



CONVENTION ON MIGRATORY SPECIES

UNEP/CMS/Resolution 14.16 (Rev.COP15)

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ECOLOGICAL CONNECTIVITY

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

Recalling Resolutions 10.3 and 11.25 on the role of ecological networks in the conservation of migratory species,

Also recalling Resolutions 12.7 (Rev. COP13) *The Role of Ecological Networks in the Conservation of Migratory Species* and 12.26 (Rev.COP13) *Improving ways of addressing ecological connectivity in the conservation of migratory species*,

Bearing in mind that ecological connectivity (hereafter “connectivity”) is the unimpeded movement of species, connection of habitats without hinderance and the flow of natural processes that sustain life on Earth,

Recognizing that opportunities for dispersal, migration and genetic exchange among wild animals depend on the quality, extent, distribution and connectivity of relevant habitats, which support both the normal cycles of these animals and their resilience to change, including climate change,

Welcoming UN General Assembly Resolution 75/271 ‘Nature knows no borders: transboundary cooperation – a key factor for biodiversity conservation, restoration and sustainable use’ that stresses the need to maintain and enhance connectivity across ecosystems,

Recalling Article III.4 of the Convention under which Parties shall endeavour to conserve and, where feasible and appropriate, restore the habitats of Appendix I species, which are of importance in removing the species from danger of extinction and to prevent, remove, compensate for or minimize, as appropriate, obstacles that seriously impede the migration of the species, and Article V.5 under which Agreements in respect of Appendix II species should provide for maintenance of a network of suitable habitats “appropriately disposed in relation to the migration routes”,

Noting the importance of ecological connectivity for the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF), the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, the UNESCO World Heritage Convention and other multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs),

Also recalling Article I.1 of the Convention under which “range” is defined for the purposes of the Convention as “all the areas of land or water that a migratory species inhabits, stays in temporarily, crosses or overflies at any time on its normal migration route”, recognizing that in the case of marine species the range may extend beyond national jurisdictional limits,

Further recalling Goal 2 of the Samarkand Strategic Plan for Migratory Species 2024–2032, “habitats and ranges of migratory species are maintained and restored, supporting their connectivity” and Targets 2.1, 2.2. and 2.3 which aim to identify monitor, manage and restore important habitats for migratory species and ensure that these habitats are well-connected and are able to support migratory species throughout their life cycles,

Recognizing that to meet their needs throughout their life history stages migratory species depend on a range of habitats across their migratory ranges,

Further recognizing that sites that perform a critical role in a wider system, such as core areas, corridors, restoration areas and buffer zones, may be linked by strategies that, through a concept of ecological networks, address habitat fragmentation and other threats to migratory species,

Recognizing in particular the importance of rivers and their associated ecosystems as corridors in the context of climate change, for facilitating flows of water and migrations of aquatic species,

Further recognizing that habitat destruction and fragmentation are among the primary threats to migratory species, and that the identification and conservation of habitats of appropriate quality, extent, distribution and connectivity are thus of paramount importance for the conservation of these species in terrestrial, inland water, coastal and marine environments,

Noting that the Convention on Biological Biodiversity (CBD) defines “inland waters” as aquatic influenced environments located within land boundaries and includes the full range of wetland ecosystems as defined by the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands,

Also noting the importance of aquatic connectivity, recognizing that some migratory freshwater and marine species require connectivity between inland waters and marine and coastal environments to complete their life cycle,

Deeply concerned that habitats for migratory species are becoming increasingly fragmented across terrestrial and aquatic biomes,

Further concerned that infrastructure projects that constitute barriers to migration with negative impacts on migratory species, including at population scale, continue to be authorized and built, including at critical points in migratory routes,

Acknowledging the absence of an agreed, single, robust indicator to measure different aspects of ecological connectivity, limited clarity on what “well-connected” means in the context of the KMGBF and the current limitations of existing indicators in measuring connectivity outside protected area networks and for marine habitats in particular,

Welcoming ongoing efforts to identify more robust and additional connectivity indicators that address current limitations and to develop methodologies to measure them,

