

PRESS RELEASE

Historic UN Wildlife Meeting Concludes with Major Set of Actions for the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals

Samarkand, 17 February 2024 – A host of new measures to safeguard migratory species, have been adopted at the 14th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP14) to the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) concluded today in Samarkand, Uzbekistan.

Among the measures agreed: the addition of 14 additional species to the coverage of the Convention, including the Eurasian Lynx, Pallas's Cat and Sand Tiger Shark. Other measures were adopted to safeguard species such as the chimpanzee and giraffe. Resolutions and decisions and concerted actions were adopted on over 100 distinct topics by representatives of the world treaty's 133 member states.

After nearly two decades of inconclusive negotiations, agreement was also reached on a Central Asian Flyway spanning 30 Range States of migratory birds. The adopted initiative includes the establishment of a coordinating unit in India with financial support from the Indian Government.

The week-long UN wildlife conservation conference, the first-ever United Nations COP held in Central Asia, was opened by Uzbekistan's Prime Minister Abdulla Nigmatovich Aripov on Monday, 12 February.

*"COP14 in Samarkand represents a milestone. With the scientific backing of the first-ever State of the World's Migratory Species report launched at the start of the COP, we must now implement CMS mandates. The ambitious goals set at COP14, coupled with the new Samarkand Strategic Plan for Migratory Species, offers us a clear roadmap for action," said **Amy Fraenkel, CMS Executive Secretary**.*

Key outcomes of COP14 include:

Cross-cutting issues

- Strengthened resolution on climate change and endorsement of the report on the climate change on migratory wildlife.
- Strengthened measures to address the illegal and unsustainable taking of migratory species.
- Actions to advance ecological connectivity.
- New global guidelines addressing the impacts of light pollution on migratory species.

- Recommendations on addressing linear infrastructure development and impact assessment.
- Endorsement of a new scientific report "Insect Decline and its Threat to Migratory Insectivorous Animal Populations", and a call for the CMS Scientific Council to develop new guidelines.
- Adoption of a new Decision on Wildlife Health encouraging CMS Parties to implement the recommendations of the scientific report 'Migratory Species and Health: A Review of Migration and Wildlife Disease Dynamics, and the Health of Migratory Species, within the Context of One Health' also endorsed by the COP.
- A new, science-based **Samarkand Strategic Plan for Migratory Species for the period 2024-2032**.

Species-specific mandates

- Amendments to CMS Appendices to include fourteen additional species in need of international conservation, such as the Eurasian Lynx, the Pallas's Cat, Sand Tiger Shark, and the Magellanic Plover.
- New Concerted Actions as priority conservation measures for six species, including the Chimpanzee, the Straw-colored Fruit Bat, and the Blue Shark, and extension of existing Concerted Actions for nine species such as the Giraffe, the Atlantic Humpback Dolphin and the Antipodean Albatross.

Migratory Aquatic species

- New mandate on addressing the impacts of deep-seabed mineral exploitation on migratory species, their prey, and their ecosystems.
- Strengthened mandate on tackling bycatch and aquatic wild meat, a global concern for small cetaceans, sharks, marine turtles and seabirds.
- Three new Action Plans for aquatic species, the Atlantic Humpback Dolphin, the Hawksbill Turtle and the Angelshark.
- New resolution on reducing the risk of vessel strikes for marine megafauna, based on a new scientific report presented to the COP "Limiting global ship strike on whale sharks Understanding an increasing threat to the world's largest fish" which focusses on the Appendix I & II-listed Whale Shark.

Migratory Birds

- Agreement on an Initiative for the Central Asian Flyway, which spans 30 Range States, after nearly two decades of inconclusive negotiations. The adopted initiative includes the establishment of a coordinating unit in India with financial support from the Government.

