

**6<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Sessional Committee of the  
CMS Scientific Council (ScC-SC6)**

*Bonn, Germany, 18 – 21 July 2023*

---

UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC6/Doc.7.3

**IN-DEPTH REVIEW OF THE CONSERVATION STATUS OF INDIVIDUAL CMS-LISTED SPECIES**  
*(Prepared by the Secretariat)*

Summary:

Pursuant to decisions 13.24 b) and 13.26 b), this document submits to ScC-SC6 for consideration the final drafts of in-depth reviews of the conservation status of selected taxa listed on CMS Appendices.

ScC-SC6 is recommended to consider the reviews and provide comments and recommendations to the Secretariat with a view to the submission of the reviews to COP14.

## IN-DEPTH REVIEW OF THE CONSERVATION STATUS OF INDIVIDUAL CMS-LISTED SPECIES

### Background

1. The 13<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CMS (COP13; Gandhinagar, 2020) considered a preliminary review of conservation status of CMS-listed taxa ([UNEP/CMS/COP13/Doc.24/Rev.1](#)). As a result, COP13 adopted [Decision 13.24](#), which directed the Secretariat to undertake a number of activities relevant to assessing the conservation status of migratory species. Paragraph b) calls on the Secretariat to “*initiate an in-depth review of the conservation status of individual CMS-listed species, starting with those species listed in Appendix I classified in the categories of lowest threat of extinction in the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species and whose conservation status has improved since first listed, and those species listed in Appendix II classified in the categories Endangered, Critically Endangered and Extinct in the Wild, with a view to determining inter alia: (i) differences in the conservation status of individual populations or management units; (ii) the importance of the protection provided by the listing on Appendix I for the conservation of the species and its individual populations.*”

### Progress in the implementation of Decision 13.24 b)

2. Fundraising activities undertaken after COP13 by the Secretariat in respect to the implementation of Decisions 13.24 have succeeded in raising significant resources. In particular, resources have been provided by the Government of Australia (Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment), the Government of Switzerland (Federal Office for the Environment FOEN), and by the Government of the United Kingdom (Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs – DEFRA). Thanks to the abovementioned contributions, the Secretariat has been able to establish an agreement with the UNEP - World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC) to assist with undertaking the activities foreseen in Decisions 13.24 (a) - (c).
3. The work on the in-depth reviews started with a focus on Appendix I-listed taxa. As an initial step, the CMS Secretariat and UNEP-WCMC developed, in collaboration with IUCN, (i) a methodology for a rapid assessment of Appendix I-listed taxa, with a view *inter alia* to help determine which individual CMS-listed taxa may be good candidates for an in-depth review as described in Decision 13.24; and (ii) a template for a set of case studies providing an in-depth assessment of the conservation status of specific Appendix I species. Pursuant to Decision 13.26 a), drafts of the methodology and of the template were submitted to the 5<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Sessional Committee of the Scientific Council (ScC-SC5, 2021), that reviewed and endorsed them.
4. Following this, UNEP-WCMC, in close consultation with the Secretariat, developed a draft rapid assessment of the conservation status of CMS Appendix I-listed taxa. A first draft was submitted to the members of the Sessional Committee of the Scientific Council for consultation and advice in July 2022. A final draft is submitted to the 6<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Sessional Committee of the Scientific Council as [UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC6/Inf.7.3a](#). The full results of the CMS Appendix I rapid assessment, along with corresponding data and metadata, is provided in an accompanying Excel document, made available as [UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC6/Inf.7.2](#).

5. Based on the outcomes of the rapid assessment, 16 taxa categorised as Least Concern or Lower Risk/conservation dependent in the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species were identified as potential candidates for in-depth review. Based on available budget, the following 5 taxa were selected for in-depth review, in consultation with the Sessional Committee of the Scientific Council:

*Tadarida brasiliensis* (Mexican Free-Tailed Bat);  
*Vicugna vicugna* (Vicuña);  
*Pelecanus onocrotalus* (Great White Pelican);  
*Haliaeetus albicilla* (White-Tailed Sea-Eagle);  
*Podocnemis expansa* (South American River Turtle).

6. Thanks to additional funding provided by the Government of Australia that became available at a later stage, an in-depth review could also be initiated for Appendix II-listed taxa. The methodology and approach described above for Appendix I-listed taxa was followed, with some adaptations. Based on a rapid assessment of the conservation status of CMS Appendix II-listed taxa, taxa have been assigned to five conservation priority groups based on their IUCN Red List category, population trend and biological vulnerability. Fifty-two taxa were classified as very high priority, 127 taxa as high priority, 265 taxa as medium priority and 554 taxa as low priority. Twelve taxa were classified as having 'insufficient information'. A final draft of the report is submitted to the 6<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Sessional Committee of the Scientific Council for information as [UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC6/Inf.7.3b](#). The full results of the CMS Appendix II rapid assessment, along with corresponding data and metadata, is provided in an accompanying Excel document, made available as [UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC6/Inf.7.3c](#).
7. Based on available resources, five of the 52 very high priority taxa have been considered further for in-depth assessment, using an adapted version of the template used for Appendix I-listed taxa:

*Loxodonta cyclotis* (African Forest Elephant)  
*Phoebastria irrorata* (Waved Albatross)  
*Galeorhinus galeus* (Tope Shark)  
*Sphyrna lewini* (Scalloped Hammerhead)  
*Anguilla anguilla* (European Eel)

8. In-depth reviews of the conservation status of the ten taxa mentioned in paragraph 5 (App. I-listed) and paragraph 7 (App. II-listed) above have been prepared by UNEP-WCMC. Preliminary versions of the reviews have been consulted with individual members of the Sessional Committee of the Scientific Council and, in the case of shark species, also with members of the Advisory Committee of the CMS Sharks MOU. The final drafts of the reviews are reproduced in the Annex to this document.
9. With a view to the submission of the reviews to COP14 for consideration, the Secretariat would welcome in particular any comments and advice from the Sessional Committee on i) possible factual inaccuracies in the reviews; ii) any clarification that may be required concerning the content of the reviews; iii) a confirmation of the suitability of the approach followed with a view to the possible continuation of the in-depth review of the conservation status of individual CMS-listed species, including the format and content of the reviews, or suggestions for any revision of the approach; and (iv) any recommendations to be brought to the attention of COP14 in relation to the species assessed.

### Recommended Actions

10. The Scientific Council is recommended to:
  - a) review the final drafts of the in-depth reviews of species listed on CMS Appendices included in the Annex to this document;
  - b) provide comments and advice to the Secretariat concerning the submission of the assessments to COP14, including any recommendation to be brought to the attention of the COP.