



**CONVENTION ON
MIGRATORY
SPECIES**

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PRIORITIES FOR AREA-BASED CONSERVATION OF MARINE MIGRATORY SPECIES

(Prepared by the Secretariat)

Summary:

This document reports on progress to implement Decisions 14.57–14.60 *Important Marine Mammal Areas (IMMAs)* and Decisions 14.61–14.64 *Important Shark and Ray Areas (ISRAs)*, and proposes new draft Decisions for adoption. Furthermore, it proposes a draft Resolution on *Important Marine Turtle Areas (IMTAs)* and a draft Resolution on *Priorities for Area-based Conservation of Marine Migratory Species*.

The attached draft Resolution and Decisions would support the achievement of Targets 2.1–2.3, 5.1 and 5.5 of the Samarkand Strategic Plan for Migratory Species 2024–2032.

PRIORITIES FOR AREA-BASED CONSERVATION OF MARINE MIGRATORY SPECIES

Background

1. This document combines relevant area-based conservation measures, previously split across two documents. The purpose of this consolidation is to create a comprehensive area-based management approach for aquatic migratory species.
2. This document contains the following sections, reporting back on relevant COP14 Decisions:
 - A. Important Marine Mammal Areas (IMMAs)
 - B. Important Shark and Ray Areas (ISRAs)
 - C. Important Marine Turtle Areas (IMTAs)
 - D. Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ Agreement)
3. The BBNJ Agreement was adopted on 19 June 2023 by the Intergovernmental Conference on Marine Biodiversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction, convened under the auspices of the United Nations. Under the overall objective – the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction – the Agreement addresses four main areas, one of which covers measures such as area-based management tools, including marine protected areas.
4. The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF), adopted on 19 December 2022, includes Target 3, which calls for at least 30 per cent of terrestrial, inland water, and coastal and marine areas to be effectively conserved and managed by 2030. It emphasizes the importance of areas critical for biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services, and promotes ecologically representative, well-connected and equitably governed systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures.
5. Area-based marine conservation and management measures as tools for aquatic migratory species conservation have been shown to be effective in a number of areas. The process used to identify IMMAs, ISRAs and IMTAs provides the necessary guidance for developing such conservation initiatives for CMS-listed cetaceans, sharks, rays, pinnipeds, sirenians, otters, fish and polar bears.
- A. Important Marine Mammal Areas (IMMAs)
6. COP12 (2017) adopted [Resolution 12.13](#) *Important Marine Mammal Areas (IMMAs)*, which requested Parties and invited Range States, intergovernmental organizations and partners to identify specific areas that would particularly benefit from an IMMA designation.
7. COP14 adopted the following Decisions on this issue:

14.57 Directed to Parties

Parties are requested to:

- a) *make use, as appropriate, of the identified Important Marine Mammal Areas (IMMAs) posted on the website of the IUCN Joint Species Survival Commission/World Commission on Protected Areas (SSC/WCPA) Marine Mammal Protected Areas Task Force*

- (www.marinemammalhabitat.org) when identifying habitat at risk or designing threat mitigation measures, and when designating marine protected areas, or generally for marine spatial planning purposes, to support the conservation of CMS-listed marine mammals; and
- b) report to the Conference of Parties at its 15th meeting on the progress in implementing the decision.

14.58 Directed to Parties

Parties are encouraged to apply the IMMA criteria in identifying areas important for marine mammals, including in regions not yet assessed by IUCN SSC/WCPA.

14.59 Directed to the Scientific Council

The Scientific Council is requested to collaborate with the IUCN SSC/WCPA Marine Mammal Protected Areas Task Force to include data on CMS-listed marine mammals in the identification of IMMAs.

14.60 Directed to the Secretariat

The Secretariat shall:

- a) inform Parties of newly identified IMMAs and the relevant CMS-listed species;
- b) reach out to other relevant regional and international organizations to bring to their attention the value of the identification of IMMAs for conservation planning, as well as already identified IMMAs; and
- c) seek enhanced cooperation and coordination with the Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ).