Aware that several initiatives aimed at promoting ecological connectivity are already in existence at different scales, including bird flyway initiatives, protected area programmes under the auspices of relevant MEAs, and initiatives that extend to areas that are not protected,

Further aware that the success of many relevant initiatives and programmes depends fundamentally on, inter alia, effective regional and international cooperation, including transboundary cooperation, among governments at national and local levels, different conventions, NGOs and other actors,

Considering that migratory species merit particular attention in designing and implementing initiatives aimed at promoting ecological networks, in order to ensure that the areas selected are sufficient to meet the needs of such species throughout their life cycles and migratory ranges,

Further considering that the designation of protected areas across very large areas is not always possible and that additional wider landscape measures usually need to be applied in order to address and mitigate anthropogenic changes at the wider landscape scale,

Recognizing that transboundary area-based conservation measures, including networks of protected and other conserved areas, can play an important role in improving the conservation status of migratory species by contributing to ecological networks and corridors and promoting connectivity, particularly when animals migrate for long distances across or outside national jurisdictional boundaries,

Recognizing the importance of ecological connectivity for achieving multiple environmental, social and economic priorities that depend on well-functioning ecosystems and the services they provide, as well as its important role in mitigating climate change and strengthening the resilience of ecosystems and migratory species to the impacts of climate change,

Aware of the importance of integrating approaches to ecological connectivity in national and transboundary environmental and spatial planning, including under the auspices of other MEAs, such as National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (under the Convention on Biological Diversity), and National Adaptation Plans (under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change),

Acknowledging that since its entry into force in 1983, the Convention on Migratory Species has provided the primary specialized intergovernmental framework for cooperative efforts on issues of connectivity in this context, and that the implementation of relevant provisions under the Convention forms a key contribution to the achievement of objectives adopted in other intergovernmental fora, including Goals 14 and 15 of 'Transforming our World: the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development', Goal A and Targets 1, 2, 3 and 12 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and the Ramsar Strategic Plan 2026-2034,

Noting in particular that Goal A and Targets 2, 3 and 12 of the KMGBF include effective language on ecological connectivity, and that it is implicit in Target 1,

Further acknowledging the UNCCD COP15 'Land, Life and Legacy' Declaration, which encourages "Parties to avoid, reduce, and reverse land degradation by accelerating the implementation of existing national commitments to achieve land degradation neutrality by 2030, taking into account the connectivity of ecosystems",

Recognizing the important role played by existing ecological networks and corridors worldwide in the conservation of migratory species, particularly through the role of these in supporting connectivity, including the networks reviewed for COP11 in document UNEP/CMS/COP11/Doc.23.4.1.2 as well as those operated at national level,

Aware of the importance of promoting cooperation through the competent international and regional organizations, where appropriate, to seek the adoption of conservation measures to support ecological connectivity across terrestrial, inland water, marine and coastal environments,

Recalling Resolution 12.21 (Rev. COP15) *Climate Change and Migratory Species* which highlights the critical importance of connectivity for conservation and management of migratory species, the Decision Framework in its Annex 2 that guides actions in support of migratory species experiencing climate change-induced range shifts, the guidance on the interpretation of the term 'barrier' in CMS/UNEP/COP15/Inf.28.12d developed by the Climate Change Working Group that provides conceptual clarity on the barriers that impede the movement of migratory species, and thus the need for the Scientific Council to consider these work areas in parallel,

Acknowledging that the practical approach to the identification, designation, protection, restoration and effective management of critical sites for maintaining, enhancing and restoring connectivity will vary between terrestrial, aquatic and avian species, as well as from one taxonomic group to another or even from species to species, and that while the flyway approach provides a useful framework to address habitat and species conservation for migratory birds along migration routes, similar approaches to articulating connectivity may be applicable to other taxa,

Also acknowledging the nearly 10,000 sites of international importance for migratory species highlighted in the *State of the World's Migratory Species* report which are Key Biodiversity Areas identified using a standardized set of criteria applied across different migratory taxa,

