

PRESS RELEASE

Momentum grows to save world's migratory wildlife

Record number of commitments at global summit sets the pace for integration of wildlife and sustainable development

CMS COP12 sees 34 proposals to amend the species appendices accepted; one withdrawn

India to host COP13 in 2020

Manila, 28 October 2017 – World governments attending this year's largest wildlife summit have collectively endorsed actions on the conservation of a wide range of migratory species, many of which are near-extinct.

The week-long CMS COP12 ended in Manila today with decisions on [34 species](#) in submissions made by 24 Parties from Asia, Africa, the Americas, Europe and Oceania. These include actions on Africa's great carnivores, 10 species of vulture, and the endangered Whale Shark, known as the *butanding* in the Philippines.

"The Conference in Manila has been a real game changer for the Convention. An intensive week of negotiations have resulted in a stronger commitment by countries to step up their efforts to conserve the planet's migratory wildlife. Thanks to the collective efforts of all, the Convention now has a compliance review mechanism and has adopted species that test the boundaries of international wildlife conservation", said Bradnee Chambers, Executive Secretary of CMS.

Governments also agreed to cooperate on reducing the negative impacts of marine debris, noise pollution, renewable energy and climate change on migratory species.

The Twelfth Session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS COP12) took place in Manila, the Philippines from 23 to 28 October 2017 under the theme 'Their Future is Our Future – Sustainable Development for Wildlife & People'.

"The theme of this Conference has also contributed to a growing global recognition of the importance of nature to our human well-being and the multiple connections between wildlife and people. It has helped to convey the message that the future of migratory wildlife is integral to our own future and that we all have the responsibility to act. Agreements made at CMS COP12 have firmly underlined this important message", said Chambers.

"Migratory animals play a critical role in our planet's ecosystem. They act as pollinators, control pests and are a source of food and income. They are also an

inspiration for people here in the Philippines and all around the world”, said Director Theresa Mundita Lim of the Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB) and national focal point of the Philippines to CMS.

The CMS COP12 in Manila has been the largest-ever meeting in the 38-year history of the Convention, which is also known as the “Bonn Convention” after the German city in which it was signed.

COP12 saw some notable outcomes, including:

- All fish proposals being endorsed, which means three species of shark and three species of ray will receive greater protection with the Whale Shark on Appendix I and the Angelshark being listed on both Appendices. The Dusky Shark, the Blue Shark, the Common Guitarfish and the White-spotted Wedgefish are listed on Appendix II.
- All avian species proposals have also been approved for addition to CMS Appendices. On Appendix I are the Steppe Eagle; four species of Asian Vulture, five Sub-Saharan Vulture Species, the Lappet-faced Vulture and the Christmas Frigatebird. A subspecies of the Black Noddy, the Yellow Bunting and the Lesser and Great Grey Shrike are now listed on Appendix II.
- For the first time, the Giraffe will receive protection under an international treaty with a listing on CMS Appendix II. Although populations in many Southern African countries are thriving, they are in overall decline across Africa with less than 90,000 animals remaining in the wild.
- The Leopard and Lion will also be listed on CMS Appendix II, paving the way for a joint initiative on protecting Africa’s great carnivores. The *African Carnivores Initiative* will become a focal point for the implementation of resolutions and decisions on lions, leopards, cheetahs and wild dogs under CMS and CITES, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species.
- The Chimpanzee is now listed on both CMS Appendices. Humans’ closest relative is facing a 50 per cent drop in numbers over three generations and rapid habitat loss, especially in the western and eastern parts of its historic range.
- The near-extinct Gobi Bear is included on Appendix I. Only 45 individuals of the Gobi subspecies of the Brown Bear remain in the wild, shared between Mongolia and China.
- The Caspian Seal is included on both CMS Appendices. It is the only marine mammal found in the world’s largest inland sea, where its migration is prompted by ice formation and foraging.