Implementation and activities relating to IMMAs

8. Since COP14, 43 new IMMAs have been identified, primarily in the North West Atlantic Ocean and Wider Caribbean. An additional nine CMS-listed species occur in newly identified IMMAs:
 - Pygmy right whale (*Caperea marginata*, App II)
 - Beluga whale (*Delphinapterus leucas*, App II)
 - North Atlantic right whale (*Eubalaena glacialis*, App I)
 - Northern bottlenose whale (*Hyperoodon ampullatus*, App II)
 - Amazon river dolphin (*Inia geoffrensis*, App II)
 - Harbour seal (*Phoca vitulina*, App II)
 - La Plata dolphin (*Pontoporia blainvillei*, App I & II)
 - Atlantic humpback dolphin (*Sousa teuszii*, App I)
 - Polar bear (*Ursus maritimus*, App II)
9. In total, there are IMMAs of relevance to 47 CMS-listed species. An overview of all current IMMAs (323 in total) is available on the [website](#) of the IUCN Joint Species Survival Commission/World Commission on Protected Areas (SSC/WCPA) Marine Mammal Protected Areas Task Force. The Task Force has also published a report on the results of testing the IMMA Monitoring Tool, to help evaluate the status of IMMAs.¹
10. As requested in Decision 14.60 (a), the Secretariat is informing Parties of newly identified IMMAs via the report in [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Inf.25.3.1a](#), and has actively

¹ [IUCN Marine Mammal Protected Areas Task Force. 2025. Moving from Important Marine Mammal Area \(IMMA\) Identification to Marine Mammal Conservation Action: Evaluation and Implementation of Conservation Action in IMMAs - Summary Report. Unpublished report. 28 p.](#)

engaged with the IMMA process, attending meetings and helping to promote IMMAs. The Secretariat has also promoted IMMAs during side events held in other forums.

B. Important Shark and Ray Areas (ISRAs)

11. COP14 adopted [Resolution 14.7](#) *Important Shark and Ray Areas (ISRAs)*, recognizing ISRAs as an advisory, expert-based classification applied to the world's oceans, and relevant inland water bodies, consisting of discrete portions of habitat, important to shark, ray, and chimaera species, that have the potential to be delineated and managed for conservation.
12. COP14 adopted the following Decisions on this issue:

14.61 Directed to Parties

Parties are requested to:

- a) *support the identification of new ISRAs;*
- b) *take into account identified ISRAs for spatial planning and conservation action with a view to implementing Targets 1 and 3 of the Global Biodiversity Framework, including through National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs); and*
- c) *report to the Conference of Parties at its 15th meeting on the progress in implementing the decision to mitigate threats to ISRAs through their National Reports.*

14.62 Directed to Parties, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations

Parties, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations are encouraged to actively engage with and provide technical support to the IUCN SSC Shark Specialist Group for the process of identifying Important Shark and Ray Areas globally.

14.63 Directed to the Scientific Council

The Scientific Council is requested to work with the IUCN SSC Shark Specialist Group, in collaboration with relevant experts of regional fisheries management and advisory bodies, (specialist) groups from Regional Sea Conventions and the Sharks MOU Advisory Committee, in a cost-effective and non-duplicative manner with the identification of ISRAs for CMS-listed shark and ray species, through sharing information and data and contributing to ISRA expert workshops.

