



CONVENTION ON MIGRATORY SPECIES

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Agenda Item 10.3

REVIEW OF THE APPLICATION OF ECOLOGICAL NETWORKS TO CMS

Summary

Following the adoption of Resolution 10.3 on The Role of Ecological Networks, a draft strategic review and a set of draft case studies assessing the relevance of ecological networks to migratory species have been prepared inter-sessionally. In connection with this, the Global Ocean Biodiversity Initiative (GOBI) has initiated a review of the Convention on Biological Diversity's process on Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas (EBSA) with respect to marine migratory species. The aim is to determine how these have been factored into the scientific description of EBSAs and whether EBSAs could contribute to the conservation of migratory species in marine areas within and beyond the limits of national jurisdiction, particularly with respect to ecological networks and connectivity.

The 18th Meeting of the Scientific Council is invited to consider the preliminary documents, as well as oral presentations on the strategic review on ecological networks and the GOBI EBSA and marine migratory species review as a basis for the 11th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP11) to advance the Convention's work with respect to ecological networks and migratory species.

REVIEW OF THE APPLICATION OF ECOLOGICAL NETWORKS TO CMS

(Prepared by the UNEP/CMS Secretariat)

1. Ecological networks were one of the core policy items considered by the Tenth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties (November 2011, Bergen, Norway), advancing earlier discussions by the 16th and 17th Meetings of the Scientific Council (UNEP/CMS/ScC16/Inf.15) and the 37th Meeting of the Standing Committee (UNEP/CMS/StC37/17). The debate benefited from the Rapid Response Assessment “Living Planet: Connected Planet – preventing the end of the world’s wildlife migrations through ecological networks” and a background document (UNEP/CMS/Conf.10.39/Rev.1).
2. Resolution 10.3 (UNEP/CMS/Res.10.3) on the role of ecological networks was adopted by COP10 in response. The Resolution requires Parties to take actions for national implementation and requests further information from the Scientific Council and the Secretariat in order for COP11 to take an informed decision on advancing the ecological networks approach within the Convention to address the needs of migratory species. COP10 requested two reports: a strategic review (paragraph 9, Res.10.3) and a set of case studies (paragraph 10, Res.10.3) illustrating how ecological networks can be applied to the conservation of specific taxa of migratory species.
3. The formal establishment of a Network of Sites of Importance for Marine Turtles during the last triennium (by way of a resolution adopted by the Signatory States to the CMS/IOSEA Marine Turtle MoU, in January 2012, UNEP/CMS/ScC18/Inf.10.3.3), is an excellent example of such an initiative already developed within the CMS Family. The ground-breaking work to develop objective and scientifically robust determinations of site importance, in the form of the IOSEA Site Network Evaluation Criteria (UNEP/CMS/ScC18/Inf.10.3.4), serves as an example for other instruments to consider.
4. The Secretariat compiled the case studies (UNEP/CMS/ScC18/Inf.10.1) in-house due to a lack of voluntary contributions. With financial support from Norway, the strategic review (UNEP/CMS/Doc.10.3.1) is currently being compiled and the case studies are being externally reviewed. Final documents will be available for COP11 and will take into account comments made by the 18th Meeting of the Scientific Council based on preliminary drafts and oral presentations.
5. Resolution 10.3 also considered that migratory species merit particular attention in designing and implementing initiatives aimed at promoting ecological networks in order to ensure that the areas selected are sufficient to meet the needs of such species throughout their life cycles and migratory ranges. In particular, it invited, as appropriate, the exploration of the applicability of ecological networks to marine species (paragraph 8, Res.10.3).
6. In addition, Resolution 10.3 acknowledges that processes, workshops and tools are underway within the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) that can assist in identifying habitats important for the lifecycles of migratory species listed on the CMS Appendices. One such process is the identification of Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas (EBSAs), which is being undertaken through a scientific collaboration among dedicated experts to better understand marine biodiversity and support national efforts to achieve the Aichi Biodiversity Targets in particular Target 11 (see CBD Decision XI/17). To date eight regional workshops have identified EBSAs in about 78% of world ocean areas and involved 101 countries and 96 organizations (with some attending more than one workshop).