Further acknowledging that flyways constitute a specific type of migration corridor, that migratory birds depend on widely separated areas for their survival, and that measures designed to conserve these networks require focus on the breeding grounds, stopover sites, non-breeding areas and feeding, resting and moulting places, as well as on preventing and addressing threats at these locations and on the routes between them,

Welcoming Resolution 12.11 (Rev.COP15) *Flyways*, the strategic review of ecological networks (UNEP/CMS/COP11/Doc.23.4.1.2) and a compilation of case studies illustrating how ecological networks have been applied as a conservation strategy to different taxonomic groups of CMS-listed species (UNEP/CMS/COP11/Inf.22),

Recognizing that there is a critical need globally to scale up knowledge and action to maintain, enhance and restore hydrological and marine connectivity, to ensure the conservation of aquatic migratory species,

Welcoming the adoption of 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 and the selection of ecological connectivity as an indicative criterion for identifying important areas in Annex 1 of the Agreement,

Further welcoming ongoing efforts to identify Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas (EBSAs), Important Shark and Ray Areas (ISRAs), Important Marine Mammal Areas (IMMAS) and Important Marine Turtle Areas (IMTAs),

Acknowledging the tools contained in Annex 1 of UNEP/CMS/COP14/Doc.30.2.1.2 as contributions to the provision of a sound scientific basis for action and to the fostering of greater public awareness concerning connectivity issues,

Also acknowledging the interconnections between social and ecological systems as a critical component of ecological connectivity and in adopting a whole-of-society approach to connectivity conservation,

Welcoming the report on available scientific evidence, experiences, and recommendations for addressing connectivity in the conservation of migratory species, contained in document UNEP/CMS/COP12/Inf.20,

Further welcoming the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services' (IPBES) ongoing assessment of integrated biodiversity-inclusive spatial planning and ecological connectivity,

Welcoming the efforts made by the Secretariat, in collaboration with Parties and partners, to promote connectivity in various fora and platforms,

Welcoming the Global Partnership on Ecological Connectivity (GPEC), which aims to ensure that connectivity is maintained, enhanced and restored by addressing related challenges, promoting informed actions and decisions based on the best available knowledge and latest science and technology, and improving the effectiveness and coherence of implemented conservation measures, and the role the Partnership plays in supporting the CMS Secretariat in meeting its mandates related to ecological connectivity,

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

1. *Urges* Parties and *invites* others to give special attention to the issues highlighted in this Resolution when planning, implementing and evaluating actions designed to support the protection, conservation, restoration and effective management of migratory species, both at national level and in the context of regional and international cooperation, including in particular when:
 - (i) devising strategic conservation objectives, so that these may more often be expressed in terms of whole migration systems, and in terms of the requirements for the functioning of the migration process itself, as opposed to merely the status of populations or habitats;
 - (ii) identifying, prioritizing, designating, restoring and managing protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, both within and beyond areas of national jurisdiction, taking account, inter alia, of the best available science, the need for connectivity to be a key factor in the definition of appropriate conservation management units, including at the flyway, swimway, landscape or seascape scale, and the need for actions to be addressed to the connections between places as well as to the places themselves;
 - (iii) identifying, strengthening and expanding, based on the best available science, ecological networks and corridors to conserve migratory species worldwide and enhancing their design and functionality;
 - (iv) evaluating the sufficiency and coherence of ecological networks in functional and qualitative terms as well as in terms of extent and distribution, recognizing the merit of sharing experiences and best practices on this issue;
 - (v) monitoring and assessing the effectiveness of the protection, restoration and management of the areas and networks referred to in the present paragraph;
 - (vi) monitoring and assessing the evolution of ecological connectivity over time;
2. *Calls* on Parties and Signatories of CMS Memoranda of Understanding to consider the network approach and ecological connectivity in the implementation of existing CMS instruments and initiatives;