14.64 Directed to the Secretariat

The Secretariat shall:

- a) *continue to liaise with the IUCN SSC Shark Specialist Group to promote the value of ISRAs for the conservation of CMS-listed sharks and rays;*
- b) *promote consultation and coordination between IUCN SSC Shark Specialist Group, Parties, Range States, relevant international and regional organizations and relevant fisheries management and advisory bodies with a view to mutually support the objective of science-based conservation and sustainability of fishing of sharks and rays based on a science-based and an ecosystem-based approach;*
- c) *inform the Scientific Council, the Parties and other relevant bodies of newly identified ISRAs; and*
- d) *report to the Conference of Parties at its 15th meeting on the implementation of this Decision.*

Activities on ISRAs

13. A total of 686 ISRAs have been identified so far, covering 327 shark species, representing about 25 per cent of all known species. All but two CMS-listed sharks and rays have so far been included as 'qualifying species' in delineated ISRAs. This means that for the vast majority of CMS species, critical habitat has been identified in at least

one part of their geographic range – the exceptions being the longfin mako (*Isurus paucus*) and smalltooth sawfish (*Pristis pectinata*). While it will be a challenge to identify areas of critical habitat for longfin mako due to a lack of available data, a considerable number of proposals for ISRAs centred on smalltooth sawfish are expected when the project assesses the North American and Caribbean Atlantic region.

14. The delineation of ISRAs has been completed for the following regions,² covering 80 per cent of global waters:
 - South American Atlantic and South American inland waters
 - New Zealand and Pacific Islands
 - Polar waters
 - Asia
 - Western Indian Ocean
 - Mediterranean and Black Seas
 - Central and South American Pacific
15. [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Inf.25.3.1b](#) provides an overview of ISRAs identified for sharks and rays listed under CMS and the Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of Migratory Sharks (Sharks MOU), highlighting key areas that play a vital role in their life history. It identifies priority sites and regions where protection and management can help recovery, resilience and ecological connectivity for these vulnerable migratory species. An interactive map of all currently identified ISRAs is available through the online [ISRA e-Atlas](#), hosted by the IUCN SSC Shark Specialist Group.
16. In line with Decision 14.64 (c), the Secretariat informed Parties and the Scientific Council of newly identified ISRAs through [Notification 2024/011 Important Shark and Ray Areas](#), informing Parties of the delineation of 122 ISRAs, four candidate ISRAs, and 45 Areas of Interest in the Asia region. A follow-up [Notification 2025/003](#) provided further updates on the inclusion of ISRAs identified in New Zealand and Pacific Islands and Polar Waters in the global ISRA e-Atlas.
17. In accordance with CMS Decisions 14.63 and 14.64 (a) and (b), the Secretariat and the Council, represented by the COP-appointed Councillor for marine fish, has continued to work with the IUCN SSC Shark Specialist Group to help identify ISRAs and promote their value for the conservation of CMS-listed sharks and rays. The Secretariat has supported the participation of experts from the Advisory Committee of the Sharks MOU at several regional ISRA workshops. The 4th meeting of the Advisory Committee to the Sharks MOU (Sharks AC4), held in November 2024 in Puerto Princesa, Philippines, included a substantive focus on the progress of the ISRAs initiative. The Advisory Committee encouraged continued collaboration between the Secretariat, the IUCN SSC Shark Specialist Group, and Parties to the Sharks MOU in promoting and applying ISRAs, particularly in ecologically sensitive and data-deficient regions.
18. To assess and improve the coverage of Important Areas delineated for Angelsharks in the Mediterranean by Marine Protected Areas the Secretariat, together with the Angel Shark Project, developed *Advice for Spatial Management of Angelsharks in the Mediterranean* ([UNEP/CMS/COP15/Inf.25.6.3f](#)) as part of the implementation of the Species Specific Action Plan for the Angelshark in the Mediterranean Sea (SSAP Angelshark Med). This document, as well as other spatial conservation measures for the SSAP Angelshark Med, are reported on in [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.25.6.3 Sharks](#)

² Workshop reports are available at: <https://sharkrayareas.org/resources/workshop-reports/>

and Rays, which also contains related draft Decisions.

