



**CONVENTION ON
MIGRATORY
SPECIES**

UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.31.2.1

24 October 2025

Original: English

15th MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES
Campo Grande, Brazil, 23 to 29 March 2026
Agenda Item 31.2.1

**REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONCERTED ACTION FOR
CHIMPANZEE (*Pan troglodytes*) BEHAVIOURAL DIVERSITY AND CULTURES***

Summary:

The IUCN SSC PSG SGA Working Group on Chimpanzee Cultures (WGCC) has submitted the attached report on the implementation of the Concerted Action for Chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes*) Behavioural Diversity and Cultures, UNEP/CMS/Concerted Action 14.1.

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**REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONCERTED ACTION
FOR CHIMPANZEE (*Pan troglodytes*) BEHAVIOURAL DIVERSITY AND CULTURES**

UNEP/CMS/ CONCERTED ACTION 14.1

CONCERTED ACTION

Title: Concerted Action for Chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes*) Behavioural Diversity and Cultures

Document number: *Concerted Action 14.1*

REPORTING GOVERNMENT or ORGANIZATION

On behalf of the CMS Expert Working Group on Culture and Social Complexity and the IUCN Species Survival Commission's (SSC) Primate Specialist Group (PSG) Section on Great Apes (SGA) Working Group for Chimpanzee Cultures:

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Co-lead of the IUCN SSC PSG SGA Working Group on Chimpanzee Cultures

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TARGET SPECIES/POPULATION

Class: Mammalia

Family: Hominidae

Order: Primates

Species: *Pan troglodytes*

PROGRESS IN ACTIVITIES

Activity 1: Identify specific targets for the protection of chimpanzee behavioral and cultural diversity

Within the WGCC, a subgroup of experts has been identified to focus on identifying targets for the protection of chimpanzee behavioral and cultural diversity. To achieve this, they have developed an analytical framework that includes examples, practical measures, and feasibility indicators for each target, with the aim of guiding advocacy and conservation strategies. This approach reinforces the integration of chimpanzee culture into conservation efforts and supports the objectives of the CA.

Activity 2: Establish a Steering Committee to guide the implementation of the CA

To streamline ongoing work, the WGCC has been appointed as the Steering Committee of the CA, and subgroups within the WGCC have been established to spearhead each respective activity. The WGCC consists of leading chimpanzee and non-chimpanzee experts on conservation, behavioral diversity and cultures, and conservation policy and implementation with experience from across the chimpanzee Range States. The committee meets at regular intervals throughout the past CMS triennium and regularly consults with the broader membership of the IUCN SSC PSG and CMS Expert Working Group on Animal Culture and Social Complexity.

Activity 3: Develop Guidelines for monitoring chimpanzee behavioral and cultural diversity

A subgroup of the WGCC has been appointed to address the need for practical guidelines and recommendations for surveying chimpanzee behavioral diversity and cultures. Subgroup leaders have liaised with editors of the IUCN Best Practice Guideline (BPG) series to determine the feasibility of publishing such guidelines on integrating the culture into conservation. The editors' responses were positive and confirmed that there is no substantial overlap with existing BPGs. The target audience of the proposed BPGs are conservation practitioners, researchers, and policymakers. Additionally, a section on monitoring for behavior has been contributed to the BPG on Great Ape Monitoring in development by the PSG.

Activity 4: Foster and support structures that will permit the monitoring of chimpanzee behavioral diversity

Significant progress has been made this year in supporting the monitoring of chimpanzee behavioral diversity. The APES Atlas has been identified as a critically important piece of infrastructure that can allow for structured monitoring of chimpanzee behaviors (Wessling et al. 2025). In building off of previous iterations of behaviorally-related data, the Atlas now features a dedicated section with a standardized table for documenting chimpanzee behaviors, carefully reviewed by ape culture experts, with a short, publicly accessible version now available online. Atlas members will focus the coming year on standardizing existing data (35 APES Atlas sites as of October 2025) according to the defined categories, and continuing to compile and archive information.