7. A review being undertaken by the Global Ocean Biodiversity Initiative (GOBI) will evaluate the EBSAs described to date with respect to migratory species (with emphasis on those listed on the CMS Appendices), determine how migratory species have featured in the descriptions of EBSAs and whether EBSAs could contribute to the conservation of migratory species in marine areas within and beyond the limits of national jurisdiction, particularly with respect to ecological networks and connectivity. A written summary of the preliminary results of the review has been prepared by GOBI for the Scientific Council (UNEP/CMS/ScC18/Inf.10.3.2). An oral presentation of the preliminary results of the review will be given during the meeting.

Action requested:

The Scientific Council is invited to:

- (a) Note the progress made during the past triennium since 2011, including the development and launch of an ecological network for marine turtles, within the context of the CMS/IOSEA Marine Turtle MoU; together with a set of robust criteria intended to lend credibility to the site selection process (UNEP/CMS/ScC18/Inf.10.3.3, UNEP/CMS/ScC18/Inf.10.3.4).
- (b) Note the compilation of case studies (UNEP/CMS/ScC18/Inf.10.3.1).
- (c) Consider the draft strategic review, and provide guidance towards its further development and finalization as appropriate (UNEP/CMS/ScC18/Doc.10.3.1).
- (d) Note the preliminary results of the review by GOBI of EBSAs and marine migratory species (UNEP/CMS/ScC18/Inf.10.3.2), and provide methodological and other guidance, as appropriate, in relation to advancing the study.
- (e) Review the draft Resolution on advancing ecological networks to address the needs of migratory species annexed to this cover note.

DRAFT RESOLUTION

ADVANCING ECOLOGICAL NETWORKS TO ADDRESS THE NEEDS OF MIGRATORY SPECIES

Deeply concerned that habitats for migratory species are becoming increasingly fragmented across terrestrial, freshwater and marine biomes;

Recalling Resolution 10.3 on the role of ecological networks in the conservation of migratory species highlighting the critical importance of connectivity for conservation and management in the CMS context, inviting the exploration of the applicability of ecological networks to marine migratory species and assigning to Parties, the Scientific Council and the Secretariat a number of tasks for COP11 and beyond;

Further recalling Resolution 10.19 on climate change urging Parties to maximize species and habitat resilience to climate change through appropriate design of ecological networks, ensuring sites are sufficiently large and varied in terms of habitats and topography, strengthening physical and ecological connectivity between sites and considering the option of seasonal protected areas;

Reaffirming Target 10 of the [draft] Strategic Plan for Migratory Species 2015-2023, which states that “all key habitats and sites for migratory species are identified and included in area-based conservation measures so as to maintain their quality, integrity, resilience and functioning in accordance with the implementation of Aichi Target 11”, which in turn calls for at least 17% of terrestrial and inland water and 10% of coastal and marine areas being “conserved through effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well-connected systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, and integrated into the wider landscapes and seascapes”;

Welcoming the progress made in producing a strategic review on ecological networks thanks to a voluntary contribution from Norway (UNEP/CMS/Conf.11. XX) and a compilation of case studies illustrating how ecological networks have been applied as a conservation strategy to different taxonomic groups of CMS-listed species (UNEP/CMS/Inf.11. XX) as requested by Resolution 10.3;

Expressing satisfaction with the formal establishment and launch of a Network of Sites of Importance for Marine Turtles, within the framework of the CMS/Indian Ocean – South-East Asia Marine Turtle Memorandum of Understanding (IOSEA); with particular emphasis on the development of robust criteria intended to lend credibility to the site selection process;

