



**CONVENTION ON
MIGRATORY
SPECIES**

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Campo Grande, Brazil, 23 – 29 March 2026
Agenda Item 16.2

**OVERVIEW OF THE WORKING GROUPS AND TASK FORCES
ESTABLISHED UNDER THE CMS SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL AND ITS SESSIONAL COMMITTEE**

(Prepared by the Secretariat)

Summary:

In line with Resolution 12.4 (Rev.COP14), paragraph 12, this document provides an overview of all CMS working groups and task forces under the Scientific Council and its Sessional Committee that are currently in effect.

This document was revised by the Secretariat to reflect the comments by the Scientific Council made at its 8th Meeting of the Sessional Committee in December 2025, as contained in UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.16.2/Add.1.

OVERVIEW OF THE WORKING GROUPS AND TASK FORCES ESTABLISHED UNDER THE CMS SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL AND ITS SESSIONAL COMMITTEE

Background

1. Various working groups and task forces have been established by the Conference of the Parties or by the Sessional Committee of the Scientific Council (ScC-SC). The duration of most working groups is limited to a specific intersessional period between two meetings of the Conference of the Parties, but for some working groups and task forces their duration is open-ended.
2. Resolution 12.4 (Rev.COP14) *Scientific Council* sets up modalities and procedures for the functioning of the Scientific Council, and includes, in paragraph 12, a mandate to the Secretariat as follows:

“Requests the Secretariat to provide, for each meeting of the Conference of Parties, an overview of the working groups and task forces established under the CMS Scientific Council and its Sessional Committee”.

Summary of working groups and task forces

3. The 7th meeting of the Sessional Committee of the Scientific Council (ScC-SC7) reviewed the list of previously established working groups and established new working groups, which are listed respectively in Annex 1 and Annex 2. It also acknowledged that the Terms of Reference of any working group co-convened jointly with other partners should not be subject to change without consulting the relevant organizations. It further agreed that regular review of the working groups and an update of their Terms of Reference, as appropriate, is warranted.
4. ScC-SC8 agreed to change the duration of several working groups, as presented in Addendum 1 to this document.
5. Annex 1 contains an overview of existing working groups and task forces with an open-ended duration.
6. Annex 2 lists the working groups and task forces established under the Sessional Committee of the Scientific Council with a limited duration until COP15.

Recommended actions

7. The Conference of the Parties is recommended to:
 - a) take note of this document.

ANNEX 1

OVERVIEW OF THE WORKING GROUPS AND TASK FORCES WITH AN OPEN-ENDED DURATION ESTABLISHED UNDER OR REPORTING TO THE CMS SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL AND ITS SESSIONAL COMMITTEE

WORKING GROUP TITLE	DURATION	REPORTING TO	CHAIR	MEMBERSHIP	NOTES/COMMENTS
Aquatic Mammals Working Group	Open-ended	ScC	Vanessa Tossenberger (COP-appointed Councillor for Aquatic Mammals)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members of ScC Party representatives Representatives of relevant MEAs Representatives of relevant international NGOs External experts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Current mandate and tasks given in Resolution 14.9, Decisions 14.72, 14.74, 14.84, 14.90 ToR proposed to COP15 in UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.25.4.1
CMS-FAO Co-Convened Scientific Task Force on Avian Influenza and Wildlife	Open-ended	ScC-SC, FAO	Ruth Cromie (COP-appointed Councillor for invasive species, disease, feral animals, insects, and marine pests and weeds)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members of CMS ScC International organizations, including UN bodies and specialist NGOs working in areas either directly or indirectly involved in issues related to the Task Force objectives Observers from the FAO/UNEP/WHO/WOAH Quadripartite 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Task Force was established in August 2005 by the FAO and CMS Secretariats and endorsed by the CMS COP (Resolutions 12.6 and 14.18). Draft ToR are available in UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC7/Outcome 2 (pending approval from FAO)
CMS ScC Working Group on Migratory Species and Health	Open-ended	ScC-SC	Ruth Cromie (COP-appointed Councillor for invasive species, disease, feral animals, insects, and marine pests and weeds)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members of CMS ScC Representatives of the Scientific Task Force on Avian Influenza and Wild Birds Representatives of Preventing Poisoning Working Group Representatives of Aquatic Wild Meat Working Group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WG was established by ScC-SC5 ScC-SC7 adopted amended ToR, which are available in UNEP/CMS/sCc-sc7/Outcome 2

