

PRESS RELEASE

**Major UN Meeting on Migratory Species Conservation
Opens in Uzbekistan**

14th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals Opens under the slogan, "Nature Knows No Borders."

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- Access COP14 [Annotated Agenda](#) and [Meeting Documents](#)
 - Follow [livestream of COP14 Opening Press Conference](#), today, 13:45pm UZT ([check your time here](#)). Members of the media are invited to ask questions through the Youtube chat of the livestream or by sending questions to press@cms.int
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Samarkand, 12 February 2024 – The 14th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP14) to the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) opened today in the historic Silk Road city of Samarkand, Uzbekistan. This pivotal UN wildlife meeting brings together CMS Parties and other governments, UN organizations engaged in biodiversity conservation, scientific experts, wildlife conservation organizations and many other stakeholders from around the globe. The meeting will consider progress in implementing the Convention, as well as actions for addressing the many conservation needs and challenges for migratory species and their habitats. During the week-long negotiations, CMS COP14 is expected to consider an extensive agenda covering more than a hundred items, including:

- Amendments to CMS Appendices to include fourteen additional species in need of international conservation, including the Eurasian lynx, the Bull ray, the Pallas's cat, and the Magellanic plover.
- Proposals for new Concerted Actions as priority conservation measures for seven species.
- 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, and best practices on linear infrastructure.
- New Strategic Plan for Migratory Species for the period 2024-2032.
- Numerous species-specific and Range States-wide initiatives such as the Central Asian Flyway and Transboundary Jaguar Initiatives.

The first-ever State of the World's Migratory Species report will also be launched on the opening day of COP14, helping to provide a scientific foundation for the discussions at the meeting.

This UN wildlife conservation conference is one of the most significant global biodiversity gatherings since the adoption of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF). CMS has a major role to play in achieving the implementation of the GBF.

Amy Fraenkel, CMS Executive Secretary, said:

"We are at a critical juncture for the future of migratory species as we open COP14 in Samarkand. This meeting, taking place for the first time in Central Asia along the historic Silk Road, emphasizes the importance of transboundary cooperation by bringing together governments and a global community committed to migratory species conservation. Our agenda is ambitious, reflecting the urgent need for action highlighted by the 'State of the World's Migratory Species' report. As we face challenges of habitat loss and species decline, COP14 provides a critical opportunity to advance conservation efforts and directly contribute to the achievement of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework."

Billions of animals make migratory journeys each year on land, in the oceans and rivers, and in the skies, crossing national boundaries and continents, with some traveling thousands of miles across the globe to feed and breed. They are an integral part of well-functioning ecosystems and provide many benefits to people, including as a source of food, economic benefits such as from tourism, and services and functions such as pollinating plants, transporting key nutrients, preying on pests, and helping to store carbon.

H.E. Aziz Abdukhakimov, Minister of Ecology, Environmental Protection and Climate Change of the Republic of Uzbekistan and Host of CMS COP14 said:

"Uzbekistan is paying a special attention to regional cooperation and connectivity. There are ongoing multiple discussions with our neighbours, countries in the Central Asian region and beyond to devise effective policies on connectivity. Ecological connectivity is essential for migratory species, which rely on a specific network of important habitats throughout their lifecycles. It has also been recognised as playing a major role in addressing effective land restoration, climate change mitigation and adaptation."

"Taking this opportunity, we would like to urge global community to actively engage with the Central Asian region. Uzbekistan is committed to further fostering of environmental diplomacy and an approach of living in harmony with nature in the same way as our ancestors did for generations before us."

But migratory species are facing increasing threats. The landmark CMS report "State of the World's Migratory Species," to be released later today, reveals a shocking decline with many of the world's migratory species of animals declining and the risk of global extinction increasing. Featuring analysis of over 4,000 species, including 1,189 that have been recognized by CMS Parties as needing international action, the report issues a clear wake-up call and provides a set of priority recommendations for action to the COP.

The conference opens under the slogan, "Nature Knows No Borders," which is a reminder that the journeys of migratory species do not adhere to political boundaries, and that their survival is dependent on international collaboration, including transboundary, regional and global conservation efforts.

This CMS meeting is the first COP of any global environmental treaty to take place in Central Asia, a region that is home to many migratory species including the Saiga Antelope, the Snow Leopard, and many species of migratory birds.

Along with the launch of the State of the World's Migratory Species report, the COP will consider other scientific reports, including new CMS reports on Climate Change and Migratory Species, Wildlife Disease and Health, and Insect Decline.

Delegates are also expected to discuss new and strengthened mandates on addressing the illegal and unsustainable taking of species, programs on Flyways, Cetaceans, and priority actions on the impacts of climate change on migratory species.

The COP's opening was preceded by a High-level Segment (HLS), convened on 11 February, under the theme "Working together for migratory species and sustainable development in Central Asia." Sessions 1 and 2 of the meeting featured special dialogues among Ministers, Executives of International Organizations, and other high-level representatives with a focus on strengthening transboundary cooperation for the conservation of migratory species in Central Asia. The last session invited ministers and other high-level officials to share their experiences related to international or transboundary cooperation on migratory species conservation.

The slogan of COP14 reflects the core of the CMS mandate and builds on the historic resolution of the UN General Assembly in 2021: "Nature knows no borders: transboundary cooperation – a key factor for biodiversity conservation, restoration, and sustainable use" (A/75/L.73). The proposal, led by countries from Central Asia, urged all UN Member States to increase international and transboundary cooperation to maintain and enhance the ecological connectivity of transboundary habitats, cross-border protected areas, and ecosystems that are either vulnerable or form part of the migratory range of specific species. The logo of the conference features a snow leopard, which is a keystone species in Uzbekistan, with a range that extends across 12 countries. While the big cat is a sacred symbol of power and benevolence, its conservation status is of great concern, with only 2,700 to 3,300 individuals thought to exist in the wild (Source: IUCN Red List of Threatened Species).

Despite the grim outlook of species decline and increasing pressures on their habitats from human activities, there are also many cases of hopeful recoveries thanks to coordinated conservation efforts under CMS. A notable example from Central Asia is the highly successful integrated conservation and restoration efforts in Kazakhstan, which have brought the Saiga Antelope back from the brink of extinction.

The event schedule includes the Migratory Species Champion Night, set for the evening of 12 February, promises to be a memorable occasion, celebrating sustained commitments by CMS Parties towards the conservation of the planet's migratory wildlife.

The negotiations of the 14th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) will be held during plenary and working group sessions throughout the week of 12-17 February, with final deliberations and the adoption of a set of new resolutions and decisions on Saturday, 17 February 2024.

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NOTES TO EDITORS:

COP14 Info Hub:

<https://www.cms.int/cop14>

COP 14 Media Kit:

<https://www.cms.int/en/press-media-inquiries>

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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