

**5th Meeting of the Sessional Committee of the
CMS Scientific Council (ScC-SC5)**

Online, 28 June – 9 July 2021

UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC5/Inf.4

**AQUATIC WILD MEAT WORKING GROUP
REPORT ON IMPLEMENTATION OF DECISION 13.64 to ScC-SC5**

(June 1, 2021)

Background

1. The Aquatic Wild Meat Working Group membership has grown steadily since formation, with 33 expert and Party members now involved.
2. Dec. 13.64 directs the Aquatic Wild Meat Working Group, subject to the availability of resources, to:
 - a) *work with the Bycatch Working Group to develop an analysis of the extent of instances where bycatch transitions to aquatic wild meat harvest and report on this for the Scientific Council to provide clear recommendations to the 14th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP14).*
 - b) *undertake the following tasks over the course of the inter-sessional period and report to the Scientific Council with clear recommendations for CMS Parties for CMS COP14:*
 - i. *incorporate CMS Appendix I-listed Sharks and Rays into all relevant activities of the working group;*
 - ii. *continue discussions to establish an online knowledge base as a repository of papers (journal articles, meeting documents, etc.) and other information related to aquatic wild meat;*
 - iii. *serve as an expert resource for CMS Parties, the Scientific Council and the Secretariat to contribute to the bushmeat/wild meat discussions within the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the International Whaling Commission (IWC) and the Collaborative Partnership on Sustainable Wildlife Management (CPW), or when international coordination and cooperation about aquatic wild meat is required;*
 - iv. *explore opportunities for greater engagement with the work of the CPW;*
 - v. *develop a criterion for considering if some Appendix II-listed sharks and rays should be included within the scope of the Working Group;*
 - vi. *share information with the IWC and participate in future Small Cetacean Subcommittee meetings with a focus on aquatic wild meat; vii. provide support to the Abidjan Aquatic Wildlife Partnership, where the development of the Action Plan to Combat Trade, Direct Consumption, Illegal Logging, and Other Uses of Endangered, Threatened or Protected Coastal and Marine Species overlaps with the conservation of CMS-listed species in the western African region;*
 - vii. *collect and present information about seabird harvests as aquatic wild meat;*
 - viii. *develop a sub-regional aquatic Wild Meat action plan for the Gulf of Guinea for consideration by Range State Parties in the region; and develop regional, sub-regional or national actions plans for Range State Parties that request assistance.*

Oversight of the Working Group

3. During ScC SC4 Margi Prideaux was appointed as the Chair of the Aquatic Wild Meat Working Group with the support of COP Appointed Counsellor Barry Baker.
4. In January 2020 Margi took unexpected leave from the roll following personal losses in Australia's Black Summer bushfires. Barry Baker maintained active oversight of the group during this period. Working Group member, Daniel Ingram, continued facilitation of a journal article the Working Group has been developing.
5. Since mid-May 2021 Margi Prideaux has stepped back into the role, and extends grateful thanks to Barry, Dan, the Secretariat and Working Group members for their continued work during her absence.

Progress Against the Decision 13.64 Work Programme

6. Given the tight turnaround comment period (comments due by June 10, 2021), Margi has provided overarching comment on the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) *Review of the second order draft of the chapters and the first order draft of the SPM of the sustainable use of wild species assessment* (Decision 13.64, b, iii) on the understand that as the review develops Working Group members can input CMS species-specific information.
7. Working Group members have continued the development of a review of Aquatic Wild Meat extent in key regions. IUCN Specialist Group review of key sections of this work has been underway over the past six months, and Margi will work closely with Dan to bring this review to completion and submission to a journal before SC6 (Decision 13.64, b, iii).
8. Working Group member, Maximin K. Djondo, has worked closely with the Government of Benin, the Secretariat of the Abidjan Convention, and CMS Partner NGO OceanCare to progress a Western African regional workshop to contribute to the aims Abidjan Aquatic Wildlife Partnership (Decision 13.64, b, vi) and the development of a *Wild Meat Action Plan for the Gulf of Guinea*. Funding is being sought, intending to host this workshop in late 2021 or early 2022 (Decision 13.64, b, ix).
9. Working Group member, Maximin K. Djondo, Benin Environment and Education Society (BEES) and OceanCare have invested in regional research to underpin this proposed workshop. They will circulate key papers to the Aquatic Wild Meat Working Group for comment and onward consideration by SC6 (Decision 13.64, b, vi and ix).

Forward Priorities

10. Between SC5 and 6, the Working Group will focus on the following mandated tasks:
 - a) Support efforts to develop a *Wild Meat Action Plan for the Gulf of Guinea* for consideration by Range State Parties in the region (Decision 13.64, b, ix).
 - b) Maintain contact with the International Whaling Commission (IWC) Scientific Council in its forward deliberations on aquatic wild meat (Decision 13.64, b, iii).
 - c) Outreach to CPW about opportunities for collaboration (Decision 13.64, b, iv).
 - d) Produce a working paper on the CMS Appendix I-listed Sharks and Rays that are subject to takes as aquatic wild meat (Decision 13.64, b, i).
 - e) Develop a criterion for assessing if any Appendix II-listed sharks and rays should be included within the scope of the Working Group, for SC6 to consider (Decision 13.64, b, v).

11. The Working Group Chair will also investigate options for progressing an analysis of the extent of instances where bycatch transitions to aquatic wild meat harvest (Decision 13.64, a).