C. Important Marine Turtle Areas (IMTAs)

19. IMTAs are sites that hold biological or cultural significance for marine turtles. The IMTA approach mirrors that of similar initiatives such as IMMAs and ISRAs, and seeks to ensure that marine turtles are fully integrated into global conservation frameworks, including CMS, CBD and the new BBNJ Agreement. IMTAs aim to guide conservation and management by identifying key in-water habitats essential for the maintenance and recovery of marine turtle populations.
20. IMTAs are based on expert-driven criteria developed by the IUCN Marine Turtle Specialist Group (MTSG), following extensive global consultations. The process is designed to be scientific, inclusive and regionally adapted. It distinguishes areas of biological or cultural significance, applying criteria such as population importance, distinctiveness or diversity. The *IMTA Guidelines 1.0*, submitted as [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Inf.25.3.1c](#), outline the criteria and process for identifying IMTAs, and offer a globally coherent yet flexible framework, grounded in science and inclusive of Indigenous and local knowledge.
21. In Annex 1, a draft Resolution is proposed for Parties to endorse the IMTA criteria and process, in the same way previous CMS Decisions endorsed the development of IMMAs and ISRAs. This endorsement will provide the mandate for identifying and proposing IMTAs through regional expert workshops.
22. So far, no IMTAs have yet been identified. To move the process forward, CMS has joined the [Blue Corridors for Turtles](#) partnership. Launched in 2025, this initiative aims to identify and establish IMTAs by integrating movement and genetic data for all seven marine turtle species. CMS and its partners are working to facilitate expert workshops and analyses of spatial data to support the identification and prioritization of IMTAs as a basis for transboundary conservation and policymaking.

D. Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ Agreement)

23. Following the adoption of the BBNJ Agreement in 2023, the CMS Secretariat has been cooperating with the UN Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea (DOALOS) and has contributed to the preparations for entry into force of the BBNJ Agreement. The Secretariat attended all meetings of the UN Oceans liaison group, and was present at [PrepCom II](#) (18-29 August 2025), including the relevant online briefings. The Secretariat also attended the UNEP BBNJ Working Group meeting to liaise with the UNEP BBNJ delegation. Of the subjects discussed, the agenda item, “arrangements to enhance cooperation with relevant legal instruments and frameworks and relevant global, regional, subregional, and sectoral bodies”, was the most relevant to CMS. For PrepCom II, the Secretariat provided input on this matter, which was compiled in a note by the PrepCom Secretariat as [A/AC.296/2025/16](#). The Executive Secretary also made a statement on behalf of CMS regarding this agenda item during PrepCom II.
24. In addition, in August 2025, UNEP published the [Horizon Scan of possible linkages between the BBNJ Agreement and biodiversity-related MEAs](#), which includes sections on CMS, for which CMS provided comments.
25. At the 3rd United Nations Ocean Conference (UNOC3), the Secretariat convened the side event, [Conservation of Marine Animal Species for Healthy Ecosystems and Long-](#)

[term Ocean Sustainability](#), together with the Governments of Australia, Belgium, France, Ghana, Panama and the United Arab Emirates, DOALOS, the Secretariats of CBD, CITES, IWC, ACCOBAMS, ASCOBANS, the IUCN Species Survival Commission, and BirdLife International. It announced new commitments focused on marine protected areas and connectivity along ocean flyways, advancing cetacean conservation, and promoting connectivity and area-based conservation measures for migratory species.

Discussion and analysis

26. The identification of IMMAs and ISRAs is ongoing and offers an additional framework for protecting aquatic migratory species. Parties are encouraged to utilize these area-based conservation tools in their national planning activities.
27. The identification and establishment of IMTAs will integrate turtles into global spatial conservation. The IMTA framework will enable the identification of key in-water habitats using movement and genetics data, supporting marine spatial planning and informing conservation priorities. The IMTA process builds on experience with IMMAs and ISRAs, and aligns with international frameworks. The IMTA framework is expected to support governments in meeting their commitments under both the KMGBF and the BBNJ Agreement, including through the identification of ecologically and biologically significant areas and the conduct of effective environmental impact assessments.
28. Area-based conservation measures will become even more relevant once the BBNJ Agreement enters into force. This new treaty will detail area-based conservation measures, including marine protected areas, in the high seas, where CMS provisions also apply. Though CMS has adopted Resolutions on IMMAs and ISRAs, there is no Resolution yet outlining a comprehensive area-based conservation management approach that encompasses tools such as IMMAs, ISRAs, IMTAs and the BBNJ Agreement. Therefore, this document proposes a new Resolution on *Priorities for Area-based Conservation of Marine Migratory Species*, contained in Annex 2. The Resolution outlines how CMS activities can be harmonized with the foreseen entry into force of the BBNJ Agreement, to streamline and improve area-based conservation measures for marine species in national and international waters.