- A new approach agreed to global flyways coordination under the CMS umbrella for CMS and non-CMS parties and partners.
- Expansion and reinforcement of the prevention of illegal killing, taking, and trade of migratory birds with a call for strengthening the recently created Asia-Pacific Intergovernmental Task Force and agreement on the launch of a new Task Force in Southwest Asia, based on the successful model of the Task Force in the Mediterranean region.

Migratory terrestrial species

- Numerous species-specific and Range States-wide initiatives, such as a new Transboundary Jaguar Initiative.
- Establishment of a new Initiative in northern Africa on the Sahelo-Saharan Megafauna based on the successful model of the CMS Central Asian Mammals Initiative (CAMI). The Initiative includes ambitious Action Plans for critically endangered species such as the Addax and the Dama Gazelle.
- As part of CAMI, Uzbekistan announced a new programme to introduce the Cheetah in the country.

"Regional cooperation and close partnership with Central Asian states is one of the key priorities. We share common history, culture, environmental and climatic characteristics, as well as migrating species. In addition to the beauty of our architecture, crafts and scholarship, one of the most significant features is that we always had a strong connection to nature. Just as our ancestors revered and drew inspiration from the natural world we must also learn to live in harmony with nature." said **H.A. Aziz Abdukhakimov, Minister of Ecology, Environmental Protection, and Climate Change of Uzbekistan and Host of COP14.**

Extension of CMS regional agreements and strengthened partnerships.

With the context of the COP being held in Central Asia, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan jointly signed the CMS Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of Migratory Birds of Prey in Africa and Eurasia (CMS Raptors MOU) bringing the membership of this specialized CMS instrument to 64 Signatories. In a similar move, Argentina signed the Memorandum Of Understanding On The Conservation Of High Andean Flamingos And Their Habitats (CMS Andean Flamingo MOU) on the third day of the COP.

Environment Agency - Abu Dhabi (EAD) and CMS extended their decade-long partnership protecting Dugongs, African-Eurasian birds of prey and other migratory animals of regional importance. A donor agreement was signed during the High-level Segment event.

On the second day of the COP, CMS and the IUCN also signed a Memorandum of Understanding to support the priorities of the Joint CITES-CMS African Carnivores Initiative (ACI).

New global initiatives

In a direct and immediate response to some of the key recommendations from the flagship CMS report, "*The State of the World's Migratory Species*," a new Global Partnership on Ecological Connectivity (GPEC) was launched during a special event of COP14. This alliance aims to ensure that ecological connectivity is maintained, enhanced, and restored in critical areas for migratory species. Initiated by the CMS, the partnership includes key entities with mandates to work on these issues, including the Center for Large Landscape Conservation (CLLC), Climate Chance, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar), the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI), the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), the UN Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC), and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF). The governments of Belgium, France, Monaco, and Uzbekistan are among the CMS Parties supporting this initiative.

The COP's opening was preceded by a political High-level Segment (HLS) meeting, convened on 11 February, under the theme "Working together for migratory species and sustainable development in Central Asia." This event featured special dialogues among Ministers, Executives of International Organizations, and other high-level representatives, focusing on strengthening transboundary cooperation for the conservation of migratory species in Central Asia and sharing experiences of transboundary cooperation from other regions of the world.

The first-ever *State of the World's Migratory Species* report (<https://bit.ly/3OM9HBx>) was launched at the opening press conference on the first day of the COP. The landmark report revealed a shocking decline with many of the world's migratory species of animals declining and the risk of global extinction increasing. It issued a clear wake-up call and provided a set of priority recommendations for action to the COP.

On the sidelines of CMS COP14, the highly anticipated ceremony of the Migratory Species Champion Programme recognized nine champions for their exceptional efforts and commitments to the global effort to conserve migratory species. The recipients of the award were the Governments of Uzbekistan (Host of COP14), Monaco, India, Germany, and the United Kingdom, along with the European Commission, the Environment Agency – Abu Dhabi, the National Center for Wildlife of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation. These entities were honoured for their contributions to initiatives that range from addressing the illegal killing, taking, and trade of birds to conserving Central Asian mammals, among many others.

