WWF for a living planet®

CMS CoP9 2008

WWF REPORT

9th MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION ON MIGRATORY SPECIES (CMS)
ROME, 1ST – 5TH DECEMBER 2008

INTRODUCTION

With several million supporters and a network of offices and projects in more than 100 countries on five continents, WWF is one of the world's largest independent conservation organizations, and has maintained a consistent record of conservation successes.

Species conservation has been the cornerstone of WWF's operation since its inception over 45 years ago, and WWF's new Global Programme has species conservation at its very heart. WWF's species conservation work spans all of WWF's offices and nearly 100 countries. WWF's current approach to species conservation helps deliver multi-faceted outcomes – benefits for species and their habitats and benefits beyond species, including benefits for people, communities, cultures, governments and global governance. It achieves this by working with governments, institutions, industry, and local people to find long term solutions which allow people and threatened species to exist side by side, that enable species populations to recover, habitats to be managed effectively, and that enable people's livelihoods to be enhanced by well functioning ecosystems and healthy species populations.

WWF AND MIGRATORY SPECIES CONSERVATION

The conservation of migratory species is a unique aspect of this work, as effective conservation of migratory species requires integration of efforts over multiple countries and in the multiple ecosystem types through which a migratory species may pass during its lifecycle. Mitigating the diverse array of threats and managing the variety of human–species interactions in each ecosystem provides a unique portfolio of challenges, which have been embraced throughout WWF's long history.

WWF's CONTRIBUTION TO DELIVERY OF CMS PRIORITIES AND INSTRUMENTS

WWF's global network (which includes a presence in more than half of all CMS parties), and its strategy of working through a combination of interlinked field presence and strong policy capacity at local, regional

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and international levels, means it has a unique ability to deliver on migratory species conservation, including through CMS instruments. WWF engages with a broad range of intergovernmental fora ranging from the UN Biodiversity Conventions to Regional Fisheries Management Organisations, and thus possesses the range of expertise that is necessary for dealing with the complex requirements of migratory species conservation.

WWF has longstanding programmes of work on many migratory species of key importance to CMS such as cetaceans, marine turtles, sharks, sturgeons, elephants, gorillas and saiga, and WWF has worked closely with CMS in the development and/or implementation of instruments for many of these species (see box 1 for an outline of joint priorities for WWF and CMS). For example, WWF's work to conserve marine turtles directly delivers on the Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation and Management of Marine Turtles and their Habitats in the Indian Ocean and South East Asia (IOSEA) in at least 14 IOSEA range states. Furthermore, WWF has recently prioritised some of its work to include a broader variety of migratory species ranging from commercially fished species such as tuna, to carnivores such as the polar bear.

WWF AND CMS CoP9

CMS offers a unique set of strengths, most notably its ability to bring governments together in concerted national and transboundary conservation actions. As such it is ideally placed to address issues of a global nature, particularly those whose management and control are multi-jurisdictional in nature.

Bycatch – the capture of non-target species in fishing gear – is exactly this kind of threat. Bycatch is a problem of global proportions, and is one of the most pervasive threats to many of the species on the CMS Appendices. The intergovernmental nature of fisheries management, particularly on the high seas, means that global collaboration and cooperation are needed as never before if bycatch is to be reduced to levels that no longer threaten marine biodiversity. WWF is encouraged by the efforts that CMS has taken to address bycatch to date, including the establishment of a Scientific Councillor for bycatch. However WWF believes that these efforts should be scaled up, particularly in terms of providing a central, global forum to facilitate information exchange and assist in the development of global policies across multiple species groups.

WWF congratulates the range states of the Gorilla Agreement who successfully negotiated this important instrument last year, and who will have the first Meeting of the Parties (MoP) to the Agreement immediately prior to the CoP. WWF is strongly committed to working with range states for the conservation of the gorilla, fully supports this Agreement, and stresses the importance of swift and thorough implementation of the Agreement text and the consistent monitoring of its progress by the range states. WWF also calls on other Parties to CMS to support the signatory states of the gorilla agreement in terms of financing and capacity, and in particular, urges donor parties to ensure that their contributions to conservation and development in the range states are fully integrated with this Agreement—for the joint benefit of gorillas, their habitats, and the people living alongside them.

WWF also supports the thinking behind resolution 9.13 on the future shape of CMS. WWF believes that in this rapidly changing environment, it is timely and strategic to look ahead and ensure CMS is able to effectively deliver conservation benefits for migratory species into the future. WWF looks forward to dialogue with CMS Parties and all our partners on this important initiative.

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CONCLUSION

Migratory species are unique components of global biodiversity, a vital element of our shared cultural and ecological heritage. On behalf of the entire WWF Network—active in nearly 100 countries across the globe—we commit ourselves to continue our work to conserve migratory species in collaboration with governments, CMS and all our partners. We look forward to discussions about the future direction of CMS during this CoP and intersessionally, as well as the decisions and actions at the CoP that will lead towards sustainable futures for both migratory species and the communities living alongside them.

Box 1:
Migratory species of joint priority for WWF and the Convention on Migratory Species:

WWF works on a large number of migratory species through its Global Programme Framework (GPF), the blueprint of WWF's conservation action across the globe. The GPF focuses WWF's conservation action into two meta-goals on biodiversity and footprint. Under the biodiversity meta-goal, there is a goal on places (including a list of WWF priority sites) and a goal on species, including the new WWF priority species list. WWF priority species are species of special importance ecologically (for example, keystone species or species which assist in the stabilisation and regeneration of habitats), culturally (for example, as important icons for communities or by demonstrating broader conservation needs or threats) and economically. You will find a brochure outlining the GPF in this pack.

The species groups of clearest joint priority to WWF and CMS are as follows:

- Cetaceans
    - WWF Global Flagship
    - CMS - two Agreements and two MOUs
- Great Apes (Asia and Africa)
    - WWF Global Flagship
    - CMS – Agreement on gorillas
- Elephants (Asia and Africa)
    - WWF Global Flagship
    - CMS - MOU on West African elephants
- Marine turtles
    - WWF Global Flagship
    - CMS - two regional MOUs
- Sharks
    - WWF footprint impacted priority species
    - CMS – Shark initiative under discussion
- Saiga
    - WWF footprint impacted priority species
    - CMS – Saiga MOU
- Sturgeon
    - WWF footprint impacted priority species
    - CMS – involved in sturgeon action plan development by the Bern Convention
- Snow leopard
    - WWF Global Flagship
    - Possible instrument has been discussed

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