



**CONVENTION ON  
MIGRATORY  
SPECIES**

CMS/PIC/MOS4/Inf.2.4c

Date: 4 August 2021

Original: English

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FOURTH MEETING OF THE SIGNATORIES TO  
THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING FOR  
THE CONSERVATION OF CETACEANS AND THEIR  
HABITATS IN THE PACIFIC ISLANDS REGION

5-6 August 2021, *Online*

**REPORTS FROM COLLABORATING ORGANIZATIONS ON IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MOU:  
INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR ANIMAL WELFARE**



## **Collaborating Organisation Report:**

### **Statement to the 4<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Parties of the CMS Pacific Islands Cetaceans MOU 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> August 2021**

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Esteemed delegates, partners, and colleagues, on behalf of the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW), I would like start by acknowledging the traditional people of the region and their connection to land, waters and culture. We pay our respects to their Elders, past, present and emerging.

IFAW is delighted to be present for this timely and important meeting. We would like to congratulate and acknowledge the tireless work of our SPREP colleagues for convening this past week a series of successful meetings to finalise the Marine Species Programme Action Plans for the next 5 years. We also wish to take the opportunity to acknowledge two very important people who are missing from these proceedings, Sue Tai and Lui Bell whose contribution to the development of this MoU were immense and whose legacy in the region remains awe inspiring.

IFAW was proud to be one of the first signatories to the CMS MoU on Cetacean Conservation in the Pacific as a collaborating organisation. We have supported the development, review and implementation of the SPREP Whale and Dolphin Action Plan (WDAP) as the CMS instrument over the last two decades including through a dedicated staff member based at SPREP; provided in country support on whale watching management and whale sanctuary legislation across 10 countries (value USD 1.3M). In partnership with SPREP and Opération Cétacés we facilitated the development of the Pacific regional guidelines for whale and dolphin watching which have now been used as a model in Timor-Leste and the Caribbean, and created and distributed ID guides across the region for education and awareness and also research purposes. Our work also saw the publication of reports showcasing the economic value of whale watching in the region.

IFAW recognises the critical function that science plays as a basis for conservation management and decision making. As such, we have supported the South Pacific Whale Research Consortium (SPWRC) and its function as the scientific advisory to the WDAP and CMS MoU (USD 350K) for the past two decades.

To address threats to cetaceans we convened international legal experts to review the legality of scientific whaling in the Southern Ocean feeding grounds of Pacific whales which precipitated the International Court of Justice (ICJ) case in 2010, and we have been active in supporting capacity building, training and education on entanglements, strandings and satellite tag deployment and monitoring. We

have worked closely with government agencies, scientists, non-government organisations and industry stakeholders to develop and monitor the implementation of volunteer protocols to reduce ship speeds in areas including the Hauraki Gulf, New Zealand, and continue to work across other international forum to reduce the impacts of ocean noise and ship strike on cetaceans globally.

In 2017 we were pleased to be able to support and participate in the *Whales in a Changing Ocean conference* in Nuku'alofa, Tonga, where many of the recommended actions for the WDAP were formed. While in recent years we have partnered with Australian based research team Blue Planet Marine, to provide scholarships for representatives from the Pacific to join research operations off the Great Barrier Reef as research assistants. IFAW has supported representatives from government agencies, NGOs and whale watching operators from Fiji, Tonga, Cook Islands and Samoa, to participate, gain knowledge and skills that have been taken back and shared with colleagues in their respective roles.

Although we have had a reduced capacity to engage as much as we had wished to in the implementation of the last action plan, IFAW remains a committed partner and signatory to the MoU. We wish you all the best for a productive two days of meetings and look forward to continuing to work with you all on the next phase of cetacean conservation efforts in the Pacific region.

Thank you.

About the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) – IFAW is a global non-profit organisation helping animals and people thrive together. We are experts and everyday people, working across seas and oceans in more than 40 countries around the world. We rescue, rehabilitate and release animals, and we restore and protect their natural habitats. The problems we are up against are urgent and complicated. To solve them, we match fresh thinking with bold action. We partner with local communities, governments, non-government organisations and businesses. Together we pioneer new and innovative ways to help all species flourish.

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