Recommended actions

29. The Conference of the Parties is recommended to:
 - a) adopt the draft Resolution on *Important Marine Turtle Areas* contained in Annex 1 of this document;
 - b) adopt the draft Resolution on *Priorities for Area-based Conservation of Marine Migratory Species* contained in Annex 2 of this document;
 - c) adopt the draft Decisions contained in Annex 3 of this document; and
 - d) delete Decisions 14.57–14.60 and 14.61–14.64.

ANNEX 1

DRAFT RESOLUTION

IMPORTANT MARINE TURTLE AREAS

Recalling Resolutions 12.13 *Important Marine Mammal Areas* and 14.7 *Important Shark and Ray Areas*, which recognize the utility of expert-driven spatial classification tools to identify critical habitats essential to the conservation of migratory marine species,

Recognizing that all seven globally recognized species of marine turtles are included on CMS Appendices I and II and CITES Appendix I, and that six of these are listed as Vulnerable, Endangered or Critically Endangered on the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List, with the seventh categorized as Data Deficient,

Further recognizing the existence of regional subpopulations, some of which are genetically distinct or highly localized, thereby necessitating spatially sensitive conservation planning that can be effectively supported by the designation of Important Marine Turtle Areas (IMTAs), also taking into account IUCN Red List assessments at population or sub-population scale,

Alarmed by the persistent, widespread and cumulative threats to marine turtles throughout their range, including habitat degradation, fisheries bycatch, unsustainable use, illegal take and trade, pollution, and the effects of climate change, which are compounded by insufficient protection of key habitats, and conscious that these threats affect critical habitats for nesting, foraging, development and migratory corridors across ocean basins,

Concerned about the limited availability of standardized, spatially explicit data on key habitats in many parts of the world, especially in developing countries and areas beyond national jurisdiction,

Recalling CITES Resolution Conf.19.5 *Conservation of and Trade in Marine Turtles*, which encourages Parties to undertake, as appropriate, research that can support the development of protection and conservation measures for marine turtle foraging, nesting and migratory areas;

Recalling Annex II *Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtle Habitats* of the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles (IAC), which calls on Parties to consider and adopt, as necessary and appropriate, measures to protect and conserve sea turtle habitats, and *aware* that areas important for Northwest Atlantic Leatherback Turtles have already been identified within the framework of the IAC,

Noting the guidance developed under the Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation and Management of Marine Turtles and their Habitats of the Indian Ocean and South-East Asia (IOSEA Marine Turtle MOU) to support the identification of critical habitat across all life stages of marine turtles, and which defines such habitats as recognizable areas essential for the maintenance and recovery of marine turtle populations, as well as the relevance of the Network of Sites of Importance for Marine Turtles in the Indian Ocean–South-East Asia Region,

Welcoming the development of criteria for the identification of IMTAs by the IUCN Species Survival Commission (SSC) Marine Turtle Specialist Group (MTSG), as a means to highlight areas of particular biological or cultural significance for marine turtles globally and within defined Regional Management Units,

Affirming that IMTAs are an advisory, expert-based classification that can provide important inputs to marine spatial planning, conservation and management, applicable globally, to coastal waters and shorelines, within and beyond areas under national jurisdiction, and consisting of discrete portions of habitat important to marine turtle species that have the potential to be delineated and managed for conservation and protection, including of connectivity,

