



**CONVENTION ON  
MIGRATORY  
SPECIES**

UNEP/CMS/Resolution 11.23 (Rev.COP15)  
Original: English

**CONSERVATION IMPLICATIONS OF ANIMAL CULTURE AND SOCIAL LEARNING**

Adopted by the Conference of the Parties at its 15<sup>th</sup> Meeting (Campo Grande, March 2026)

*Recognizing* that many species of mammals, birds and fish, and some reptiles, show evidence of social learning or non-human culture (hereafter 'culture'),

*Concerned* that species that exhibit social learning face unique conservation challenges,

*Aware* that the social transmission of knowledge between individuals may increase population viability and provide opportunities for the rapid spread of innovations and thus adaptation to environmental change, highlighting the importance of maintaining 'cultural capacity' within and between populations for the development and transmission of adaptive cultural behaviours,

*Further aware* that this transmission of knowledge may also increase the impact of anthropogenic threats or can operate synergistically with anthropogenic threats to compound their impact on a specific social group or more widely,

*Recognizing* that the impact of removal of individuals from populations of species that exhibit social learning may have consequences beyond simply a reduction in absolute numbers,

*Also recognizing* that populations of some species are better delineated by cultural behaviour than genetic diversity or geographic isolation,

*Grateful* for the groundbreaking work of the CMS Animal Culture Expert Working Group<sup>1</sup> since its establishment in 2015,

*Conscious* that the scientific investigation of culture and social learning in vertebrates is a rapidly evolving field which can be informed by local and Indigenous ecological knowledge, and that collaboration between CMS and IUCN in this field will be instrumental for informing conservation targets for migratory species, and

*Considering* that the CMS Family is in a strong position to take account of this emerging information in its work,

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<sup>1</sup> Established as 'Expert Working Group on Animal Culture and Social Complexity' through Resolution 10.15 *Global Programme of Work for Cetaceans (2012-2024)*; now called 'Expert Working Group on Animal Culture and Social Learning'

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

1. *Welcomes* the guidance developed by the Animal Culture Expert Working Group as output of its workshops and as published open access in the 2025 *Royal Society Philosophical Transactions B* issue on 'Animal culture: conservation in a changing world';
2. *Encourages* Parties to consider culturally transmitted behaviours when determining conservation measures;
3. *Further encourages* Parties and other stakeholders to support actions and research that investigate the conservation implications of animal culture and social learning for a diverse range of taxa, including fish and reptiles;
4. *Also encourages* Parties and other stakeholders to assess anthropogenic threats to vertebrate species on the basis of evidence of interactions of those threats with social structure and socially learned behaviours;
5. *Urges* Parties to consider cultural processes as relevant for the conservation of all species for which there is evidence for social learning, applying a precautionary approach to the management of populations for which there is evidence that influence of culture and social learning may be a conservation issue, and to support conditions for 'cultural capacity' in these species, where appropriate;
6. *Encourages* Parties and other stakeholders to gather and publish pertinent data for advancing the conservation management of these populations and discrete social groups;
7. *Encourages* Parties and other stakeholders to give specific attention to threats (including human–wildlife conflict) and good practices that might be specific to any particular cultural groups that have been identified;
8. *Requests* the Scientific Council to maintain the intersessional Expert Working Group on Animal Culture and Social Learning, which considers the conservation implications of social learning and animal culture for all taxonomic groups covered by the Convention;
9. *Invites* Scientific Councillors with relevant expertise to engage in this work; and
10. *Requests* the Animal Culture Expert Working Group to report its findings and any proposals for future work through the CMS Scientific Council to each meeting of the Conference of the Parties.