Recognizing that transboundary protected area systems can play an important role in improving the conservation status of migratory species and *acknowledging* that CMS Parties have made some progress, for example through the KAZA Treaty on Transfrontier Conservation Areas (TFCA), signed by Angola, Botswana, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe on 18 August 2011, which is a large ecological region of 519,912 km² in the five countries

encompassing 36 national parks, game reserves, forest reserves and community conservancies, and further *recalling* that the KAZA region is home to at least 50% of all African elephants (Appendix II), 25% of African wild dogs (Appendix II) and substantial numbers of migratory birds and other CMS-listed species;

Taking note with interest of several IUCN processes which may contribute to the conservation of migratory species and, when adopted, promote ecological networks and connectivity, including the draft IUCN WCPA Best Practice Guideline on Transboundary Conservation drafted by the IUCN WCPA Transboundary Conservation Specialist Group and the IUCN Joint SSC/WCPA Marine Mammal Protected Areas Task Force process to develop criteria for identifying Important Marine Mammal Areas (IMMAs);

Acknowledging that the ability to increasingly track small animals globally will greatly enhance the knowledge base for informed conservation decision making, for example through global tracking initiatives such as ICARUS (International Cooperation for Animal Research Using Space), planned to be implemented on the International Space Station by the German and Russian Aerospace Centers (DLR and Roscosmos) by the end of 2015;

Recognizing that marine migratory species depend on a range of habitats across their migratory range both within and beyond the limits of national jurisdiction to meet their needs throughout their life history stages;

Further recognizing the unique approach of CMS concerning migratory range is fully consistent with the Law of the Sea and provides the basis for like-minded Range States to take individual actions at a national level and regarding their flag vessels within and beyond the limits of national jurisdiction and to coordinate these actions across the migration range of the species concerned;

Aware of the United Nations General Assembly Ad Hoc Open-ended Informal Working Group to Study Issues Relating to the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity Beyond Areas of National Jurisdiction, including its deliberations with respect to area-based conservation measures in marine areas beyond the limits of national jurisdiction;

Recalling Resolution 10.3 acknowledging the processes, workshop and tools underway within the Convention on Biological Diversity that can assist in identifying habitats important for the lifecycles of marine migratory species listed on the CMS Appendices;

Welcoming the progress made in the process being undertaken by the Convention on Biological Diversity, which has convened regional workshops covering approximately 78% of world ocean areas, to scientifically describe Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas (EBSAs) in need of protection in the open oceans and deep seas;

Considering that several of the scientific criteria applied to describe EBSAs are particularly relevant to marine migratory species, namely ‘special importance of life history stages of species’, ‘importance for threatened, endangered or declining species and/or habitats’, ‘vulnerability, fragility, sensitivity or slow recovery’ and ‘biological productivity’;

Recognizing that the description of areas meeting the scientific criteria for EBSAs has thus far been undertaken on an individual site basis, without reference to the potential of these areas to contribute to ecological networks and connectivity;

Aware that marine migratory species provide a useful basis to further review the potential contribution of EBSAs to ecological networks and connectivity by exploring whether EBSAs could contribute to meeting the needs of marine migratory species which use multiple habitats throughout the stages of their life history and across their migration range; and

Welcoming as a contribution to the strategic review on ecological networks, the Global Ocean Biodiversity Initiative (GOBI) review of EBSAs and marine migratory species undertaken to determine how marine migratory species have factored in the description of EBSAs and, through the use of preliminary case studies on cetaceans, seabirds and marine turtles, to explore the potential of EBSAs to contribute to meeting the needs of marine migratory species by contributing to ecological networks and connectivity;

*The Conference of the Parties to the
Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals*

