



## CONVENTION ON MIGRATORY SPECIES

UNEP/CMS/Resolution 11.31 (Rev.COP15)

Original: English

### ILLEGAL AND UNSUSTAINABLE TAKING OF MIGRATORY SPECIES

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

*Concerned* that illegal and unsustainable taking<sup>1</sup>, use and trade of migratory species is a growing threat to migratory species and the benefits they provide to ecosystems and people,

*Recognizing* that wildlife crime and offences continue to take place at an unprecedented scale with global reach, as wildlife trafficking continues to be highly lucrative with little risk of prosecution and thus ranks right behind arms and drug smuggling and human trafficking worldwide,

*Further recognizing* that the illegal and unsustainable taking and trade of migratory species can increase the risk of zoonoses and pathogen spillover from wildlife to humans, other wildlife, livestock, and other animals,

*Concerned* that illegal and unsustainable taking of species cause an immense loss of revenue for States and local communities, severely damage livelihoods and ecosystems, negatively impact on sustainable utilization and tourism, and in some cases, lead to threats to human lives and fund organized criminal and other violent groups,

Acknowledging that “The Future We Want”, adopted at Rio+20 and endorsed by consensus of the United Nations General Assembly, “recognize[d] the economic, social and environmental impacts of illicit trafficking in wildlife where firm and strengthened action needs to be taken on both the supply and demand sides”,

*Noting* the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) 2019 Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, which highlighted direct overexploitation as one of the two key drivers of biodiversity loss,

*Noting* that the United Nations General Assembly has adopted seven Resolutions on wildlife trafficking, most recently Resolution A/79/L.96, adopted on 30 June on *Tackling Illicit Trafficking in Wildlife* which, inter alia, calls upon Member States to “take decisive steps at the national level to prevent, combat and eradicate the illegal trade in wildlife strengthen appropriate capacity for law enforcement agencies to monitor and investigate illegal online wildlife trade; work in cooperation with relevant organizations to identify and promote the use of solutions that utilize technology, including artificial intelligence, to support criminal prosecutions; recognize and support the crucial role played by rangers and guards, across the world, in the fight against illicit wildlife trafficking; and increase the capacity of local communities to pursue sustainable and, as appropriate, alternative livelihood opportunities, in order to reduce the risk of illicit trafficking in wildlife”,

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<sup>1</sup> In this document, the term “illegal and unsustainable taking” refers to taking that may be illegal, unsustainable, or both.

*Welcoming* the discussions taking place under the auspices of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime on strengthening the international legal framework for international cooperation to prevent and combat illicit trafficking in wildlife,

*Taking note* of the United Nations Environment Programme Governing Council Decision 27/9 on advancing justice, governance and law for environmental sustainability,

*Recognizing* the role of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) as the principal international instrument for ensuring that international trade in specimens of wild animals and plants does not threaten the species' survival,

*Welcoming* the adoption by the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) Resolution on illegal trade in wildlife (UNEP/EA.1/3), acknowledging the role of CMS in countering such illegal activities and including the call for strengthened cross-agency cooperation,

*Further welcoming* the continued work of the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime (ICWC), which includes UNODC, the Secretariat of CITES, INTERPOL, the World Customs Organization (WCO) and the World Bank, as an important collaborative effort to strengthen enforcement,

*Noting* the declaration and agreed urgent measures of the African Elephant Summit (Gaborone, December 2013), the Declaration of the Elysée Summit for Peace and Security in Africa (Paris, December 2013), the London Declaration on Illegal Wildlife Trade (London, February 2014), the anti-poaching declaration of African Ministers of Tourism and United Nations World Tourism Organization (Berlin, April 2014), and the declaration of the Conference to Combat Wildlife Trafficking and Illicit Trade (Dar es Salaam, United Republic of Tanzania, May 2014), and the Declaration "Our ocean, our future: united for urgent action" of the 2025 United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development (Nice, France, June 2025),

*Welcoming* the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework adopted under the Convention on Biological Diversity, which includes numerous Goals and Targets related to the conservation and sustainable, safe and legal use of wildlife, with particular relevance to migratory species, in particular Targets 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 9,

*Also welcoming* the Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction,

*Recognizing* the specific role of CMS in the global response to the illegal and unsustainable taking of migratory species by strengthening population management in situ, including population monitoring, awareness-raising, capacity-building, national law enforcement and creation of community-based approaches, both within Range States and across national borders where illegal and unsustainable taking of wildlife is often hardest to control,

