Assessments.

Poorly planned infrastructure can create barriers and threats to migratory species and interrupt or destroy natural ecosystem processes, while possibly resulting in significant legal challenges and financial losses.

Numerous initiatives under CMS are aimed at practical measures to allow infrastructure and wildlife to coexist. The CMS Energy Task Force is developing best practices for power plants, hydroelectric dams, wind turbines. As part of the CMS Central Asian Mammal Initiatives (CAMI), guidelines and tools were developed to address the impacts of linear infrastructures and maintain and restore the connectivity of steppes and grasslands essential for these animals to be able to move - and to survive.

## Nature-based Tourism

### SDG 8 Decent Work and Economic Growth

Tourism is a major global industry, a significant portion of which includes nature-based activities such as wildlife-viewing. Such tourism can generate jobs and funds for conservation. Work under CMS has supported tourism activities that do not adversely affect migratory species and their habitats, for example, the development of case studies on wildlife watching tourism, and in cooperation with the International Whaling Commission, a Whale Watching Handbook.

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## One Health and Migratory Species

### SDG 3 Good Health and Well-being

The risk of zoonotic diseases such as COVID 19 are tied to human activities that overexploit wild animals and destroy nature.

This includes both the direct use of wild species, and the destruction and fragmentation of natural habitat that bring humans and their livestock in close proximity to wild species, increasing the risk of spillovers of pathogens to humans.

Significant work under CMS has contributed to our understanding of these linkages and risks. This includes a Scientific Task Force on Avian Influenza and Wild Birds, a Scientific Task Force on Wildlife and Ecosystem Health, and a working group on Migratory Species as Vectors of Diseases under the CMS Scientific Council.

The CMS Secretariat also contributed to the publication of the 'Preventing the Next Pandemic – Zoonotic diseases and how to break the chain of transmission' (UNEP 2020) providing policy responses to reduce the likelihood of future zoonotic outbreaks.



## Migratory species and food security

### SDG 2 Zero Hunger

Many migratory species contribute directly to agriculture. Birds and bats can play important roles in pest control. Many songbirds and bats feed on insects, while birds of prey feed on rodents and other small mammals. Numerous species of birds and bats are also indispensable pollinators, with over 80 per cent of the world's flowering plants dependent on them. Bees, birds and bats affect a third of the world's crop production, increasing outputs of 87 of the main food crops worldwide, plus many plant-derived medicines

Some migratory species also provide a direct source of food for human consumption, most notably from commercial fisheries, while consumption of wild meat can be an important part of nutrition for indigenous and local communities.

At the same time, agriculture is the largest cause of habitat destruction, and direct uses of migratory species need to be regulated and managed to ensure their sustainability. Food security needs to take into account the needs of local communities, as pressures on migratory species increase from overexploitation of wild animal species, and other factors such as climate change and habitat destruction.

### SDG 12 Responsible Consumption and Production

## About CMS

The Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), also known as the Bonn Convention, works for the conservation of a wide array of endangered migratory animals worldwide through negotiation and implementation of agreements and species action plans. It has 132 Parties (as of 1 January 2021).

CMS engages all relevant stakeholders in addressing threats to migratory species in concert with all other aspects of wildlife conservation and management.

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