Other mammals that will benefit from the additional protection include the African Wild Ass – the most endangered wild equid in the world, Przewalski's Horse and four species of Lasiurus Bat. The proposal to add the Chinkara (Indian Gazelle) was withdrawn.

Unusually for a CMS COP, consensus was not reached on four species proposals, which went to a vote. Listing of the Chimpanzee, Giraffe, Leopard and Lion was approved by a wide majority at the Committee stage.

In total, 12 mammals were afforded greater protection under CMS, 16 birds and 6 species of fish. Listing on Appendix I requires governments of Parties to protect the species while Appendix II calls for international cooperation to ensure that the conservation status of a species is favourable.

Other successes, which will benefit many of the newly-listed species include:

- Consensus on a new intergovernmental task force to curb the illegal killing of birds crossing the East Asian-Australasian Flyway, which spans 22 countries;
- A Conservation Roadmap for the critically endangered African Wild Ass, with fewer than 70 animals remaining in the wild;
- A Vulture Multi-Species Action Plan to better protect 15 species of Old World Vulture in more than 120 countries;
- CMS guidelines on assessing impacts of marine noise activities;
- Expanding the Convention's work on preventing the poisoning of birds with a particular focus on the effects of lead; and
- Action on aquatic wild meat, which is fast becoming a conservation problem on a scale similar to that of terrestrial bushmeat.

CMS COP12 also saw five new Migratory Species Champions – commended for their outstanding commitment and long-term conservation efforts. These were:

- The **Environment Agency of Abu Dhabi** - recognized for the Conservation of Birds of Prey in Africa and Eurasia for the period 2015-2019 and the conservation of Dugongs and their Habitats for the period 2015-2019;
- The **European Commission** - for its efforts in addressing Illegal Killing, Taking and Trade of Migratory Birds in the Mediterranean in 2018-2020;
- The **Government of Federal Republic of Germany** - for Reconciling Energy Sector Developments with Migratory Species Conservation in 2018-2020;
- The **Principality of Monaco** - for its commitment to Marine Species Conservation 2018-2020; and
- The Government of the **Philippines** for its efforts to protect the Whale Shark.

Government ministers, representatives of civil society and chief officers of international organizations met on the eve of the summit for a High-Level panel discussion on the importance of protecting migratory wildlife in the context of the

Sustainable Development Goals. The resulting [Manila Declaration on Sustainable Development and Migratory Species](#), which emphasizes the links between the conservation of wildlife and attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals was unanimously adopted by Parties.

A number of celebrities made appearances at the Conference and gave passionate pleas for wildlife conservation, including UN Environment Global Goodwill Ambassador Yann Arthus-Bertand and Nadya Yuti Hutagalung as well as Philippine journalists and celebrities such as Rico Hizon, Cathy Untalan-Vital and Antoinette Taus.

Addressing the Plenary of COP12 on Wednesday, Erik Solheim, Executive Director of UN Environment, noted that the Sustainable Development Goals were directed at both 'people' and 'planet'. He added that new technologies and political commitment could protect both the planet and bring development to people with the same policies.

"We will put in place the necessary national measures to integrate the conservation and protection of migratory wildlife species into our development planning processes and we will engage all sectors of society in crafting these measures", said Ms. Lim with reference to the decisions adopted at CMS COP12.

Dr. Chambers concluded: "This COP has broken all records as the biggest COP in the history of CMS, with the highest number of attendees from Parties, non-Parties and NGOs, with a record number of proposals accepted. Our hosts here in the Philippines have contributed greatly to this success. We look forward to working closely with Parties over the next few years to expand our role as the preeminent guardian of migratory animals across the world."

"We can protect only those species within our territory. Beyond our territory, we urge other countries to also initiate measures to protect these species and to join the Convention", said Ms. Lim.

Changes to the CMS Appendices, Resolutions and Decisions enter into force 90 days after the COP.

CMS COP12 attracted over 1,000 participants, including 234 delegates from 91 Parties as well as 35 from non-Parties representing every region of the world. It marked the first time the summit had been held in Asia.

Notes to Editors:

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