



**CONVENTION ON
MIGRATORY
SPECIES**

UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.19

16 January 2026

Original: English

15th MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES
Campo Grande, Brazil, 23 – 29 March 2026
Agenda Item 19

COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

(Prepared by the Secretariat)

Summary:

This document provides a summary of communication, outreach and information management activities since the 14th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (2024).

It proposes new decisions to strengthen the Convention's communication and information management activities and their impact.

COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

Background

1. Communications and information management are core to the work of the CMS Secretariat, and vital for raising awareness of the importance of the Convention and its priorities. CMS Article IX includes such responsibilities as maintaining a list of range states for migratory species on CMS Appendices, and providing for the general public information concerning CMS and its objectives. Additionally, communications and information management constitute strategic activities for the Convention as highlighted by Targets 6.1 and 6.2 of the Samarkand Strategic Plan for Migratory Species (2024-2032) on the importance of raising awareness of migratory species and CMS globally.
2. The 12th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP12) adopted Resolution 11.8 (Rev.COP12), which reiterated the importance of communication in raising public awareness of migratory species and encouraging action.
3. The Programme of Work for the intersessional period between COP14 and COP15 included tasks and budgetary needs for Information Management, Communications and Outreach.
4. COP14 endorsed the [Strategic Communications Assessment](#), which identified key challenges and recommendations for strengthening communication activities and adopted Decisions 14.15 and 14.16 on Communication and Information Management, which read:

14.15 Directed to the Parties

Parties are encouraged to support the implementation of the recommendations provided in the 'Strategic Communication Assessment'.

14.16 Directed to the Secretariat

The Secretariat shall, subject to the availability of external resources, develop a plan for the recommendations provided by the 'Strategic Communications Assessment' and, to the extent possible, work towards its implementation.

Activities since COP14

Information management

5. A major achievement in information management during this intersessional period was the launch of the new CMS Family websites in September 2025, marking the first comprehensive redesign since the previous launch in 2014. This ambitious project involved upgrading the main CMS corporate website as well as those of the Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) and Agreements managed by the Secretariat—a total of 25 websites launched simultaneously.

6. The upgraded websites focused on creating a secure, practical, modern, and visually appealing platform that meets the needs of diverse stakeholders. Key improvements included:
 - A stronger emphasis on visual communication, with redesigned homepages, meeting pages, and news sections to enhance user engagement.
 - Use of common species names to make content more accessible.
 - Improved interface for National Focal Points (NFPs) through enhanced meeting pages.
 - Full mobile responsiveness, ensuring 100% compatibility across devices.
 - Ability to schedule content posting, supporting timely updates.
 - Enhanced search and filtering capabilities for easier access to information.
 - A streamlined navigation structure, improving overall user experience.
7. This upgrade represents a significant step forward in modernizing CMS's digital presence, ensuring that the websites are not only visually appealing but also functional, secure, and aligned with the latest industry standards.
8. In addition, the Unit initiated the migration of several microsites and project websites from Drupal 7, ahead of its January 2025 End of Life deadline, ensuring compliance with security and performance standards.
9. The upgrade of websites was achieved over the course of several years due to the limited available core financial resources and in-house capacity dedicated to website development.

Media outreach activities

10. *Launch of the State of the World's Migratory Species Report*
On the opening day of COP14 in Samarkand, the Secretariat organised the global launch of the first-ever State of the World's Migratory Species report. This milestone publication represents a major achievement for the Convention, providing the most comprehensive assessment to date of the status, trends, and threats facing migratory species worldwide. The report consolidates scientific data from multiple sources and offers clear recommendations to guide policy and conservation action at global, regional, and national levels.
11. The launch was accompanied by a carefully coordinated media campaign that ensured the report's findings reached a truly global audience. Coverage appeared in more than 3,000 media outlets, including leading international agencies and newspapers such as Reuters, AP, AFP, Bloomberg, CNN, BBC, The Washington Post, Le Monde, and The Guardian. The campaign achieved a potential reach / impressions of over 8 billion views across 108 countries and 46 languages, reflecting the strong interest in migratory species conservation among diverse audiences.
12. There was a strong message across media outlets that the status of many of the world's migratory species – particularly fish, birds and marine mammals – has worsened in recent years, reinforcing the urgency and relevance of CMS efforts.
13. Social media engagement amplified this impact, with a potential reach of 455 million users. Notably, high-profile influencers and organizations shared the report's key messages, including two Instagram posts by Leonardo DiCaprio to his 60 million followers. This level of visibility helped elevate the profile of CMS and its work to an unprecedented level, ensuring that the challenges facing migratory species—and the solutions proposed—were widely understood and discussed.

