



CONVENTION ON MIGRATORY SPECIES

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

DAILY MEETING REPORT: DAY 3 (25 MARCH 2026)

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – MORNING

217. On Wednesday morning, the COW Chair invited reports from the WG Chairs. The COW heard reports from the Chairs of the Credentials Committee, the Budget WG, the Terrestrial and Aquatic WGs, and the Cross-Cutting WG.

Item 32.1 Report of the Credentials Committee

218. The Chair of the Credentials Committee reported that the Committee held their second meeting and validated another seven Parties and rejected on Party, bringing the total to 58 validated Parties and six rejected Parties. She requested Parties that had not yet submitted credentials to submit as soon as possible. The COW Chair urged Parties to submit credentials.

Item 32.2 Reports of the Working Groups of the Budget Committee

219. The Budget WG Chair said the WG made excellent progress in reviewing the budget elements and considered budget scenarios 1 and 2, as contained in [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.14.2/Rev1](#). The WG also held a first discussion of elements of the draft resolution to understand new proposals and reviewed the Programme of Work. The WG met again at lunch to continue deliberations.

220. The Aquatic WG reported that the WG had finalized document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.25.1.4/Rev1](#) *Aquatic Wild Meat* which would be prepared as a CRP for consideration by the COW. The WG also held productive discussions on *Bycatch and Other Fisheries-induced Mortality* ([UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc25.1.1](#)), *Bycatch of Chondrichthyan Species* ([UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc25.1.2](#)) and *Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs)* ([UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc25.1.3](#)). The WG would continue their discussion on Wednesday.

221. The Terrestrial WG Chair reported constructive engagement on several agenda items on Tuesday evening, including on the *Joint CITES-CMS African Carnivores Initiative* ([UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.27.1](#)), *Sahelo Saharan Megafauna* ([UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc27.2](#)), *Central Asian Mammals Initiative* ([UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc27.3](#)), *Jaguar* ([UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc27.4](#)), *Concerted Actions* ([UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.31.1/Rev.1](#)), and *Progress in the Implementation of Concerted Actions* ([UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.31.2](#)). The WG had requested the Secretariat to prepare CRPs based on their discussions.

222. A representative of the Avian Species WG said the Group had covered several documents, including on *Flyways* ([UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.26.3.1](#)), *Seabirds and marine flyways* ([UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc26.3.2/Rev.1](#)), *Multi-Species Action Plan for Bustards* ([UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.26.4.2](#)), *Steppe Eagle Global Action Plan* ([UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.26.4.3](#)), *Action Plan for Migratory Landbirds in the African-Eurasian Region* ([UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.26.4.5](#)), *African-Eurasian Vultures* ([UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.26.4.6](#)), *Saker Falcon Global Action Plan* ([UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.26.4.7](#)), and *Internationally Important Raptor Areas* ([UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.26.4.8](#)). The Group planned to continue its work on Wednesday.
223. The Institutional and Cross-Cutting Issues WG Chair said the Group had discussed the document on *Resource Mobilization* ([UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.14.3](#)), holding a constructive, considered, and respectful discussion and considering very different socio-economic circumstances. The WG agreed on text on enhancing the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and a revised draft Decision would be submitted as a CRP. The Chair further indicated support for other resource opportunities, not limited to the GEF, and said the WG agreed on text for a standalone draft “resource mobilization strategy”, which was a request to the Standing Committee (StC) to develop such a strategy by COP 16. The text would be included within the CRP. The WG also discussed the Samarkand Strategic Plan for Migratory Species (SPMS) 2024-2032 ([UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.15](#)) and planned to continue discussions on Wednesday evening.

