

**Report on the Crosscutting Issues Working Group 5<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Sessional Committee of the**

**CMS Scientific Council (ScC-SC5)**

**02 and 07 July 2021: 12.30 – 15.00 (CEST)**

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The Cross-Cutting Conservation Issues Working Group examined all the documents assigned to it and concluded its business. The topics discussed were:

**1. Document 3. Programme of Work for the Sessional Committee of the Scientific Council for the intersessional period between COP13 and COP14**

The working group reviewed the table in document UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC5/Doc.3/Annex/Part E line by line.

**1.1. Dec. 13.114 Connectivity**

This workstream has been addressed in detail by the Contact Group on the CMS contribution to the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework. It is covered under the report of that Contact Group. Activities included in the PoW reflect the outcome of the Contact Group.

**1.2. Dec. 13.26 Conservation status of migratory species**

This workstream has been addressed in detail by the Contact Group on Conservation Status Report. It is covered under the report of that Contact Group. Activities included in the PoW reflect the outcome of the Contact Group.

**1.3. Dec. 13.105 Conservation implications of animal culture and social complexity**

The meeting received an update on progress in the activities of the Working Group on Animal Culture and Social Complexity by the chair of the Working Group. A workshop scheduled in 2021 had been rescheduled for 2022. A full report on the activities of the group is expected to be made to the 6<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Sessional Committee. Several interventions stressed the importance of this workstream, and the Group expressed full support to it.

**1.4. Dec.13.121 Community participation and livelihoods**

The specific input of the ScC to this workstream, as mandated by the COP, was dependent on the availability of a compilation of case studies that could not be undertaken so far due to lack of funds. The group encourages the Secretariat to keep seeking funding for this workstream.

**1.5. Dec. 13.123 Impacts of plastic pollution on aquatic, terrestrial and avian species**

Funding has been secured through the “Counter Measures Two” project to advance the work on plastic pollution in the Asia-Pacific region. Full reports on this work will be provided for the next meeting.

**1.6. Dec. 13.126 Climate change and migratory species**

The work on climate change was further elaborated under the climate change agenda item. The activities included in the PoW reflect the outcome of that discussion.

**1.7. Dec. 13.129 Insect decline and its threat to migratory insectivorous animal population**

Funding has been received from Australia and Germany to undertake a review of insect decline and its cascading effects on insectivorous migratory species, and the Secretariat requested the working group to help develop a TOR for the review of insect biomass in relation to migratory species. A TOR drafting group was identified to finalize the TOR.

### **1.8. Dec. 13.131 Infrastructure development and migratory species**

This work was further elaborated under the Infrastructure agenda item. The activities included in the PoW reflect the outcome of that discussion.

### **1.9. Dec. 13.136 Sustainable tourism and migratory species**

The group encouraged the Secretariat to continue to keep seeking funding for this workstream. There is a possible opportunity to secure an intern to conduct a literature review of the existing guidelines in order to better document the current gaps and opportunities for CMS. It was recommended to frame this activity within other relevant CMS initiatives, e.g. on sustainable boat-based marine wildlife watching.

### **1.10. Dec.13.139 Light pollution guidelines for wildlife**

This work was further elaborated under the light pollution agenda item. The activities included in the PoW reflect the outcome of that discussion.

## **2. Light Pollution and Migratory Species (UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC5/Doc. 6.4.3)**

The group discussed how to proceed with its work on light pollution. Work on light pollution was planned in three phases: 1. The production of a short document on the impact of light pollution on different taxa of migratory species of relevance to CMS, 2. The production of a review document, identifying possible gaps in the availability of appropriate guidelines and 3. The production of a set of guidelines on light pollution. Phase one and two are complete. Phase three will focus on the drafting of guidelines to compliment those already agreed. It was proposed that three sets of guidelines be produced: 1. Concerning migratory birds 2. Concerning bats and 3. Providing generic advice on reduction of light pollution. One or two consultants should be appointed using the funding available from the German government and they will facilitate the further collection of expert advice, the drafting of the guidelines and their expert review prior to submission to the next meeting of the Sessional Committee. The guidelines will be designed to be user-focused and focused on the migration process itself. This was supported. The group noted that, to avoid duplication, existing work and guidelines on this topic must be fully incorporated into the new guidelines, especially the recent and ongoing work by Australia and Germany. It was noted that the impact of light pollution is being proposed as the theme for the next World Migratory Bird Day.