14. The CMS online presence also saw significant growth following the launch. The CMS website attracted 400,000 visitors in the year after COP14, representing a 25% increase compared to the previous year. This surge in traffic demonstrates the importance of communications and outreach, the heightened global interest in migratory species and the effectiveness of the Secretariat's outreach strategy.
15. This flagship report effectively demonstrated the relevance of migratory species to broader environmental challenges. It elevated the importance of migratory species and the Convention in the landscape of global efforts on biodiversity conservation and the major threats affecting biodiversity, and reinforced the role of CMS as a leading voice in biodiversity conservation. COP14 agreed (Resolution 14.4) that future such reports should be issued.
16. Throughout the intersessional period, the Secretariat maintained a strong and consistent media presence to promote the work of the Convention and its instruments. Activities included the preparation and dissemination of press releases, coordination of interviews with senior officials and scientific experts, and engagement with international and regional media outlets. The Secretariat leveraged traditional and digital platforms to amplify key messages, ensuring coverage of major milestones such as report launches, global campaigns, and partnership initiatives. Social media channels were actively managed to complement media outreach, resulting in increased visibility and engagement across multiple audiences.
17. Between 11 February 2024 and 15 November 2025, CMS received 4,880 media mentions according to its media monitoring suite. These mentions had a potential estimated accumulated potential reach / impressions of 15.4 billion.
18. Top coverage came from the following countries (in no particular order): India, USA, Brazil, Australia, United Kingdom, United Arab Emirates, Pakistan, Germany, Spain, Nigeria, France, Mexico, Canada, and Argentina.
19. Media coverage on CMS focused on the conservation challenges and opportunities facing migratory species, highlighting both encouraging initiatives and alarming trends over the above-mentioned period. There was strong attention to practical conservation measures and tools. Many stories stressed the significant concern over declining insect populations as a key issue for migratory bird conservation, based on [CMS insect decline report](#), underlining how vital prey species are for the survival of birds along their flyways. The [Atlas of Ungulate Migration](#) was widely presented as an important tool to guide conservation planning and habitat protection. Coverage also included community-led conservation strategies as essential for safeguarding migratory species, based on a CMS report.
20. At the same time, media coverage painted a stark picture of the pressures facing migratory wildlife, based on CMS insight. Many news reports underlined that migratory birds and other migratory animals are increasingly at risk from rising global temperatures, habitat loss, pollution, and broader climate change impacts. The CMS press release on the declaration by the International Union for Conservation of Nature that the Slender-billed curlew is now extinct was cited as a powerful symbol of what is at stake, and media repeatedly described wildlife migration as facing unprecedented challenges due to climate and habitat disruption.
21. The Secretariat launched the Atlas of Ungulate Migration in September 2024 and the media campaign secured coverage in major outlets such as Science Magazine, BBC, and Mongabay, complemented by a well-attended webinar featuring 150 participants. The development of a dedicated space on the CMS website as well as the promotion of

knowledge and modules were part of further promoting ecological connectivity and the implementation of Decision 14.019 on Atlas on Animal Migration.

22. In January 2025, the Secretariat implemented Decision 14.200 on Communities and Livelihoods by creating a dedicated information hub on the CMS website. This hub serves as a central resource for Parties and stakeholders, offering guidance, case studies, and multimedia materials to promote community participation and sustainable livelihoods in migratory species conservation.
23. The Secretariat advanced outreach on this topic by organizing the media launch of the report "[Community Participation and Livelihoods in the Conservation of Migratory Species](#)" and hosting a 90-minute webinar with key authors and experts. These initiatives reinforced the importance of inclusive conservation strategies and highlighted the role of local communities in achieving CMS objectives.

Outreach campaign

24. The flagship World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD) campaign continued to be a cornerstone of CMS outreach. In 2024, the campaign focused on the theme "Protect Insects, Protect Birds", generating 372 registered events in 62 countries and achieving global visibility through UN channels and major social media platforms, reaching over 70 million users. As part of this effort, the Secretariat launched the report "Insect Decline and its Threat to Migratory Insectivorous Animal Populations", implementing Decision 14.217. The launch attracted extensive media coverage, including 438 news articles and live interviews with the CMS and AEWA Executive Secretaries on France24.
25. In 2025, WMBD adopted the theme "Shared Spaces: Creating Bird-Friendly Cities & Communities", highlighting the importance of urban environments for migratory birds. The Secretariat used this opportunity to strengthen its partnership with ICLEI and the city of Bonn and invited UN-Habitat to collaborate in promoting the campaign's message. A joint event was organised in Bonn to mark the May celebration, bringing together local authorities, international partners, and stakeholders to showcase practical solutions for creating bird-friendly cities and communities. WMBD continues to drive record participation and enthusiasm for awareness raising: in May 2025, a record 798 events were registered globally, creating excitement around the challenges migratory birds face and the solutions available to conserve them.
26. World Migratory Bird Day 2026 focuses on "Citizen Science", shining a spotlight on the thousands of volunteers, birdwatchers, and dedicated individuals worldwide who play a vital role in monitoring migratory birds and collecting essential data that informs global conservation policy.
27. Thanks to the generous financial support of the Australian Government, the global website of the campaign is undergoing a major upgrade and is expected to be launched in the second quarter of 2026.