VII. IMPLEMENTATION OF TAXA-SPECIFIC AND CROSS-CUTTING MANDATES

ITEM 28. CROSS-CUTTING CONSERVATION ISSUES

Item 28.14 Multiple Systems of Knowledge

224. The Secretariat introduced document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/28.14/Rev.1](#) Multiple Systems of Knowledge and said the COP recommended noting the report and adopting the draft decisions.
225. Brazil, Australia, New Zealand, Cook Islands, Panama, and Fiji supported the adoption of the document and its Decisions.
226. Brazil stressed operationalization of this agenda item should remain non-binding, subject to national circumstances and free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC), protection of traditional knowledge, and respect for cultural specifics. He urged inclusion of these terms in the draft Decisions. Australia appreciated Brazil’s emphasis on the benefits of indigenous and local knowledge to sustainable management, observing that indigenous and local knowledge remained significantly under-represented within CMS processes.
227. Argentina requested including the term “relevant” every time the document referenced indigenous and local knowledge.
228. The EU supported the document and requested that the Secretariat include consistent use of language when mentioning indigenous and local knowledge.
229. New Zealand highlighted the inclusion of traditional Māori knowledge on bird breeding and bird behaviour in developing the listing proposals for the flesh-footed shearwater.

230. The Cook Islands stressed the need to ensure engagement with indigenous peoples and local communities (IPLCs) was grounded in respect for their rights, including FPIC, while cautioning that not all knowledge was meant to be shared.
231. Fiji described the contribution of local communities to conservation, such as *tambu* areas attached to marine closures that protect marine species, including sea turtles, cetaceans, and migratory species. He emphasized the importance of FPIC when engaging IPLCs and supported an inclusive platform that enabled IPLCs to contribute to CMS.
232. A representative of IPLCs in the Pantanal region appreciated the document's recognition of the relevance of traditional knowledge in conserving migratory species, underscoring that effective inclusion of IPLCs could contribute to knowledge sharing and strengthened participation in conservation.
233. The COW Chair said the Secretariat would prepare a CRP based on the suggestions.

VIII. APPENDICES AND CONCERTED ACTIONS

ITEM 30. AMENDMENT OF APPENDICES I AND II OF THE CONVENTION

Item 30.1 Guidelines for preparing and assessing Proposals for the Amendment of CMS Appendices

234. The Secretariat introduced document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.30.1/Rev.1](#), noting that multiple systems of knowledge including indigenous and local knowledge could be used when preparing proposals for listing. The Secretariat said the document should be read in conjunction with document UNEP/CMS/COP15/28.14/Rev.1 on multiple systems of knowledge.
235. The EU agreed to adopt the draft amendments with several amendments to several subparagraphs, noting that while they recognized the application of multiple systems of knowledge, including indigenous and local knowledge, could provide insights in implementation of Concerted Actions, the EU did not support incorporating these types of knowledge here and in guidelines, noting the best available science should be used.
236. Brazil underscored the need to align to other processes, such as the CBD, and to refer to indigenous "and" local knowledge.
237. Australia supported Brazil's proposed amendments and the need for consistent reference to indigenous and local knowledge. She clarified that guidelines included a prompt for Parties to include knowledge for listing proponents, where relevant.
238. New Zealand agreed with Australia and Brazil and supported the suggested changes to incorporate such knowledge, which Parties were invited, not obligated, to include
239. The COW Chair suggested referring this topic to the Cross-Cutting Issues WG, and the COW agreed.

ITEM 31. CONCERTED ACTIONS

Item 31.1 Concerted Actions

240. The Secretariat introduced document [UNEP/CMS/COP/Doc.31.1/Rev.1](#) *Concerted Actions*, noting the recognition in the revised document of indigenous and local knowledge when preparing Concerted Actions.
241. Brazil stressed the need for consistency with language adopted in other conventions, including the CBD.
242. It was agreed that the Secretariat would prepare a CRP.

ITEM 29. CMS APPENDICES

Item 29.1 Treatment of Species included within Aggregated Families listed in Appendix II

243. The Secretariat introduced document [UNEP/CMS/Doc.29.1](#).
244. As there were no requests for the floor, the COW agreed to directly refer the document to the COP for adoption.

Item 29.2 Maintaining Lists of Species included in CMS Appendices

245. The Secretariat introduced [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.29.2/Rev.1](#) *Maintaining Lists of Species included in CMS Appendices* and [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.29.2/Add.1](#) *ScC Comments*, and [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Inf.2a-c](#).
246. As there were no requests for the floor, the COW agreed to directly refer the document to the COP for adoption.

