



Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals

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16TH MEETING OF THE CMS SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL

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MARINE DEBRIS

(Submitted by Australia)

1. UNEP recognises marine debris as any persistent, manufactured or processed solid material discarded, disposed of or abandoned in the marine and coastal environment.
2. Australia recognises that marine debris is harmful to marine life, including to migratory species of birds, sharks, turtles and marine mammals. Marine debris may cause injury or death through drowning, injury through entanglement or internal injuries, or starvation following ingestion.
3. Australia, in addition to other parties to the CMS is committed to addressing the threat posed by marine debris to migratory species.
4. 'Injury and fatality to vertebrate marine life caused by ingestion of, or entanglement in, harmful marine debris' was listed as a key threatening process under Australia's *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* in 2003.
5. Australia finalised a *Threat abatement plan for the impacts of marine debris on vertebrate marine life* (TAP) in 2009. The TAP aims to provide a coordinated national approach to the implementation of measures to prevent and mitigate the impacts of harmful marine debris on vertebrate marine life.
6. The TAP comprises four objectives:
 - 6.1 Contribute to the long-term prevention of the incidence of harmful marine debris
 - 6.2 Remove existing harmful marine debris from the marine environment
 - 6.3 Mitigate the impacts of harmful marine debris on marine species and ecological communities
 - 6.4 Monitor the quantities, origins and impacts of marine debris and assess the effectiveness of management arrangements over time for the strategic reduction of debris
7. Within the TAP objectives, there are a number of approaches:
 - 7.1 Improve waste management practices on land and at sea
 - 7.2 Raise public awareness and improve education campaigns about the prevention of littering on land and at sea

- 7.3 Build and strengthen international collaboration to identify the origins and effective responses to the prevention of harmful marine debris
- 7.4 Development of a national approach to information collection and management
- 7.5 Improve understanding of the origins of harmful marine debris
- 7.6 Facilitate implementation of wildlife research and recovery actions

8. Australia has been involved in improving understanding of the origins and distribution of harmful marine debris both regionally and nationally, focusing on debris in Australian waters.

9. Australia recognises the transboundary nature of marine debris as a threat, and is seeking to strengthen international collaboration to identify the origins and effective responses to the impacts of harmful marine debris on migratory species.

Action requested:

Scientific Council members are requested to:

- a. consider the suitability and relevance of the threat to migratory species by marine debris to the CMS parties;
- b. consider the suitability of promoting Australia's TAP as a model measure to address harmful marine debris at a national level;
- c. consider the appropriateness of introducing a resolution focusing on marine debris at COP; and
- d. provide advice on the potential scope of such a resolution.