3. *Invites* Parties to review their national legislation relating to conservation of biological diversity to determine whether it adequately reflects the need to ensure ecological connectivity, and, where necessary, to amend such legislation accordingly;
4. *Encourages* Parties to adopt and implement those guidelines developed within CMS and other relevant processes, including the 'Technical Guidance on Systematic Conservation Planning with Connectivity', which aim to promote connectivity and halt its loss, for example through the provision of practical guidance to avoid infrastructure development projects disrupting the movement of migratory species;
5. *Encourages* Parties and *invites* others, working with all relevant stakeholders in national and local government authorities, local communities, the private and other sectors, to intensify efforts to address threats to the conservation status of migratory species and the integrity of their connected habitats, which are manifested as threats to connectivity and ecological integrity, including barriers to migration, anthropogenic additional mortality, fragmented resources and disrupted processes, genetic isolation, population non-viability, altered behaviour patterns, shifts in range caused by climate change or depletion of food or water resources, inconsistencies in management across and beyond national jurisdictions, and other factors;
6. *Requests* the Secretariat to coordinate the sharing and review of information on connectivity within and between the instruments of the CMS Family, biodiversity-related MEAs and other actors, and, where appropriate, facilitate joint attention by such instruments, agreements and organizations at strategic level to such matters;
7. *Encourages* Parties and other Range States, when identifying areas of importance to migratory terrestrial, avian and aquatic species, to take into account and make explicit by description, schematic maps or conceptual models, the relationship between those areas and other areas that may be ecologically linked to them, either in physical terms, for example as ecological corridors, or in other ecological terms, for example as breeding areas related to non-breeding areas, stopover sites, feeding and resting places;
8. *Also invites* Parties and other Range States and relevant organizations to collaborate to identify, designate, restore and effectively maintain comprehensive and coherent ecological networks of protected sites, ecological corridors, including through long distance trails and their associated green corridors, and other adequately managed sites of international and national importance for migratory animals while taking into account best available science, resilience to change, including climate change, and existing ecological networks and corridors;
9. *Urges* Parties to identify and promote ecological networks and other connectivity tools, including long distance trails, for example through the development of further site networks within the CMS Family or other fora and processes, that use scientifically robust criteria to describe and identify important sites for migratory species and promote their internationally coordinated protection, conservation management and restoration, with support from the CMS Scientific Council, as appropriate;
10. *Urges* Parties and other Range States and partners to make full use of all existing complementary tools and mechanisms for the identification, designation and effective management of critical sites and site networks for migratory species and populations, including through further inscription of UNESCO World Heritage Sites (including transboundary serial nominations) and, for migratory waterbirds and other migratory wetland, inland water and marine and coastal dependent taxa, the designation and effective management of Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Sites);

11. *Encourages* Parties to maintain, enhance and restore free-flowing rivers and connected floodplains of particular importance to migratory freshwater fishes and other migratory freshwater obligate species, including through basin-scale planning and transboundary cooperation where appropriate;
12. *Urges* Parties and *invites* Range States to strengthen the restoration and effective management of ecological connectivity through existing network sites and their further development, and through the designation and management of additional sites based on the best available science;
13. *Encourages* Parties to support existing ecological connectivity initiatives within the CMS Family of instruments;
14. *Further encourages* Parties and relevant organizations, when implementing systems of protected areas and other relevant site- and area-based conservation measures, to:
 - a) select areas in such a way as to address the needs of migratory species as far as possible throughout their life cycles and migratory ranges;
 - b) set network-scale objectives for the conservation of these species within such systems, including by restoration of fragmented and degraded habitats and removal of barriers to migration; and
 - c) cooperate regionally and internationally for the achievement of such objectives;
15. *Invites* Parties, in collaboration with other MEAs, NGOs, local governments and other stakeholders, as appropriate, to enhance the quality, monitoring, management, extent, distribution and connectivity of protected areas and OECMs across terrestrial, inland waters, and coastal and marine ecosystems, in accordance with relevant international law including UNCLOS, so as to address as effectively as possible the needs of migratory species throughout their life cycles and migratory ranges, including their need for habitat areas that offer resilience to change, including climate change, taking into account wider landscapes, seascapes and migratory routes;
16. *Requests* the Secretariat to support Parties in the establishment and management of conservation areas, networks and corridors, including existing protected areas and Transfrontier Conservation Areas;
17. *Invites* Parties and other States as well as relevant regional and international fora, as appropriate, to explore the applicability of ecological networks and other connectivity tools to marine migratory species, especially those that are under pressure from human activities such as over exploitation, oil and gas exploration/exploitation, fisheries, infrastructure and other coastal development;
18. *Calls* upon Parties, as appropriate, to apply the concept of Transfrontier Conservation Areas (TFCA), meaning an area or component of a large ecological region that straddles the boundaries of two or more countries and is within their national jurisdiction, which may encompass one or more protected areas, as well as multiple resource use areas, in their transboundary conservation efforts;
19. *Encourages* Parties to identify transboundary habitats of CMS-listed species, which could be considered as TFCAs, for cooperation and possible bi- or multilateral agreements between neighbouring Range States, to improve the conservation of the habitats and species concerned;