*Further recognizing* the ongoing work of the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement (AEWA) to provide mechanisms for structured, coordinated and inclusive decision-making and implementation to ensure the sustainable use of species, while maintaining them at a favourable conservation status, and the work of the Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of Migratory Birds of Prey in Africa and Eurasia (Raptors MOU) to ensure sustainability of any harvest of Saker Falcons including through development of an adaptive management framework under the CMS Saker Falcon Global Action Plan,

*Acknowledging* the work under the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP) in providing best practice advice and strengthening regulation towards reducing the take of seabirds in the southern hemisphere by closely working with CMS Parties, Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs) and non-Parties,

*Further recalling* Art. III (5) of the Convention, which obliges Range States of Appendix I-listed migratory species to prohibit the taking of animals belonging to such species, except for specific and limited purposes, namely scientific research, enhancement of propagation or survival, traditional subsistence use, or in extraordinary circumstances, with such exceptions being precise in content and restricted in space and time, and ensuring that any such taking does not operate to the disadvantage of the species,

*Noting* the relevant guidance and success stories available across several of the CMS instruments to achieve the recovery of migratory species,

*Recalling* Target 3 of the Samarkand Strategic Plan for Migratory Species 2024–2032, which focuses on addressing illegal and unsustainable taking of migratory species,

*Further recalling* that CMS Parties have adopted Resolutions on minimizing the risk of poisoning to migratory birds (Resolution 11.15 (Rev.COP15)), on preventing the illegal killing, taking and trade of migratory birds (Resolution 11.16 (Rev.COP15)) and on the Central Asian Mammals Initiative (Resolution 11.24 (Rev.COP15)), which includes a programme of work for the conservation of large mammal migrations in Central Asia providing, inter alia, for anti-poaching and other actions to minimize wildlife crime,

*Acknowledging* the work of the Task Force on Illegal Killing, Taking and Trade of Migratory Birds in the Mediterranean, the Asia Pacific Illegal Taking of Migratory Birds Intergovernmental Task Force, and the South-West Asia Illegal Taking of Migratory Birds Intergovernmental Task Force,

*Recognizing* that illegal and unsustainable taking of migratory species are not confined to terrestrial and freshwater biomes but also have an impact on the marine environment, especially in the High Seas but also in areas within national jurisdiction, where bycatch of non-target species constitutes a severe threat to migratory species, in addition to illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing (IUU),

*Further recognizing* the efforts of Parties to develop and implement legislative provisions and programmes and to ensure that any utilization of migratory species, where it occurs, is sustainable, recognizing that in some circumstances utilization of species may contribute to conservation and is of importance to the subsistence and culture of traditional communities, and

*Welcoming* the close collaboration between CMS and CITES in working to ensure that the taking and use of species is legal and sustainable, including measures to eradicate illegal and unsustainable taking of migratory species, and calling for a new CMS-CITES Joint Work Programme 2026-2030 to be adopted which addresses this area of work,

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

1. *Encourages* Parties and non-Parties to take measures to increase awareness among relevant authorities, including enforcement, legislative, prosecution and judicial authorities, the private sector and the public of illegal and unsustainable taking of migratory species and the negative impacts that it has on them and the benefits they provide;
2. *Urges* Parties and non-Parties to identify and share information on the drivers and scale of illegal and unsustainable taking of migratory species within their jurisdiction and to develop and implement conservation strategies to effectively address such activities, including through engagement with local communities;
3. *Recommends* that Parties and non-Parties provide greater information and training for their enforcement, prosecution and judicial authorities with respect to the significant threat of illegal and unsustainable taking of and trade in migratory species; including integrating training on wildlife crimes and offences into the national curricula of relevant training academies/schools where possible;
4. *Encourages* Parties, non-Parties and stakeholders to increase national efforts on population estimates, developing and maintaining science-based management and monitoring plans for CMS-listed species, where appropriate using other systems of knowledge as well;
5. *Urges* Parties and non-Parties to develop and implement effective and transparent systems for collecting data on the scale of exploitation of migratory species, and make public accurate data on the scale of take of CMS-listed species;
6. *Calls* on the Scientific Council to work with relevant stakeholders regularly to analyze data on the scale of take of CMS-listed species to identify those species for which cumulative take is clearly unsustainable and make recommendations;
7. *Urges* all Parties to take all necessary actions to prevent the illegal and unsustainable take of CMS-listed species as well as conduct regular reviews to identify gaps in protection, compliance, enforcement and prosecution and ensure that their legislation fully implements the provisions of the Convention, including penalties for wildlife crime that are effective, act as a deterrent, and reflect the gravity of the offence, and provide for the confiscation of specimens taken in violation of the Convention;
8. *Urges* Parties to use, where feasible, new technologies, methods and tools for enforcement to prevent illegal taking of migratory species;
9. *Urges* Parties to engage with coordinating bodies of key user groups such as hunting and fishing organisations to increase compliance with the laws and regulations, promote accurate reporting of take, implement sustainability principles, and provide training on species identification;
10. *Urges* Parties and *invites* non-Parties to strengthen national and transboundary law enforcement, through participation, when possible, in transnational enforcement networks, with emphasis on interdisciplinary cooperation and intelligence-sharing between relevant stakeholders, such as rangers, wildlife management authorities, border authorities, customs, police and the military;