Audiovisual production

28. An [informational animation to promote the Joint CMS-CITES African Carnivores Initiative](#) and its objectives was developed and launched in September 2025, thanks to the generous financial support of the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety of Germany (BMU).

Media capacity building

29. To strengthen internal capacity and equip senior staff with the skills needed to communicate complex conservation issues effectively to the media, the Secretariat organised, for the first time, a training session facilitated by three senior environmental journalists with decades of experience at major outlets, including Agence France-Presse (AFP). The participatory session featured presentations and mock video interviews of staff on conservation topics.

Social media community growth

30. CMS social media channels continued to grow, particularly with the Convention's LinkedIn page congregating a thriving community of professionals around conservation issues. The page – launched in January 2023 – has steadily grown from 1,500 followers at the wake of COP14 to more than 14,000 in January 2026, recording an 800% increase in followers in less than two years reflecting a successful strategic focus on high-quality and visual contents. The Secretariat has strengthened its communication efforts by deepening collaboration on media releases, social media campaigns, and international day celebrations with UNEP, relevant Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs), and international non-governmental organisations. This coordinated approach has enabled consistent messaging and expanded the reach of CMS advocacy. As part of this broader strategy, selected podcast episode interviews were placed with the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), UN Geneva, and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) further supporting CMS outreach across diverse international platforms.

Staffing

31. During the intersessional period, the Secretariat strengthened the capacity of the Information, Communications, and Awareness-raising Unit (IMCA), a joint unit serving both CMS and the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds Agreement (AEWA). The team comprises two staff members from the CMS Secretariat (100% P3 and 100% G7) and two from the AEWA Secretariat (100% P2 and 80% G5). In September 2024, the vacant G7-level position of Senior Public Information Assistant, focusing on media relations and social media management, was successfully filled. Recruitment for a CMS staff member (50% G4 Team Assistant) is currently underway.

Discussion and analysis

32. During the past intersessional period, the Secretariat contributed to the implementation of Decision 14.016 and the priorities defined by the Strategic Communication Assessment (SCA), including the design and upgrade of the new corporate websites, increased social media activity focusing on visual communications and species content, development of an animation, media capacity building for the Secretariat, and the continued development of the World Migratory Bird Day campaign.
33. Among the priorities identified in the SCA that require further implementation are: developing a series of informational pieces in diverse formats such as videos, infographics, and interactive web content to broaden outreach and engagement; ensuring equal communication and content delivery in all three official languages of the Convention to reach and serve the full spectrum of Parties and stakeholders; launching a dedicated UN Day outreach campaign on migratory species to raise global public awareness and mobilise action; branding; and strengthening the Convention's digital

infrastructure and data access capabilities to support more robust information management and improved accessibility for Parties and the public.

34. These initiatives are essential for enhancing the impact and inclusivity of CMS's communications, but their realisation is contingent on the availability of secure and adequate funding. The notable communication successes achieved during COP14 demonstrate what is possible when sufficient resources are available.
35. Additionally, the Joint IMCA Unit is also a shared team serving both CMS and AEWA with limited personnel and resources. Notably, the Unit still lacks in-house, full-time capacity to manage the extended number of corporate and project websites and digital platforms overseen by the Secretariat. This places considerable pressure on the existing team and limits the Secretariat's ability to maximise the Convention's digital presence.

Recommended actions

36. The Conference of the Parties is recommended to:
 - a) take note of this document and provide comments as appropriate;
 - b) adopt the draft Decisions as contained in the Annex to this this document;
 - c) repeal Resolution UNEP/CMS/Resolution 11.8 (Rev.COP12) as it addressed an outdated work programme.

DRAFT DECISIONS

COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

Directed to Parties

15.AA Parties are encouraged to:

- a) provide financial support for the continued implementation of Strategic Communication Assessment recommendations endorsed by COP14;
- b) integrate communications components in the planning phase of relevant activities to contribute to the achievement of targets 6.1 and 6.2 of the Samarkand Strategic Plan for Migratory Species 2024 - 2032.

Directed to the Secretariat

15.BB The Secretariat shall, subject to the availability of external resources:

- a) continue to implement the Strategic Communications Assessment recommendations;
- b) continue to explore strategic partnerships on communications and information sharing with other entities.