1. *Expresses its gratitude* to the Government of Norway for funding the work on ecological networks intersessionally;
2. *Takes note* of the compilation of case studies on ecological networks (UNEP/CMS/Inf.11. XX);
3. *Endorses* the recommendations made in the strategic review on ecological networks (UNEP/CMS/Conf.11. XX), included in Annex I to this Resolution;
4. *Requests* Parties and *invites* all other Range States, partner organizations and the private sector to provide financial resources and in-kind support to assist in implementing the recommendations within this Resolution, including Annex I;
5. *Encourages* Parties to provide financial resources and in-kind support to underpin and strengthen existing ecological network initiatives within the CMS Family of instruments, including the Western/Central Asian Site Network for the Siberian Crane and other Migratory Waterbirds, and the newly launched CMS/IOSEA Network of Sites of Importance for Marine Turtles;
6. *Calls upon* Parties to apply transboundary protected area systems when implementing the CMS ecological network mandate and to strengthen and build upon existing transboundary protected area systems, including the KAZA TFCA;
7. *Urges* Parties to promote ecological networks and connectivity through, for example, the development of further site networks within the CMS Family or other fora and processes, that use scientifically robust criteria to identify important sites for migratory species and promote their internationally coordinated conservation and management, with support from the CMS Scientific Council, as appropriate;

8. *Invites* Non-Parties to collaborate closely with Parties in the management of transboundary populations of CMS-listed species, including joining CMS and its associated instruments, to improve the implementation of ecological networks globally;
9. *Further invites* the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, the World Heritage Convention, the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) and others, to align their capacity-building activities with regards to identifying ecological networks for the conservation and management of migratory species;
10. *Requests* Parties to adopt and implement guidelines developed within CMS or other relevant processes, which aim to halt the loss of connectivity, impaired when infrastructure development projects, including building fences, roads, railways, pipe- and power-lines, dams and wind farms disrupt the movements of migratory species;
11. *Encourages* Parties, other Range States and relevant organizations to apply the IUCN WCPA Best Practice Guideline on Transboundary Conservation and the criteria for identifying Important Marine Mammal Areas (IMMAs) developed by the IUCN Joint SSC/WCPA Marine Mammal Protected Areas Task Force once adopted by IUCN;
12. *Calls upon* Parties and *invites* other Range States and relevant organizations to apply Movebank, ICARUS and other tools to better understand the movements of CMS-listed species, including the selection of those endangered species whose conservation status would most benefit from a better understanding of their movement ecology;
13. *Encourages* the Convention on Biological Diversity to conclude the first round of EBSA workshops noting several regions remain with workshops outstanding and *further encourages* the continuation of the EBSA process to further refine, update and improve the scientific information in each region and for the EBSAs described;
14. *Calls on* Parties, other Range States, relevant organizations and individual experts in the research and conservation community to participate actively in the EBSA process and mobilize all available data and information related to migratory marine species, to ensure that future EBSA workshops have access to the best available science in relation to marine migratory species;
15. *Invites* Parties, other Range States and competent international organizations to consider the initial results of the GOBI review (UNEP/CMS/ScC18/Inf.10.3.2) with respect to EBSAs and marine migratory species as they further engage in the EBSA process and subsequently consider conservation and management measures, and to support a more in-depth review by GOBI of the potential contribution of EBSAs to ecological networks and connectivity by exploring whether EBSAs could contribute to meeting the needs of marine migratory species;
16. *Requests* the Secretariat to share the results of the GOBI review with respect to EBSAs and marine migratory species with relevant fora, including the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity and the UN General Assembly;
17. *Invites* the United Nations General Assembly Ad Hoc Open-ended Informal Working Group to Study Issues Relating to the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity Beyond Areas of National Jurisdiction in its deliberations *inter alia* with respect to

area based conservation measures to draw on the experience of CMS relevant to marine migratory species in identifying migratory pathways, critical habitats and key threats, avoiding fragmentation, and promoting coordinated conservation and management efforts across a migratory range, both in marine areas within and beyond the limits of national jurisdiction; and

18. *Reaffirms* Resolution 10.3 on Ecological Networks and *urges* Parties, the Scientific Council and the Secretariat to address outstanding or recurring actions.

Annex I

Recommendations taken from the strategic review on ecological networks (UNEP/CMS/Conf.11.XX).