Item 29.3 Taxonomy and Nomenclature Updates

247. The Secretariat introduced document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.29.3/Rev.1](#) *Taxonomy and Nomenclature Updates* 3 and [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.29.3/Add.1](#) and [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Inf.29.3](#) *Excerpt from the standard reference for fishes*. She noted the document was revised to reflect recent taxonomical changes to the standard reference for fish, specifically for sturgeons. As a result, the Secretariat proposed introducing a different nomenclature reference for sturgeons from that for the remaining fish species.
248. The EU said an updating process should be established on a regular basis and supported the draft Decision.
249. As there were no proposed textual amendments, the COW agreed to forward the document to the COP for adoption.

Item 29.4 Species that meet the Criteria for Listing on CMS Appendices

250. Secretariat introduced document [UNEP/CMS/COP/29.4/Rev.1](#) *Species that meet the Criteria for Listing on CMS Appendices*, noting that a list of *Migratory Freshwater Fishes that meet the Criteria for Listing on CMS* was now available as part of the *Global Assessment of Migratory Freshwater Fishes* and annexed to document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/25.6.1](#). She proposed that, depending on the outcome of the discussion in the Aquatic WG, this list could be annexed to Resolution 14.20, as another

Annex (next to birds and bats). She added that the Secretariat could reflect the outcome of the Aquatic WG in a CRP for consideration by the COW.

251. New Zealand underscored that only species meeting the migration criteria and poor conservation thresholds should be considered for listing. She said coming up with criteria for other taxonomic groups might be desirable.
252. Given continuing discussions in the Aquatic WG, the COW Chair said the Secretariat would prepare a CRP taking into account the Aquatic WG's outcome.

Item 29.5 Towards Harmonization of Taxonomy and Nomenclature

253. The Secretariat introduced document [UNEP/CMS/COP29.5 Towards Harmonization of Taxonomy and Nomenclature](#), noting that the Secretariat would delete a reference to "external" in relation to a reference to the availability of resources.
254. As there were no requests for the floor, the document was forwarded to the Plenary for adoption with the change noted by the Secretariat.

ITEM 25. AQUATIC SPECIES CONSERVATION ISSUES

Item 25.1 Fisheries-induced Threats and Direct Take

Item 25.1.1 Bycatch and Other Fisheries-induced Mortalities

255. The Secretariat introduced documents [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc 25.1.1 Bycatch and Other Fisheries-induced Mortalities](#), [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.25.1.1/Add.1 ScC-SC comments](#), [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Inf.25.1.1](#) and [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Inf.25.1.1b](#), noting ongoing discussions in the Aquatic WG.
256. Peru mentioned the need for agreement on the definition of bycatch, designated as the capture of any species, and urged inclusion of marine birds. Panama and Senegal supported Peru's proposal.
257. The Animal Welfare Institute (AWI), Pro Wildlife, Save our Seas Foundation, WCS, Fundación Cethus, OceanCare, Law of the Wild, and WWF made a joint statement, welcoming the inclusion of decision text on the impacts of the fish maw trade in the document. She said the global trade in fish maw served the same high-value, high-demand market as shark fin and other dried marine products. She noted that CITES regulation of trade in shark products had reduced the availability of shark fins, the global demand for, and the value of fish maws, had increased rapidly, which had serious consequences for both target fishes and bycaught species, including 15 CMS-listed marine mammals, sharks, rays and marine turtles. They said the proposed draft Decisions provided a timely and practical pathway for CMS to address this issue before it became a crisis for other species. They supported collaboration with the International Whaling Commission to mitigate cetacean bycatch in maw fisheries, and hoped similar efforts could be established for other impacted taxa. They recommended cooperation with CITES to improve data collection on maw trade and its impacts, and to strengthen trade oversight. They urged adopting these Decisions, working to ensure the global maw trade is sustainable, and eliminating the associated bycatch.
258. Australia supported the development of effective measures to eliminate more bycatch, and noted cooperation with Papua New Guinea and regional partners, including the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP).

259. The COW Chair returned the item to the Aquatic WG for further discussions and for preparation of a CRP.

Item 25.1.2 Bycatch of Chondrichthyan Species

260. The Secretariat introduced document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.25.1.2](#) *Bycatch of Chondrichthyan Species*, noting the Aquatic WG had discussed the document.

261. Argentina shared domestic progress on responsible fisheries, traceability, monitoring and registration systems.

262. The COW Chair said the outcomes would be merged into the CRP prepared for document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.25.1.1](#).