Recognizing the support of civil society and others in the implementation of COP mandates related to marine turtles, and *welcoming* in this case specifically the *Blue Corridors for Turtles* partnership, which aims to facilitate designation of IMTAs across all ocean regions,

Further recognizing the potential of IMTAs to support the implementation of Multilateral Environmental Agreements and of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, in particular Targets 1, 2 and 3, and their relevance to area-based management of fisheries and other activities within and beyond national jurisdiction, marine connectivity and ecological networks;

Noting that IMTAs are intended to complement and contribute to existing spatial conservation approaches such as the Network of Sites of Importance for Marine Turtles in the Indian Ocean–South-East Asia Region established under the IOSEA Marine Turtle MOU, Important Marine Mammal Areas (IMMAs), Important Shark and Ray Areas (ISRAs), Wetlands of International Importance listed by the Ramsar Convention, World Heritage Sites, Ecologically or Biologically Significant Areas (EBSAs), Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs), and Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas (PSSAs),

Welcoming the adoption of the Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ Agreement), which provides a framework for the designation and management of high seas marine protected areas and other area-based management tools,

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

1. *Acknowledges* the criteria and identification process for Important Marine Turtle Areas (IMTAs) developed by the IUCN SSC Marine Turtle Specialist Group, and welcomes the availability of the IMTA Guidance Document on the MTSG website (<https://www.iucn-mtsg.org/imtas>);
2. *Requests* Parties and *invites* Range States, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and relevant partners to share data and support the identification and validation of IMTAs, especially in areas hosting nesting, foraging, migratory or culturally important habitats for marine turtles, ensuring equitable data sharing and capacity-building among developed and developing countries;
3. *Recommends* that such identification processes engage competent national authorities, research institutions, Indigenous Peoples and local communities, relevant regional and international organizations, and other relevant stakeholders in a transparent and inclusive manner from an early stage, making use of participatory approaches;

4. *Encourages* Parties to make use of identified IMTAs in national biodiversity planning and marine spatial planning processes, to inform fisheries management and when considering the designation of marine protected areas or other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs);
5. *Encourages* Parties, Range States and relevant international organizations to make use of identified IMTAs as a scientific basis for informing the selection and designation of marine protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures in areas beyond national jurisdiction, in support of ongoing global efforts, including under the BBNJ Agreement; and
6. *Invites* the Convention on Biological Diversity, the International Maritime Organization, Regional Fisheries Bodies and Management Organizations, Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans, and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature to consider IMTAs as useful contributions for the determination of EBSAs, PSSAs and KBAs.

DRAFT RESOLUTION

PRIORITIES FOR AREA-BASED CONSERVATION OF MARINE MIGRATORY SPECIES

Recalling Resolutions 12.13 *Important Marine Mammal Areas*, 14.7 *Important Shark and Ray Areas*, and 14.16 *Ecological Connectivity*,

Recognizing the continuing loss of biodiversity and degradation of ecosystems, including migratory species and their habitats, as underscored by the Global Biodiversity Outlook and the findings of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) Global Assessment,

Concerned about the increasing pressure on marine and coastal ecosystems due to climate change, unsustainable development, vessel strikes, and other cumulative impacts and their perplexities that threaten the viability of migratory species and their critical habitats,

Welcoming the adoption of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF) and its associated Targets, in particular Targets 1, 2 and 3, including the 30x30 commitment,

Welcoming the adoption of the Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ Agreement), which provides a framework for the designation and management of high seas marine protected areas and other area-based management tools,

Affirming the importance of coordinated and ecologically coherent networks of protected and conserved areas, including those beyond national jurisdiction,

Recognizing the need for continuous development of conservation and management of critical sites and ecological networks for CMS-listed migratory species by taking into account the relationship between areas of importance and other areas that may be ecologically linked to critical sites and ecological networks,

