



# CONVENTION ON MIGRATORY SPECIES

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Agenda Item 4.4.1

## SUBJECT-BASED WORKING GROUPS WITHIN THE SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL

### Summary:

The paper attached to this note has been prepared by the Chair of the Scientific Council as a contribution to ongoing discussions concerning the structure and *modus operandi* of the Scientific Council. It proposes the setting up of ad hoc and cross-taxa working groups with the aim of contributing to produce best practice approaches to tackle cross-cutting conservation issues related to migratory species.

## **SUBJECT-BASED WORKING GROUPS WITHIN THE SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL**

*(Prepared by Secretariat)*

1. The attached paper has been prepared by the Chair of the Scientific Council as a contribution to ongoing discussions concerning the structure and *modus operandi* of the Scientific Council. It builds on previous consultations already undertaken by correspondence.

### **Action requested:**

The Scientific Council is invited to:

- (a) Take note of the report, and provide comments towards the further development of the initiative;
- (b) Confirm subjects for which working groups should be established, identify their membership and develop Terms of Reference.

## ANNEX

**SUBJECT-BASED WORKING GROUPS WITHIN THE SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL**

*(Prepared by Fernando Spina, Chair of the Scientific Council)*

In March 2013, the Chair of the CMS Scientific Council has distributed to all Councillors a proposal foreseeing the setting up of *ad hoc* and cross-*taxa* working groups with the aim of contributing to produce best practice approaches to tackle cross-cutting conservation issues related to migratory species.

The rationale behind this proposal is that the work of the Scientific Council has traditionally been mainly structured based on taxonomic working groups and thematic working groups, aside to few groups, listed under “other topics”, with a more general perspective.

However, CMS is challenged with the urgent need to contribute to the conservation of a huge variety of migratory species worldwide. Despite each of the different groups of taxa, and in fact each of the single taxa, have their own biological features and conservation challenges, there are aspects which feature migratory species across different groups of *taxa*. Among these, there are aspects such as:

- connectivity across space and time
- seasonality of movements across space
- use of different types of habitats across space and time
- need of networks of suitable habitats along their flyways, etc.

Equally, there are common conservation challenges and models which feature migratory species such as:

- dispersal of migratory vs resident species
- demography of migratory vs resident species
- monitoring models and protocols for migratory species
- models for active management of migratory species (e.g. harvesting, restocking).

Through its unique experience derived from working on migratory species, and thanks to the opportunity offered by its long-term direct experience in conservation, CMS has the potential to produce best practice models for the conservation of migratory species. Such best practice models would be shared across the CMS Family to be used within the various CMS instruments to tackle common aspects within conservation strategies to be adopted for the various groups of taxa. A common and optimal approach within the CMS Family would also help evaluating the effects of conservation policies adopted for different migratory species.

This would also allow CMS to offer such conservation tools very widely, including outside CMS, i.e. across the various MEAs and for the implementation of the new global platform represented by IPBES.

The Chair therefore proposed setting up working groups within the Scientific Council aimed to put together people with specific expertise on the same or similar subjects across various

taxa. He proposed a series of possible subjects such as:

- individual marking techniques (e.g., ringing, tagging, tracking, photoID, genetics, etc.), including experiences on data gathering, storing, processing and use;
- demography (monitoring protocols in use for migratory species, rank of importance of variables to be collected, best models to describe parameters like productivity, survival and natal and breeding dispersal);
- connectivity (models to analyse connectivity in migratory species);
- principles and criteria to quantify the importance of sites for migratory species;
- restocking and re-introduction strategies for migratory species
- models and methods to assess the economic value of migratory species.

Producing best practice models would minimize the resources needed when having to plan conservation efforts for single species or groups of species or when addressing more general conservation problems which would be added to the list of tasks for CMS in the future, at the same time contributing to optimizing ongoing conservation efforts within the CMS Family.

Through a couple of reminders the Chair of the Scientific Council has obtained positive responses from approximately 20 Councillors, with specific expertise on individual marking techniques, demography, connectivity, importance of sites and restocking/reintroduction.

The eighteenth meeting of the Scientific Council will offer an opportunity for further consideration of the concept by Scientific Council members, and, it is hoped, make progress towards the identification of subjects and products to be covered by working groups, and the definition of membership and terms of reference for the working groups.

After discussion at ScC18, a start-up phase would foresee checking for further availability within the Council and activating contacts among the Councillors who would confirm their interest to contribute to single aspects.