Item 25.1.3 Fish Aggregating Devices

263. The Secretariat introduced document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.25.1.3](#) *FADs*, noting the Aquatic WG had begun discussing the document.

264. New Zealand supported further work to reduce the environmental impact of FADs on marine species.

265. The COW Chair said discussions would continue in the Aquatic WG.

Item 25.1.4 Aquatic Wild Meat

266. The Secretariat introduced document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.25.1.4/Rev.1](#) *Aquatic Wild Meat*, noting the Aquatic WG had discussed the document and finalized a CRP.

267. The EU, Senegal, and Panama recognized aquatic wild meat as a significant, under-addressed, and growing threat to migratory species. Benin regretted that aquatic wild meat had not received sufficient attention at the international level beyond the CMS, highlighting CMS's role as a significant platform to address the topic.

268. New Zealand described an increasing challenge of migratory seabirds being consumed by crew operating on high seas vessels, explaining that hunting and trapping was the fourth biggest threat to seabirds and consumption of aquatic wild meat also posed a threat to human health. Cote d'Ivoire called for implementing a One Health approach.

269. Liberia, the Dominican Republic, and Ghana supported efforts to address aquatic wild meat.

270. The COW Chair noted a CRP had been published online and the COW agreed to transfer the CRP to the plenary for adoption.

Item 25.2 Marine Pollution and Other Threats

Item 25.2.1 Marine Pollution

271. The Secretariat introduced [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.25.2.1](#) *Marine Pollution* and [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Inf.25.2.1](#), noting discussions were taking place in the Aquatic WG.

272. The COP-Appointed Councillor for the Marine Pollution emphasized the process of taking advice from marine pollution experts and a relevant workshop. He noted the proposal for a WG comprised of experts from around the world to advise the CMS and Parties on the best way to address this complex nexus of threats.

273. The Cook Islands supported the adoption of the draft Resolution and Decisions, noting marine pollution was a direct and growing pressure on migratory species, ocean health, and the livelihoods, and cultures of people in the Cook Islands. He welcomed recognition that marine pollution was multi-dimensional, including plastics, chemical pollutants, wastewater, abandoned fishing gear, and emerging threats. He supported the emphasis on cumulative and synergistic impacts, particularly the interaction between pollution and climate change. In this regard, he highlighted four priorities: addressing land-based and transboundary sources of pollution; tackling plastic pollution and abandoned fishing gear; strengthening monitoring and science-policy linkages; and applying the precautionary principle to emerging threats. He said that, from a SIDS perspective, implementation depended on adequate, effective, transparent, and predictable support, including for monitoring, response systems, and capacity-building, to address shared pollution challenges across migratory routes.
274. New Zealand, Samoa, and Fiji noted the importance of this issue for the Oceania region and supported the Cook Islands. ACCOBAMS also agreed with the intervention of the Cook Islands.
275. Somalia said it had banned single use plastic and called for capacity-building to combat marine pollution.
276. Senegal welcomed progress made but stressed international cooperation and building capacity.
277. Argentina proposed avoiding reference to the exploitation of marine seabirds as the issues was being addressed under the International Seabed Authority (ISA) and said duplication of themes covered elsewhere should be avoided. The Dominican Republic supported Argentina.
278. UNEP welcomed the document, particularly the decision requesting strengthened engagement on marine pollution with the Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans, highlighting that their Protocols on Land-Based Sources of Pollution, which provided established regional governance frameworks through which countries cooperate to prevent, reduce, and control marine pollution from land-based activities. Together with the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities – the GPA, she said these frameworks provided a coherent global and regional approach to addressing marine pollution affecting migratory species. She looked forward to strengthening collaboration between CMS and the Regional Seas Programme, and reaffirmed its commitment to strengthening practical, implementation-oriented synergies.
279. OceanCare supported adoption of decision, supported establishing a WG on Marine Pollution to address this issue, and offered its support.
280. ACCOBAMS said marine pollution was on the agenda of its Scientific Committee.
281. COW Chair sent the document back to the Aquatic WG for further discussion.

Item 25.2.2 Underwater Noise

282. The Secretariat introduced document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.25.2.2/Rev.1](#) *Underwater Noise*.