Also recognizing the relevance of area-based tools such as Important Marine Mammal Areas (IMMAs), Important Shark and Ray Areas (ISRAs), Important Marine Turtle Areas (IMTAs), Ecologically or Biologically Significant Areas (EBSAs), Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) and Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas (PSSAs), for identifying and conserving important habitats for migratory species,

Further recognizing that tools such as IMMAs and ISRAs are science-based, expert-driven processes that complement formal designation and conservation processes, and can support the identification of sites suitable for protection under national or international frameworks,

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

1. *Affirms* the value of area-based conservation management for the protection and recovery of migratory species and their habitats, in particular through the identification, delineation and effective management of ecologically important sites across all areas of national jurisdiction and areas beyond national jurisdiction;
2. *Recognizes* IMMAs, ISRAs, IMTAs and other similar scientific frameworks as key advisory tools for guiding spatial conservation and management, including for marine spatial planning and the design of marine protected areas;
3. *Urges* Parties to integrate CMS-relevant area-based tools and identified sites, such as IMMAs, ISRAs and IMTAs, into national conservation planning, spatial planning and reporting processes, including their National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs), in support of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework Targets 1 and 3;
4. *Encourages* Parties to make use of the growing e-atlases of IMMAs and ISRAs, and engage in ongoing regional expert consultation processes to identify additional areas critical for migratory species;
5. *Further encourages* Parties to monitor habitat viability for all CMS-listed species, incorporating insights on aspects of sociality as contained in the advice from the Expert Working Group on Animal Culture and Social Complexity;
6. *Urges* Parties that have not yet done so to ratify and implement the BBNJ Agreement, and ensure CMS-relevant data and tools are used to inform the designation of area-based management tools under that Agreement;
7. *Invites* UN agencies and MEAs, including all those with an interest in the BBNJ Agreement, to collaborate with CMS to implement Target 3 of the KMGBF for migratory species;
8. *Encourages* Parties to support the IUCN Species Survival Commission in the identification of IMMAs, ISRAs, IMTAs and related tools;
9. *Further encourages* Parties to make use of the identified Important Areas when designating marine protected areas, or generally for marine spatial planning processes, to support the conservation of CMS-listed species; and
10. *Instructs* the Secretariat to facilitate information exchange between Parties and relevant bodies concerning area-based conservation management, and to regularly update Parties on newly identified areas relevant to CMS-listed species.

DRAFT DECISIONS

PRIORITIES FOR AREA-BASED CONSERVATION OF MARINE MIGRATORY SPECIES

Directed to Parties

15.AA Parties are requested to make use, as appropriate, of the identified Important Marine Mammal Areas (IMMAs), Important Shark and Ray Areas (ISRAs) and Important Marine Turtle Areas (IMTAs) when identifying habitat at risk or designing threat mitigation measures, and when designating marine protected areas, or generally for marine spatial planning purposes, including through National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs).

Directed to Parties, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations

15.BB Parties, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations are encouraged to actively engage with and provide financial and technical support to the IUCN Species Survival Commission (SSC) for the process of identifying IMMAs, ISRAs and IMTAs globally.

Directed to the Scientific Council

15.CC The Scientific Council is requested to, subject to the availability of resources:

- a) develop a report about improving the long-term effectiveness of protected areas dedicated to marine migratory species in the face of climate change, and make recommendations to Parties; and
- b) collaborate with the IUCN SSC to include data on CMS-listed species in the identification of IMMAs, ISRAs and IMTAs.

Directed to the Secretariat

15.DD The Secretariat shall:

- a) inform Parties of newly identified IMMAs, ISRAs and IMTAs, and the relevant CMS-listed species;
- b) reach out to other relevant regional and international organizations to bring to their attention the value of identifying IMMAs, ISRAs and IMTAs for conservation planning;
- c) continue to liaise with the IUCN SSC to promote the value of IMMAs, ISRAs and IMTAs for the conservation of CMS-listed species, and continue to engage in the Blue Corridors for Turtles partnership; and
- d) continue to engage in the process around the BBNJ Agreement, including attending upcoming meetings.