11. *Suggests* that Parties and non-Parties establish cooperative bilateral and multilateral arrangements for the management of shared wildlife populations and habitats with common shared boundaries, in order to prevent illegal and unsustainable taking, use, sale and trafficking;
12. *Encourages* Parties and non-Parties, funding agencies and CMS Partners to support capacity-building nationally, across borders and in the High Seas for rangers, border authorities, customs, police, the military and other relevant bodies;
13. *Calls upon* Parties, and non-Parties to support and recognize community-based approaches and approaches based on multiple systems of knowledge that contribute to reducing and ideally eliminating the illegal and unsustainable taking of migratory species;
14. *Urges* Parties to treat the prevention of any illegal and unsustainable take of Appendix I species as a priority, and to report back at subsequent COPs;
15. *Suggests* the enacting of national laws that prohibit the possession and trade in illegally obtained wildlife specimens and products, including those obtained in contravention of legislation in their country, and ensuring that confiscated wildlife specimens are disposed of in the best possible manner aligned with the purposes of the Convention, and that does not stimulate further illegal trade;
16. *Recommends* that Parties and non-Parties work to reduce demand for illegally and unsustainably obtained wildlife specimens and products within their domestic markets and utilize CMS to exchange knowledge and lessons learned regarding successful demand-side reduction strategies;
17. *Urges* that Parties and relevant funding agencies provide adequate, predictable and timely financial support for implementing the provisions of this Resolution;
18. *Calls upon* Parties and other Range States that have not already done so, to sign the CMS instruments relevant to species particularly affected by illegal and unsustainable taking of migratory species, and to implement the relevant provisions and guidance on best practice of those instruments;
19. *Further calls upon* the Scientific Council to facilitate the use of best practice developed across relevant CMS instruments, including ensuring a consistent approach to addressing unsustainable take through adaptive harvest management;
20. *Welcomes* the cooperation between the Secretariat and the members of the Collaborative Partnership on Sustainable Wildlife Management (CPW) and encourages the Secretariat to continue working closely with the CPW;
21. *Establishes* a CMS Global Initiative on Illegal and Unsustainable Taking of Migratory Species, with the aim of supporting the implementation of this Resolution, associated Decisions and activities under CMS instruments related to illegal and unsustainable taking of migratory species, and supporting Parties in coordinated actions to prevent, monitor and reduce illegal and unsustainable taking of species;
22. *Urges* Parties and non-Parties to strengthen awareness and cooperation with relevant national agencies on wildlife trade and trafficking and to monitor trade of CMS-listed species currently not listed in the CITES Appendices; and

23. *Encourages* the Secretariat, Parties, non-Parties, intergovernmental, international and national organizations, multilateral environmental agreements and established networks, such as the ICCWC and each of its partner agencies (CITES, INTERPOL, UNODC, the World Bank and the World Customs Organization (WCO)), UNEP, Regional Fishery Management Organizations (RFMOs), Regional Fisheries Bodies (RFBs) and regional Wildlife Enforcement Networks (WENs), the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) and the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC), to collaborate closely, as well as through engaging in the Global Initiative on Illegal and Unsustainable Taking of Species and in specific task forces, such as the avian task forces to address illegal and unsustainable taking and trade.