283. Australia welcomed the document and supported CMS efforts to expand work on underwater noise to freshwater ecosystems. Panama and WCS also supported work in freshwater ecosystems. WCS urged using a precautionary approach on integrated underwater noise considerations into marine and spatial.
284. South Africa supported work on this topic.
285. The Dominican Republic and Senegal highlighted particular threats to cetaceans.
286. Monaco supported CMS collaboration with other instruments on underwater noise to ensure they consider the impacts on migratory species. IWC also supported joint work on the topic, including with the International Maritime Organization (IMO).
287. The COW Chair said discussion on the topic would continue in the Aquatic WG.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – AFTERNOON

288. On Wednesday afternoon, the COW began its consideration of CRPs.

Item 18.2 Cooperation between IPBES and CMS

289. The COW considered [UNEP/CMS/COP15/CRP18.2](#) and forwarded it to the Plenary for adoption.

Item 18.3 CMS Contribution to the Kunming-Montreal GBF

290. The COW considered [UNEP/CMS/COP15/CRP18.3](#) and agreed to submit it to the Plenary for adoption, with the understanding that a change requested by Brazil would be taken into account.

Item 19. Communications, Outreach and Information Management

291. The COW considered [UNEP/CMS/COP15/CRP19](#). Australia suggested a text modification for idiomatic clarity in the English version of the document, specifically in a section of the document referring to ‘the state of the world’s migratory species report’. Zimbabwe also suggested an addition to the text. The document was forwarded to the Plenary for adoption.

Item 28.2 Ecological Connectivity

292. The COW considered [UNEP/CMS/COP/CRP18.2](#) and agreed to send it to the Plenary for the adoption.

Item 28.6 Pastoralism

293. The COW considered [UNEP/CMS/CRP/CRP8.6](#) and agreed to forward it to Plenary for adoption

Item 25.2.3 Deep-Sea Mining

294. The Secretariat introduced document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.25.2.3 Deep-Sea Mining](#), noting it would be discussed in the Aquatic WG Wednesday evening.

295. Brazil observed that the ISA was the relevant authority on deep-sea mining and said Brazil could support voluntary, non-binding guidance.
296. France called for a precautionary pause on exploitation and noted some recommendations fell mainly within the exclusive mandate of the ISA.
297. Argentina said the document exceeded the Convention's mandate, noting this topic fell under the ISA, and did not support the recommendations.
298. The UK welcomed progress on the topic and thanked Australia and Monaco for funding the report but shared concerns on the recommendations due to remaining uncertainties. He supported the development of the highest possible environmental guidelines and standards at the ISA.
299. South Africa observed that the findings were inconclusive on the degree of impact on species and supported a precautionary approach to deep-sea mining to ensure minimal impact on migratory species, their prey, and their ecosystems.
300. The EU highlighted its Biodiversity Strategy, which stated that deep-sea mining could not be explored until the impacts and risks were fully understood and it can be demonstrated that no serious harm to the environment would take place. The EU also supported a precautionary approach.
301. Panama reiterated the call for a moratorium on deep-sea mining.
302. Germany did not support licensing of deep-sea mining exploration and called for a precautionary pause until the adoption of a set of rules within the ISA framework of the ISA to ensure any deep-sea mining activities do not have any harmful effects on the marine environment. Cyprus aligned with Germany, supporting a precautionary pause.
303. Norway also expressed concerns about the report, noting the existence of newer research and reports, but said it could "take note of" the report. Poland also said it could not endorse the report but could further discuss the issue in the Aquatic WG.
304. The Deep-Sea Conservation Coalition (DSCC) agreed with Parties' concerns, stressing that determining whether mitigation measures could prevent harm to ecosystems, marine species, and the environment was not possible. She observed the proposed measures did not meet a precautionary, science-based approach.
305. Brazil requested discussing textual proposals in the Aquatic WG, a position supported by the EU, the UK, Germany, Cyprus, Poland, and WWF.
306. The COW Chair said the topic would be further discussed in the Aquatic WG.

Item 25.3 Marine Area-based Conservation Management

Item 25.3.1 Priorities for Area-based Conservation of Marine Migratory Species

307. The Secretariat introduced documents [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.25.3.1](#) *Priorities for Area-based Conservation of Marine Migratory Species*, [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.25.3.1/Add.1](#) *ScC Comments*, and [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Inf.25.3.1a-c](#).