## **3. Climate Change and Migratory Species UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC5/Doc.6.4.5**

The group discussed the ongoing work on climate change and migratory species, and received a number of important contributions for Parties and other members of the group. These emphasized the need for action, especially given events over recent years that have seen a rapid development of the impact of climate change on migratory species and on the habitats on which they depend. The group considered a proposed framework which has been developed to help identify the most appropriate conservation actions for species that are likely to be impacted by climate change. The framework includes a decision tree to help identify possible conservation actions based on climate models and the species' natural history, ecology, and conservation status. Parties are encouraged to test the decision tree and provide feedback on: 1. The interpretation of the terms 'barrier' and 'restoration' 2. Indicators to measure overall change and 3. How to evaluate vulnerability to climate change for selected species. Further work was proposed to develop approaches for the inclusion of extreme climate related events, such as wildfires, in conservation planning. The paper was noted, and the work to-date welcomed, it was referred to the climate change working group for further deliberation intersessionally.

#### **4. Interpretation of the terms 'Range State' and 'Vagrant' UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC5/Doc.7**

The group discussed a proposed framework that has been developed to assist with guidance on the interpretation of the terms “range state” and “vagrant”. It was noted that this is especially important in a climate change context, wherein species ranges are increasingly likely to shift in response to changing environmental conditions. It was suggested that the National Report format could be amended to deliver a better overview of changes in distribution of migratory species in the context of climate change. It was further noted that Parties are mandated to update the CMS on what species they consider themselves to be a range state for. It was agreed, however, that further clarity and clear guidelines for determining range state status would help ensure constancy of interpretation. The framework was noted, as was the need for the Convention Text need to be the starting point. It was suggested that further consideration of the spatial and temporal characteristics of migrations, as well as species-specific considerations and issues related to data limitations are needed. Further, it was noted that the goal of the framework should be to identify and enhance meaningful conservation opportunities and to ensure the application of the precautionary principle. It was concluded that the existing terminology in the text of the Convention was key and that significant further work and discussion was needed on this topic which exceeded the scope of the current working group. It was suggested that a dedicated intersessional working group be convened to further this initiative or that the work continued as part of the working group on climate change.

#### **5. Wildlife Diseases and Migratory Species UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC5/Doc.6.4.1**

The group supported the reactivation and renewal of the existing working group on wildlife diseases and the appointment of a COP-appointed councilor on this topic. The group refined the TOR for the existing working group on wildlife diseases and proposed that it be called the “Working Group on Migratory Species and Health”. The group recommended that the mandate of the new working group be expanded beyond the role of migratory species as disease vectors to taking the most holistic approach possible. The new working group mandate was recommended to include linkages between migratory species, their wider ecological context and the “One Health” agenda. The group encouraged engagement and coordinate with other multilateral processes, such as the development of a proposed pandemics agreement, to ensure opportunities to contribute to these processes are taken. Further, it was recommended to ensure linkages with other CMS working groups such as the aquatic wild meat group.

The group also refined the TOR for a review of migration and wildlife disease dynamics and the health of migratory species within the context of one health and ecosystem approaches to health. The review will be funded by the German government.

#### **6. Infrastructure Development and Migratory Species UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC5/Doc. 6.4.2**

The group took note of the recently completed analysis on the impacts of infrastructure on migratory species that was commissioned by the Secretariat. The review recommended the establishment of an infrastructure working group and this was supported by the group. It was agreed that, while for practicality reasons, the existing review focused on terrestrial systems, the new working group should consider as many systems as possible, including coastal and marine ecosystems. It was recommended that the new working group consider a consolidation of the exiting guidelines and best practice in this field. The group discussed and refined the proposed the membership of the new working group, specifically including scientific council members as key members. The group instructed the Secretariat to refine the new working group TOR further and identify a chair.