20. *Invites* non-Parties to collaborate closely with Parties in the management of transboundary populations of CMS-listed species, including by joining CMS and its associated instruments, to support the enhancement of ecological connectivity globally;
21. *Urges* Parties to address immediate threats to national sites important for migratory species within ecological networks and corridors, making use, where appropriate, of international lists of threatened sites, such as the 'World Heritage in Danger' list of UNESCO, the 'Montreux Record' of Ramsar and the 'Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas (IBAs) in Danger' list of BirdLife International;
22. *Also urges* Parties to adequately monitor ecological connectivity in a standardized manner to allow early detection of any deterioration in quality of sites, rapid identification of threats and timely action to maintain ecological integrity, making use, where appropriate, of existing and emerging monitoring methods;
23. *Requests* the Secretariat to bring this Resolution to the attention of the Convention on Biological Diversity, 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, the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, and in relation to relevant nominations of World Heritage Sites under the World Heritage Convention including within a multinational context of migration;
24. *Further requests* the Secretariat, subject to availability of resources, to work with Parties and the Scientific Council and other international and regional organizations, including the Convention on Biological Diversity and other relevant stakeholders, in promoting the protection, conservation, restoration and effective management of critical sites, ecological networks and corridors, and ecological connectivity in general;
25. *Invites* the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, the World Heritage Convention, 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 (BBNJ Agreement), the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) and others to collaborate in identifying and protecting important sites such as Key Biodiversity Areas (including Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas), Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas (EBSAs) and Wetlands of International Importance to enhance ecological connectivity;
26. *Also invites* Parties, other States and relevant organizations to provide support for the long-term maintenance and application of large-scale databases on migratory species distributions, movements and abundance such as those included in Annex 1 of UNEP/CMS/COP14/Doc.30.2.1.2 and any additional ones resulting from the survey contained in Annex 2 of the same document;
27. *Further invites* the Global Environment Facility (GEF) in making its funding disbursement decisions to give support to activities that will assist in taking forward the areas of work defined in the present Resolution, in particular to support improved habitat management and restoration as well as enhanced connectivity to facilitate migration, through the use of tools and resources developed specifically for the conservation of migratory species in their flyway, swimway, migratory path or ecological network and corridor context, and to support the sharing of information and experience;

28. *Welcomes* the Global Partnership on Ecological Connectivity, which fosters collective and coherent actions that maintain, enhance and restore connectivity across terrestrial, inland water, marine and coastal ecosystems that are important for migratory species;
29. *Calls* on MEAs, regional and other intergovernmental organizations and relevant NGOs to collectively and synergistically support the implementation of the present Resolution, including by sharing information and collaborating in the technical work and through partnerships such as the Global Partnership on Ecological Connectivity;
30. *Requests* the Secretariat to continue their role in supporting the Global Partnership on Ecological Connectivity and the achievement of its objectives;
31. *Requests* the Secretariat to report to the Conference of the Parties at each of its ordinary meetings on the progress in implementing this Resolution; and
32. *Repeals*:
 - a) Resolution 12.7 (Rev.COP13) *The Role of Ecological Networks in the Conservation of Migratory Species*, and
 - b) Resolution 12.26 (Rev.COP13) *Improving Ways of Addressing Ecological Connectivity in the Conservation of Migratory Species*.