308. Supporting the resolution, South Africa recognized that Important Marine Mammal Areas (IMMAs), Important Shark and Rays Areas (ISRAs), Important Marine Turtle Areas (IMTAs), Ecologically and Biologically Significant Areas (EBSAs), Important Bird Areas (IBAs), and other similar scientific frameworks were key advisory tools for guiding spatial conservation and management, including for marine spatial planning and the design of marine protected areas and any other areas outside marine protected areas (MPAs). She highlighted the Southern Coastal and Shelf Waters of South Africa IMMA, noting ongoing research on CMS-relevant species and associated habitats.
309. New Zealand recognized the success of marine sea turtle conservation efforts and mentioned an ISRA established in 2025 in New Zealand. New Zealand noted increased concern for manta rays in the Oceania region.
310. Argentina highlighted that national fisheries research institutions provided information through cartilaginous fish and commercial fleet data. She noted concrete management measures and important fisheries management across jurisdictions including between Argentina and Uruguay. She pointed to a permanent ban on shark fishing, restricted trawling, and managing reproduction of cart species, including sharks.
311. Kenya supported science-based spatial identifiers and said the technical tools detailed in the document helped advance GBF Target 3. Kenya supported linking the BBNJ with national efforts and blue corridors.
312. Brazil supported the overall direction on IMTAs marine turtle areas and noted the value in strengthening the scientific identification of areas. He said they contributed to environmental impact assessment (EIA) processes, including under the BBNJ Agreement. He highlighted the role of coastal and marine ecosystems, coral reefs, and seagrass beds, and supported strengthened synergies with other international efforts.
313. UNEP supported the priorities identified for area-based conservation, highlighting the role of the Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans, particularly their Protocols on Specially Protected Areas and Biodiversity, which provide regional legal and governance frameworks for the establishment and management of MPAs, ecological networks, and other area-based management tools. UNEP supported the conservation of important areas for migratory species within national jurisdictions and can contribute to ensuring coherence and complementarity between area-based management measures adopted within national jurisdictions and those adopted in areas beyond national jurisdiction, including under the BBNJ Agreement, particularly regarding ecological connectivity.
314. ACCOBAMS proposed adding a reference to Resolution 9.20, adopted by the ACCOBAMS MOP on area-based measures for cetacean conservation.
315. The COW Chair recalled that a Party had to support any proposal put forward by an observer. Monaco supported the ACCOBAMS proposal.
316. WWF noted the importance of IMTAs and their centrality in supporting the IUCN MTSG, the WWF-coordinated Blue Corridors for Turtles initiatives, and the need to apply consistency among tools. She also emphasized their importance for marine spatial planning, particularly in areas beyond national jurisdiction.
317. The Dominican Republic noted her country was the first in the Caribbean region to achieve the 30x30 target on MPAs and stressed that blue corridors for the protection of marine turtles.

318. Australia proposed that the comments from the ScC reflected in UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.25.3.1/Add.1 be incorporated into the document.
319. IWC stressed the importance of regional fisheries bodies for gathering data for the identification of areas, as well as for monitoring and management.
320. Ocean Care supported this work area, the resolution, and draft Decision. She encouraged the use of CMS-relevant data and tools to help inform the designation of area-based management tools under the BBNJ Agreement and, more generally, the building of meaningful synergies between CMS and BBNJ to support the implementation of the conservation commitments embedded in the BBNJ Agreement.
321. SPREP said that IMMAs, IBAs, and ISRAs had all been initiated in the Pacific Ocean to support protected area identification and management of threats. She explained that SPREP risk assessments found that four of the five marine turtle species in the Pacific were at risk of extinction within a generation. She welcomed the criteria and identification process for Important Marine Turtle Areas (IMTAs) developed by the IUCN SSC Marine Turtle Specialist Group (MTSG) and the availability of the IMTA Guidance Document on the MTSG website. She noted initiation of an EU-funded project on identifying IMTAs to support collaboration across the Pacific islands and increase protection for these threatened species.
322. The COW Chair suggested the Aquatic WG further consider this issue, which the COW agreed to.

