



**CONVENTION ON
MIGRATORY
SPECIES**

UNEP/CMS/Resolution 15.5

Original: English

CONSERVING SEAMOUNT ECOSYSTEMS

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

Recognizing the significance of seamounts as essential habitats and navigational landmarks for various migratory marine species, including those listed in Appendix I and Appendix II of the Convention, such as whales, dolphins, chondrichthyans, turtles and seabirds,

Recalling the fundamental principles of the Convention as expressed in Article II, which encourages “taking individually or in co-operation appropriate and necessary steps to conserve such species and their habitat”, and Article I (1), which defines “range” for 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”,

Emphasizing Resolution 14.16 (Rev.COP15) *Ecological Connectivity*, which urges CMS Parties to identify critical areas like Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas (EBSAs) and consider ecological linkages when designing and implementing conservation measures, including in areas beyond national jurisdiction through collaboration,

Recalling United Nations General Assembly Resolutions 61/105 (2006) and 64/72 (2009), 66/68 (2011), 71/123 (2016), 77/118 (2022), which calls upon States to protect vulnerable marine ecosystems, including seamounts, from destructive fishing practices in areas beyond national jurisdiction, and further calls upon States and regional fisheries management organizations and arrangements to prevent significant adverse impacts on vulnerable marine ecosystems, including seamount ecosystems through prior impact assessments, the application of the precautionary approach, and adoption of conservation management measures including area based measures where appropriate,

Also recalling the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) COP Decision VII/5 (2004) on marine and coastal biodiversity, urging Parties to work together to protect seamounts both within and beyond national jurisdiction,

Noting IUCN Recommendation 3.099 and IUCN Resolution 08.32, which call for the protection of seamounts and other vulnerable marine ecosystems from destructive fishing practices, in accordance with international law,

Acknowledging the Important Marine Mammal Areas (IMMAs) and Important Shark and Ray Areas (ISRAs) initiatives, among others, developed under IUCN Commissions and recognized by CMS as tools to assist Parties in identifying key habitats and areas of conservation concern, and noting that these processes have increasingly identified seamount ecosystems as essential habitats for migratory species, both within and beyond national jurisdiction,

Expressing concern over the negative impacts of destructive fishing practices that affect migratory species on seamounts, as well as the increasing pressures on these ecosystems that jeopardize their ecological functions and interactions with migratory species,

Further expressing concern over climate change impacts, including ocean acidification, deoxygenation, and warming, as well as additional pressures from pollution, on seamount ecosystems,

Stressing the urgent need for collaborative and coordinated efforts by nations, regional groups, global institutions, and other stakeholders for the conservation and sustainable management of vulnerable marine ecosystems, including seamounts,

Affirming the commitment of Parties to implement the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework adopted under the Convention on Biological Diversity in 2022 (CBD/COP/DEC/15/4), including Targets 3, 4, 7 and 10, which hold the most relevance in the context of this Resolution,

Recognizing the interrelationship between the mandates of CMS and those of relevant regional fisheries bodies or arrangements,

Recognizing that the protection of seamounts in areas beyond national jurisdiction requires the combined efforts of Parties, other Range States, international organizations, and relevant fisheries bodies,

Welcoming the entry into force and increasing ratifications of the Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity in Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction,

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

1. *Encourages* Parties to acknowledge the importance of seamount ecosystems as vital habitats and navigational landmarks for migratory marine species, including those listed in Appendices I and II of the Convention, such as whales, dolphins, chondrichthyans, turtles and seabirds, and to recognize their significance for indigenous peoples and local communities, who are holders of traditional knowledge;
2. *Urges* Parties, consistent with international law and within their respective competencies, to work individually and collaboratively to prioritize the protection of seamount ecosystems both within and beyond their national jurisdiction, from multiple threats, including but not limited to overfishing and destructive fishing practices to enhance the conservation status of migratory species and protect the ecological integrity of seamount ecosystems, recognizing their environmental connectivity;
3. *Calls upon* Parties, other Range States, and relevant organizations and regional bodies to prioritize seamounts in implementing the Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity in Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ Agreement), including promoting coherence and complementarity among relevant international frameworks and bodies with competence in areas beyond national jurisdiction;
4. *Encourages* Parties and other Range States to conduct collaborative research on seamounts to improve understanding of their biodiversity, vulnerability, and ecological functions, in relation to migratory species. This knowledge should inform decision-making for the protection of seamounts;

5. *Calls upon* Parties to actively engage, as appropriate, with indigenous peoples and local communities, as well as other traditional knowledge holders, scientists, civil society, and relevant economic sectors to enhance public awareness and understanding of the importance of seamount ecosystems to the health and life cycle of migratory species populations;
6. *Requests* the Secretariat to promote international cooperation and coordination for the conservation and sustainable management of seamounts that support migratory species, through existing regional mechanisms and collaboration with other relevant international instruments and processes, such as the Convention on Biological Diversity, Regional Fisheries Management Bodies, and the BBNJ Agreement; and
7. *Encourages* Parties that are members of regional fisheries bodies, as well as other relevant regional bodies, as appropriate, to prioritize the protection of seamounts from destructive fishing practices and support the effective implementation of United Nations General Assembly resolutions relating to deep sea fisheries, including through impact assessments, encounter protocols, area-based management measures and periodic review of measures adopted to prevent significant adverse impacts on seamounts ecosystems and the migratory species that depend on these habitats.