Activity 5: Create a scaffolding framework to elevate local stakeholders to leadership in research and advocacy of behavioral diversity as a conduit of conservation

While some progress has also been made in promoting leadership across chimpanzee range countries, more work remains to be done during the next triennium. The WGCC succeeded in recruiting local stakeholders and also implemented simultaneous translation of meetings into

French to facilitate participation. Membership guidelines and terms of reference have allowed a formalization of member responsibilities, and further transparency about engagement. Leadership opportunities were promoted to a diverse array of stakeholders, as well as opportunities to contribute to publications and presentations of the WGCC.

Activity 6: Identify the needs of conservation practitioners in the domain of chimpanzee behavior and align conservation efforts to support the needs of these practitioners

The WGCC subgroups have each engaged with conservation practitioners to identify their needs for practical implementation of the culture concept, both in the format of more public-facing engagement as well as a more concerted engagement of practitioners in the WGCC membership. Further, the WGCC plans to conduct a survey of practitioners to identify existing opportunities for culture to be used in promoting chimpanzee conservation, and to better understand the role of culture in filling these gaps and/or needs and scale dimensions. To extend our message to as broad of a conservation audience as possible, Dr. Wessling presented the work of the WGCC in a session on “Why does Animal Culture matter for conservation?” at the 2025 IUCN World Conservation Congress in Abu Dhabi.

Activity 7: Increase integration of behavioral surveys into ongoing monitoring efforts

To address the persistent questions about how cultural behaviours are relevant to the implementation of species conservation, the proponents of this CA have proposed a conceptual framework to facilitate the integration of animal culture into conservation management. This is described “*Pathways from Theory to Practice: Applying Animal Cultures to Conservation*” submitted for publication in *Biological Reviews*.

Activity 8: Provide guidance to stakeholders about how chimpanzee cultures can be responsibly used in conservation advocacy and pilot these advocacy approaches in real-world settings

The WGCC is currently identifying target audience or interest groups, as well as existing opportunities for advocacy ‘using’ culture to enhance chimpanzee conservation and wellbeing, better understanding advocacy gaps and needs and the role of culture in filling these gaps and/or needs and scale dimensions. These efforts were recently highlighted in a special issue on “Animal Culture: Conservation in a Changing World” (Wessling et al. 2025).

CHANGES TO THE CONCERTED ACTION

The Concerted Actions activities have been edited to reflect progress toward each objective. Importantly, the WGCC was appointed as the Steering Committee for the Concerted Action and Working Groups were formed to focus on the specific activities outlined in the proposal.

Since the activities outlined in the Concerted Action are still in progress, the timeline of implementation has shifted to the next triennium.

REFERENCES

- Wessling, E. G., Whiten, A., Soiret, S. K., Scholfield, K., Samuni, L., Rutz, C., Redmond, I., Pintea, L., Lanjouw, A., Koops, K., Kamgang, S. A., Kalan, A. K., Ikemeh, R. A., Humle, T., Hobaiter, C., Frisch-Nwakanma, H., Freymann, E., Doumbe, O., Brakes, P., Abwe, E., & Sanz, C. (2025). Concerted conservation actions to support chimpanzee cultures. *Phil. Trans. R. Soc. B* 38020240143. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1098/rstb.2024.0143>.
- Wessling, E. G., Samuni, L., Koops, K., Humle, T., Hockings, K., Danquah, E., Soiret, S., Luncz, L., Kalan, A., Hobaiter, C., Fourrier, M., Carvalho, S., Arandjelovic, M., Almeida-Warren, K., & Sanz, C. 2025 Pathways from theory to practice: applying animal cultures to conservation. See <https://osf.io/preprints/osf/gpsz>.

ACTION

It is recommended that the Concerted Action is renewed (see revised Concerted Action proposal [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.31.3.1](#)). As activities were not yet completed and have been updated, the Concerted Action should be extended for the following triennium.