Item 25.3.2 Vessel Strikes

323. The Secretariat introduced document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.25.3.2/Rev.2](#) *Vessel Strikes* and recommended the COP adopt the draft Decisions.
324. The UK proposed an addition to the text to reflect similar work already underway for cetaceans under the IWC, clarifying that any CMS-led guidance should apply to species “not subject to existing advice from the IWC”. IFAW and Ocean Care supported this proposal.
325. South Africa supported efforts to promote ship strike risk assessment in ship hot spots, improved monitoring, reporting and data sharing, and integration of ship strike mitigation into marine spatial planning. South Africa urged close cooperation with IWC, port authorities, and the shipping industry to ensure guidelines and protocols align.
326. Kenya called for a technical bridge between CMS, IWC, and International Maritime Organization (IMO), saying mitigation measures must move beyond voluntary guidelines to be integrated into IMO safety mitigation protocols.
327. The EU proposed changes to the text to reflect ongoing work on the topic by IWC and IMO and recommended inclusion of text on the benefits of CMS aligning with IWC and IMO on the issue.
328. The COW Chair said the topic would be referred to the Aquatic WG.

Item 25.3.3 Conserving Seamount Ecosystems

329. Panama, on behalf of Monaco and Panama, introduced document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.25.3.3](#) Conserving Seamount Ecosystems. She said the proposal was aligned with the Samarkand SPMS, particularly Targets 2.1 and 2.2, and recommended the COP adopt the draft Decisions.
330. Many Parties recognized the ecological importance of seamounts as critical habitats, including Monaco, Peru, Ecuador, Dominican Republic, Brazil, the EU, and Fiji. Ocean Care, DSCC, Bird Life, IFAW, WCS, WWF, IUCN, and the Brazilian Humpback Whales Institute also stressed the vital role of seamounts.
331. Costa Rica highlighted the importance of seamount protection for both migratory species and for maintaining sustainable fisheries and said CMS was an ideal platform to make progress on protection. IUCN also highlighted CMS as uniquely placed to protect seamounts through the lens of migratory species. Brazil highlighted seamounts' role in supporting fisheries. Fiji said support for seamounts could contribute to the GBF.
332. The Dominican Republic drew attention to the importance of baseline data and supported increased data sharing.
333. Norway suggested two small text changes to note the entry into force of the BBNJ Agreement and to encourage coordination with Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs).
334. Argentina stressed terminology should align with the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and RFMOs.
335. Australia proposed text amendments to ensure alignment with BBNJ objectives and language agreed to by the UN General Assembly as well as language agreed within RFMO processes. Australia also requested to suggest a new paragraph in the WG.
336. The EU suggest broadening the wording to emphasize coordinated action through relevant global processes.
337. The COW Chair referred the topic to the Aquatic WG for further discussion.

Item 25.4 Marine Mammals

Item 25.4.1 Conservation Priorities for Cetaceans

338. The Secretariat introduced document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.25.4.1/Rev.1](#) *Conservation Priorities for Cetaceans*, [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.25.4.1/Add.1](#) *ScC comments*, and [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Inf.25.4.1a-c](#), noting it had not yet been discussed in the Aquatic WG.
339. Argentina supported cooperation with the IWC but said the currently proposed wording in the document did not incorporate sufficient safeguards to prevent duplication of work. She supported amending the text to better ensure complementarity and avoid duplication of CMS and IWC mandates. The Dominican Republic supported Argentina's statement.

340. The UK supported the proposal to investigate the development of a joint work programme with the IWC Secretariat on the conservation of cetaceans, noting the existing MOU had already led to excellent collaboration between the two. He said a formal work programme could build on existing collaboration.
341. The EU noted the crucial role of cetaceans in ecosystem functioning but also highlighted threats from climate change and underwater noise. He underscored coordinated science-based action, including with ACCOBAMS and ASCOBAMS, building on existing expertise and avoiding duplication of work, and strengthening the role of CMS on threats posed by chemicals to cetaceans.
342. South Africa commended the Secretariat for identifying the critical stressors facing these migratory marine mammals. As a Range State to numerous cetacean species, she highlighted South Africa's: significant expansion of MPAs; the deploying of new acoustic technology to better track marine species and manage noise-related threats, particularly in sensitive nursery areas like the southern right whale aggregation sites; successful testing of gear modifications, such as sinking groundlines, to mitigate entanglements in the trap fishery; and finalization of its National Coastal Climate Change Adaptation Plan to address shifting migratory patterns and prey availability caused by climate change. She encouraged the Secretariat to support capacity building, data sharing, and technology sharing and said collaborative frameworks that support long-term monitoring and enforcement were required for effective implementation among developing countries.
343. The COW Chair referred the issue to the Aquatic WG for further consideration.