WORKING GROUP TITLE	DURATION	REPORTING TO	CHAIR	MEMBERSHIP	NOTES/COMMENTS
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representatives from CMS instruments, including, but not limited to, EUROBATS and AEWA • Representatives of UNEP, WHO, WOH and FAO • Representatives of other relevant MEAs • Representatives from other international wildlife health expert groups including IUCN Wildlife Health Specialist Group, WOH Working Group on Wildlife and Wildlife Disease Association • Independent experts who can be co-opted on an ad hoc basis as necessary and appropriate • Representatives from NGOs with specialisms relevant to migratory species and ecosystem health 	
Expert Working Group on Animal Culture and Social Complexity	Open-ended	ScC	Philippa Brakes (Whale and Dolphin Conservation), supported by Fernando Spina (COP-appointed Councillor for Connectivity and Ecological Networks)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members of ScC • External experts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Established through Resolution 11.23 (Rev.COP12) • Current tasks defined by Decision 14.229 • ToR, including change to WG name, proposed to COP15 in UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.28.13
Joint Noise Working Group of CMS, ACCOBAMS and ASCOBANS	Open-ended	CMS ScC, ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee, ASCOBANS Advisory Committee	Yanis Souami (SINAY) and Sigrid Lueber (OceanCare) (elected by members of the WG)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members and observers of ScC, ACCOBAMS SC and ASCOBANS AC with relevant expertise • External experts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Established through Resolution 12.14 (as well as Decisions of Parties to ACCOBAMS and ASCOBANS) • Current tasks mandated by CMS in Decision 14.45, 14. 46 (a&d), 14.47 (d) • Terms of Reference and Work Plan

WORKING GROUP TITLE	DURATION	REPORTING TO	CHAIR	MEMBERSHIP	NOTES/COMMENTS
					<p>New Workplan proposed in UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc25.2.2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More information on activities of WG published on CMS website • ToR not subject to change without consultation with ASCOBANS and ACCOBAMS
Working Group on Aquatic Wild Meat	Open-ended	ScC	Maximillian Djondo (Benin Environment and Education Soceity), supported by Barry Baker (COP-appointed Councillor for Bycatch)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members of ScC • External experts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Established through Resolution 12.15 • Current tasks: Decision 14.187 and 14.191 • ToR proposed to COP15 in UNEP/CMS/COP15.Doc.25.1.4
Working Group on Flyways	Open-ended	ScC	Rob Clay (COP-appointed Councillor for Birds)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members of ScC • Party representatives • Representatives of relevant CMS instruments • Representatives of relevant MEAs • Representatives of relevant int. NGOs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Established through Res. 9.2 (repealed); reconfirmed by Res. 12.11 (Rev.COP14) • Tasks defined by Flyways POW (2014-2023); new POW proposed to ScC-SC8 • Decisions 14.137 to 14.140 • ToR have been revised and formalized by the FWG in 2025, to be submitted to ScC-SC8 for approval.
Working Group on Migratory Landbirds in the African-Eurasian Region	Open-ended	ScC	Olivier Biber (Swiss Ornithological Institute)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ScC members • Party representatives • Representatives of relevant CMS instruments • Representatives of relevant NGOs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mandate from Res. 11.17 (Rev.COP14) • Relevant Documents/Decisions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Updated AEML WG POW 2021-2026 - Decisions 14.130 to 14.133 • ToR are available here