You could see countries working together to address the known threats to migratory species in a more integrated way. This meeting was all about how to address the findings of the State of Migratory Species report. How do we tackle that decline in a big big way and in a new way. Only the UN, across the board can do that. So it is us or nothing," said **Colin Galbraith, Deputy Chair of COP14 and outgoing COP-Appointed Scientific Councillor for Climate Change.**

The meeting in Samarkand marked a COP of many firsts. It was the first COP of any global environmental treaty to take place in Central Asia, a region that provides habitat to numerous migratory species, including the Saiga Antelope, the Snow Leopard, and many species of migratory birds. The meeting registered over 1700 participants, with 92 CMS Parties, 16 UN Agencies and over 240 participants from various conservation organizations, including many

delegations attending a CMS COP for the first time. This included high-level representation from entities including the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the World Bank, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI), and the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea. Additionally, Inger Andersen, the Executive Director of the UN Environment Programme, made her first visit to the Central Asian region.

With the conclusion of COP14, the Government of Uzbekistan now holds the mantle of the CMS COP Presidency and will carry the momentum from this meeting into the next three years, not only in Central Asia but also for all regions of the world, for the conservation of migratory species and their habitats.

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About the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS)

An environmental treaty of the United Nations, the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) provides a global platform for the conservation and sustainable use of migratory animals and their habitats. This unique treaty brings governments and wildlife experts together to address the conservation needs of terrestrial, aquatic, and avian migratory species and their habitats around the world. Since the Convention's entry into force in 1979, its membership has grown to include 133 Parties from Africa, Central and South America, Asia, Europe and Oceania.
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List of 14 new species included in the CMS Appendices:

1. Proposal for the inclusion of the Eurasian Lynx (*Lynx lynx*) in Appendix II and Balkan Lynx (*Lynx lynx balcanicus*) in Appendix I of the Convention
2. Proposal for the Inclusion of the Pallas's Cat (*Felis manul*) in Appendix II of the Convention
3. Proposal for the Inclusion of the Guanaco (*Lama guanicoe*) in Appendix II of the Convention
4. Proposal for the Inclusion of Lahille's Bottlenose Dolphin (*Tursiops truncatus gephyreus*) in Appendix I and II of the Convention
5. Proposal for the Inclusion of the Baltic Proper Population of the Harbour Porpoise (*Phocoena phocoena*) in Appendix I of the Convention
6. Proposal for the Inclusion of the Peruvian Pelican (*Pelecanus thagus*) in Appendix I and II of the Convention
7. Proposal for the Inclusion of the Magellanic Plover (*Pluvianellus socialis*) in Appendix I of the Convention
8. Proposal for the Inclusion of the Southern African Population of the Bearded Vulture (*Gypaetus barbatus meridionalis*) in Appendix I of the Convention
9. Proposal for the Inclusion of the Sand Tiger Shark (*Carcharias taurus*) in Appendix I and II of the Convention

10. Proposal for the Inclusion of the Blackchin Guitarfish (*Glaucostegus cemiculus*) in Appendix II and the Mediterranean Sea Population of this Species in Appendix I of the Convention
11. Proposal for the Inclusion of the Bull Ray (*Aetomylaeus bovinus*) in Appendix II and the Mediterranean Sea Population of this Species in Appendix I of the Convention
12. Proposal for the Inclusion of the Lusitanian Cownose Ray (*Rhinoptera marginata*) in Appendix II and the Mediterranean Sea Population of this Species in Appendix I of the Convention
13. Proposal for the Inclusion of the Gilded Catfish (*Brachyplatystoma rousseauxii*) in Appendix II of the Convention
14. Proposal for the Inclusion of the Laulao Catfish or Piramuta (*Brachyplatystoma vaillantii*) in Appendix II of the Convention

