



CONVENTION ON MIGRATORY SPECIES

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MODUS OPERANDI FOR CONSERVATION EMERGENCIES

Adopted by the Conference of the Parties at its Tenth Meeting
(Bergen, 20-25 November 2011)

Acknowledging that the Convention foresees in its text, Article V.5 (m), the provision for “emergency procedures whereby conservation action would be considerably and rapidly strengthened when the conservation status of the migratory species is seriously affected”;

Considering that CMS has in the past addressed emergencies, such as the 1997 mass mortality in the monk seal (*Monachus monachus*) colony in the Cap Blanc peninsula on the north-west coast of Africa, the outbreak of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (H5N1) affecting migratory birds in Asia, Europe and Africa, and the 2010 die-off of 12,000 Saiga antelopes (*Saiga tatarica*) in Kazakhstan;

Noting that in the above-mentioned cases the CMS Secretariat facilitated awareness raising, fundraising and the coordination of emergency procedures by bringing relevant stakeholders together;

Recognizing that successful emergency response is dependent on a fast and detailed assessment of the situation on the ground, including adequate resources, to guide follow-up activities;

Noting that the Secretariat continues to play an important role in bringing together authorities responsible for species management, technical experts from other disciplines and other relevant stakeholders across national borders in order to resolve conservation crises affecting migratory species;

Acknowledging that the CMS Secretariat is not a dedicated disaster relief agency but that it can, as appropriate, play a facilitation role, as well as a proactive role, in resolving conservation emergencies when requested by Range State Parties to assist;

Taking note that there are a number of relevant crisis management mechanisms, such as the one on animal disease under the FAO and the standards operated by the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE);

Defining an emergency in the context of CMS to be a situation that has resulted or is likely to result in an irregular or sudden reduction in numbers or range size and deterioration of ecological integrity and health of one or more populations of a CMS-listed species;

Noting that for a number of species there is a lack of relevant scientific information to enable decisions on emergency response;

Recognizing that a situation requires intervention when events such as natural phenomena (disease outbreaks, plant poisoning, or periods of exceptionally cold weather or prolonged drought); or anthropogenic disasters (environmental contamination and poisoning, including oil spills, pesticide or industrial run-off) have been observed, projected or inferred, which are known to lead to a considerable deterioration in the conservation status of migratory species; and

Recalling the recommendation of the 16th meeting of the CMS Scientific Council to establish a *modus operandi* as outlined in document UNEP/CMS/ScC16/Doc.13;

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

1. *Decides* that an emergency response shall be set in train only when at least one CMS Party or the High Seas are affected. Non-Parties, however, may be considered in exceptional circumstances;
2. *Instructs* the CMS Secretariat to apply the steps to emergency response outlined in the Annex, as appropriate;
3. *Calls on* Parties to contribute on a voluntary basis towards the implementation of the emergency *modus operandi*;
4. *Instructs* the Secretariat to identify UN agencies, IGOs, NGOs, industry and other relevant agencies that may be able to respond to emergencies affecting migratory species and their habitats;
5. *Requests* CMS Parties, Parties to and Signatories of CMS instruments, the Scientific Council and advisory bodies of other Multilateral Environmental Agreements to assist each other and the CMS Secretariat in coordinating emergency responses with the aim of improving the conservation status of the populations affected as outlined above;
6. *Invites* the FAO, the Group on Wildlife Diseases of the Organization for Animal Health (OIE), the Scientific Task Force on Wildlife and Ecosystem Health and the Secretariats of relevant Multilateral Environmental Agreements to collaborate closely and make available their expertise to CMS in order to address conservation emergencies effectively, as outlined above.

Annex
Steps for Emergency Response

- a. Immediately review available information and contact relevant focal points, agreement contact points, Scientific Councillors, technical experts (such as FAO EMPRES Wildlife Health and Ecology Unit, Scientific Task Force on Wildlife and Ecosystem Health, IUCN Wildlife Health Specialist Group, OIE Working Group on Wildlife Disease) and other stakeholders.
- b. Report the unofficial event information to the Wildlife Health Event Reporter (WHER);
- c. Notify appointed Scientific Councillors on the specific taxonomic group, region and/or theme, the Chair of the Scientific Council, the Chair of the Standing Committee and regional representatives of the Standing Committee.
- d. Establish an emergency response group composed, as appropriate, of CMS and other relevant focal points and Scientific Councillors in the country or countries affected, appointed Scientific Councillors on the specific taxonomic group, region, and/or theme and experts in the species and/or issue, as well as other relevant stakeholders, e.g. NGOs and scientists.
- e. Engage and notify relevant crisis management mechanisms and relief agencies.
- f. Call for one or several teleconferences of the emergency response group to assess the situation and coordinate next steps.
- g. Dispatch an emergency mission team to the area upon the invitation of the Range States affected, recommendation by experts and instruction of the CMS Secretariat.
- h. Maintain regular contact with the emergency mission team in order to assess the situation further and disseminate new information, if possible.
- i. Initiate fundraising aimed at relieving the emergency by seeking support from UNEP, Parties, IGOs, NGOs and other relevant donors.
- j. Widely disseminate the results of the emergency mission team immediately after its return from the area of the emergency and follow up on resulting decisions of the emergency response group, for example by notifying Parties and relevant stakeholders (e.g. through the Standing Committee) and by assisting stakeholders in implementing mitigation measures.