WORKING GROUP TITLE	DURATION	REPORTING TO	CHAIR	MEMBERSHIP	NOTES/COMMENTS
Preventing Poisoning Working Group	Open-ended	ScC	No Chair elected yet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ScC members Party representatives Representatives of UN bodies Representatives of relevant NGOs Experts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mandate from Res. 11.15 (Rev.COP14) Relevant Documents/Decisions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decision 14.134 to 14.136 PPWG POW 2017-2020 ToR are available in Annex to Resolution 11.15 (Rev.COP14) and here
Working Group on Infrastructure and Migratory Species	Open-ended	ScC	Barry Baker (COP-appointed Councillor for Bycatch)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experts identified in cooperation with the Secretariat 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established by ScC-SC7 as requested by Decision 14.202 ToR are available in UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC7/Outcome 4
CMS Scientific Council Working Group on Climate Change and Migratory Species	Open-ended	ScC	Des Thompson (COP-appointed Councillor for Climate Change)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ScC members ScC observers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First established by COP5 under the Scientific Council; current reference found in Resolution 12.21 (Rev.COP14) Decision 14.214 requested the ScC to re-establish its Climate Change WG for the next triennium and develop its ToR ToR are available in UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC7/Outcome 2 Revised ToR amending the duration of the WG adopted by ScC-SC8
CMS Scientific Council Working Group on Taxonomic and Nomenclatural Issues and on Potential Taxa for Listing	Open-ended	ScC	Stephen Garnett (COP-appointed Councillor for Birds)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ScC members Experts from Parties and other observers Representatives of other MEAs, such as CITES 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established by ScC-SC7 ToR are available in UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC7/Outcome 6 Revised ToR amending the duration of the WG adopted by ScC-SC8
CMS Scientific Council Working Group on	Open-ended	ScC	Stephen Garnett (COP-appointed Councillor for Birds)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ScC members and scientific councillors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established by ScC-SC7

WORKING GROUP TITLE	DURATION	REPORTING TO	CHAIR	MEMBERSHIP	NOTES/COMMENTS
Maintaining Lists of Species Listed in CMS Appendices				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ScC observers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ToR are available in UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC7/Outcome 7 • Revised ToR amending the duration of the WG adopted by ScC-SC8
CMS ScC Working Group on Ecological Connectivity	Open-ended	ScC-SC meetings	Fernando Spina (COP-appointed Councillor for Connectivity and Ecological Networks)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ScC members • ScC observers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ToR are available in UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC7/Outcome 2 • Revised ToR amending the duration of the WG adopted by ScC-SC8

OVERVIEW OF THE WORKING GROUPS AND TASK FORCES WITH LIMITED DURATION ESTABLISHED UNDER OR REPORTING TO THE CMS SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL AND ITS SESSIONAL COMMITTEE

WORKING GROUP TITLE	DURATION	REPORTING TO	CHAIR	MEMBERSHIP	NOTES/COMMENTS
Working Group on Pastoralism and CMS-listed species	Until COP15	ScC	No Chair elected yet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stakeholders with experience and knowledge of managing rangelands, pastoralism and wildlife 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established by ScC-SC7 as requested in Decision 14.180 ToR are available in UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC7/Outcome 3
CMS Scientific Council Working Group on the State of the World's Migratory Species Report	Until COP15	ScC	Vanessa Tossenberger (COP-appointed Councillor for Aquatic Mammals)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ScC members Experts from Parties and other observers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established by ScC-SC7 to oversee the report ToR are available in UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC7/Outcome 8
CMS Scientific Council Working Group on Multiple Systems of Knowledge, Including Traditional and Indigenous Knowledge	Until COP15	ScC	Martin Hitziger (Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ScC members and scientific councillors ScC observers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established by ScC-SC7 ToR are available in UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC7/Outcome 5
Working Group on Illegal and Unsustainable Taking of Wildlife	Until COP15	ScC	Sue Lieberman (Wildlife Conservation Society) and Arif Shamkhi Jaber (Iraq)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scientific Council members Environmental ministries and wildlife authorities Scientific community involved in migratory species and illegal hunting/taking Relevant MEAs and intergovernmental organizations, such as CBD, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established by ScC-SC7 as requested by Decision 14.184 ToR are available in UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC7/Outcome 2.

WORKING GROUP TITLE	DURATION	REPORTING TO	CHAIR	MEMBERSHIP	NOTES/COMMENTS
				UNEP, FAO, CITES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International and national NGOs • Representatives of relevant CMS family working groups and task forces • Other relevant experts 	