Item 25.4.2 Cetacean Action Plan

344. The Secretariat introduced [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.25.4.2](#) *Cetacean Action Plan* and UNEP/CMS/COP15/Inf.25.4.2a and b.
345. There were no comments and the COW agreed to forward the document to the Plenary for adoption.

Item 25.5. Marine Turtles

346. The Secretariat introduced document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.25.5](#) *Marine Turtles*, [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.25.5/Add.1](#) *ScC comments*, and UNEP/CMS/COP15/Inf.25.5 a and b.
347. Kenya highlighted ongoing work under CMS marine turtle instruments, particularly the Indian Ocean and South-East Asia (IOSEA) MOU, and acknowledged progress achieved in improving the conservation status of several populations. She noted threats posed by fisheries bycatch, climate change, coastal development, pollution, and habitat degradation, as well as the need for further research on vulnerable early life stages. She supported strengthening protection and management of nesting beaches, and emphasized the importance of enhanced cooperation, improved reporting, and increased technical and financial support to facilitate effective implementation of conservation measures, including the Hawksbill Turtle Single Species Action Plan (SSAP). She expressed reservations regarding decisions directed to non-Party Range States, noting such States cannot be obligated to undertake actions. Australia agreed with Kenya on the difficulty of asking non-Party Range States to implement action.

348. Australia asked that comments made by the ScC be incorporated into the document. She suggested that the Secretariat consider alternative reporting mechanisms and cycles to streamline the reporting process and reduce the burden on the Secretariat. For example, she said that, as the Intergovernmental Oceanic Commission (IOC) was the responsible for developing the Hawksbill SSAP, they could receive and analyse the reports. Thus, she suggested deleting reference in the draft Decision to reporting “once every intersessional period” to retain more flexibility in reporting.
349. New Zealand noted her country was a Range State for the Hawksbill turtle, but that they did not nest in New Zealand; thus, bycatch was low and there was no trade.
350. Ghana called for strengthened regional action among Range States to ensure effective conservation and to secure future of marine turtles.
351. Senegal reaffirmed its strong commitment to the conservation of marine turtles and shared its efforts to monitor and protect turtles during the breeding season. Senegal hoped for future progress on the West African Turtles MOU with the Secretariat.
352. The Dominican Republic said it had recorded a new impact on marine turtles, from contact with small vessels involved in tourism, which disturbs turtles’ visits to their coasts.
353. The COW Chair said the Secretariat would prepare a CRP.

Item 25.6 Fish

Item 25.6.1 Freshwater Fish

354. The Secretariat introduced document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.25.6.1/Rev.1 Freshwater Fish](#).
355. Peru and Senegal supported the draft Decisions.
356. Uganda expressed great concern about the attribution of three species of fish (*Anguilla bengalensis*, *Anguilla bicolor*, and *Anguilla mossambica*) attributed to Uganda that have never been recorded in its waters. Uganda requested its name be deleted in association with these fish.
357. Brazil proposed a small addition to the preambular paragraph to recognize the important role of small-scale fisheries.
358. WCS welcomed the document and supported the focus on technical, governance, and expert support and coordination with other conventions and partners.
359. The EU said it would submit comments regarding certain fish species listed for The Netherlands and Belgium. The EU also proposed language to emphasize the importance of exchanging monitoring and surveillance data and information sharing on conservation actions.
360. IUCN welcomed recognition of rivers as essential migratory corridors and the inclusion of migratory fishes in the CMS Appendixes, underscoring that maintaining free-flowing rivers was critical for feeding, spawning, and nursery habitats.
361. The Cow Chair referred the discussion to the Aquatic WG.

Youth Statement

362. Youth representative Sofia Pieczykolan, Brazil, delivered a statement on behalf of youth. She stressed youth inclusion in public policy was not only about being heard but encompassed having a real influence and being able to actively participate in decision-making, where youth were not only present but truly considered.