List of selected Resolutions adopted at CMS COP14

- Samarkand Strategic Plan for Migratory Species for the period 2024-2032
- CMS Contribution to the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework
- Cooperation with Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES)
- Atlas on Animal Migration
- Conservation Status of Migratory Species
- Review Mechanism and National Legislation Programme
- Bycatch
- The Maltreatment and Mutilation of Seabirds in Fisheries
- Marine Pollution
- Marine Noise
- Vessel Strikes
- Deep-sea Mining
- Recreational In-Water Interactions
- Guidelines for recreational in-water Interactions with Marine Wildlife
- Important Marine Mammals Areas
- Important Shark and Ray Areas
- Seagrass Ecosystems
- Conservation Priorities for Cetaceans
- Sirenians, Pinnipeds and Otters
- Marine Turtles
- Single Species Action Plan for the Hawksbill Turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*) in South-East Asia and the Western Pacific Ocean Region
- Single Species Action Plan for the Angelshark (*Squatina squatina*) in the Mediterranean Sea
- Freshwater Fish, including the European Eel
- Implementation of the CMS Appendix I-Listing for the Oceanic Whitetip Shark (*Carcharhinus longimanus*)
- Prevention of Illegal Killing, Taking and Trade of Migratory Birds
- Action Plan for Migratory Landbirds in the African-Eurasian Region (AEMLAP)
- Preventing Poisoning of Migratory Birds

- [Flyways](#)
- [Initiative for Central Asian Flyway](#)
- [Action Plans for Birds](#)
- [African-Eurasian Vultures](#)
- [Saker Falcon \(*Falco cherrug*\) Global Action Plan \(SAKERGAP\)](#)
- [Joint CITES-CMS African Carnivores Initiative](#)
- [Sahelo-Saharan Megafauna](#)
- [Central Asian Mammals Initiative \(CAMI\)](#)
- [Endorsement of the African Elephant Action Plan](#)
- [Initiative for the Jaguar](#)
- [Pastoralism and Migratory Species](#)
- [Priorities for Addressing Illegal and Unsustainable Taking of Migratory Species](#)
- [Aquatic wild meat and Action Plan to address aquatic wild meat harvests in West Africa](#)
- [Ecological Connectivity - Policy Aspects](#)
- [Transfrontier Conservation Areas for Migratory Species](#)
- [Community Participation and Livelihoods](#)
- [Infrastructure and Impact Assessment](#)
- [Renewable Energy and Migratory Species](#)
- [Climate Change and Migratory Species](#)
- [Insect Decline and its Threat to Migratory Insectivorous Animal Populations](#)
- [Wildlife Disease](#)
- [Light Pollution Guidelines for Wildlife \(guidelines\)](#)
- [Plastic Pollution](#)
- [Conservation Implications of Animal Culture and social Complexity](#)
- [Ecotourism and Migratory Species](#)
- [Potential Avian Taxa for Listing](#)
- [Concerted Actions](#)

About CMS Appendices

Appendix I comprises migratory species that have been assessed as being in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of their range. The Conference of the Parties has further interpreted the term “endangered” as meaning “facing a very high risk of extinction in the wild in the near future” (Res. 11.33 paragraph 1). Parties that are a Range State to a migratory species listed in Appendix I shall endeavour to strictly protect them by: prohibiting the taking of such species, with very restricted scope for exceptions; conserving and where appropriate restoring their habitats; preventing, removing or mitigating obstacles to their migration and controlling other factors that might endanger them.

Appendix II lists migratory species which have an unfavourable conservation status and which require international agreements for their conservation and management. It also includes species whose conservation status would significantly benefit from the international cooperation that could be achieved by an international agreement.

About the Conference of the Parties (COP)

The Conference of the Parties (COP) is the principal decision-making body of the Convention as set out in Article VII of the CMS text.

It meets once every three years and sets the budget and priorities of the following three years (the triennium). It also decides on the amendment of the Appendices and considers reports submitted by the Parties, the Scientific Council and the Agreements established under the Convention.

For further information please contact:

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