



TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE AQUATIC MAMMALS WORKING GROUP

(as approved by COP15)

Background

CMS Appendix I and II list many migratory aquatic mammal species. CMS COPs have also adopted several Resolutions that cover aquatic mammals, their habitats and the threats to which they are exposed. The Aquatic Mammals Working Group was established in 2011 through Resolution 10.15 *Global Programme of Work for Cetaceans*.¹

Purpose

- A. The primary objective of the Working Group is to support the delivery of relevant tasks contained in the Programme of Work of the Sessional Committee.
- B. It will receive its specific mandates through Decisions at each COP. In addition, the Working Group will support the implementation of relevant Resolutions and Decisions directed to the Scientific Council.
- C. The Working Group will support the implementation of aquatic mammal-related goals and targets within the Samarkand Strategic Plan for Migratory Species 2024–2032, as well as the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and the further development of its monitoring framework.
- D. The Working Group will provide a platform to discuss and exchange information and scientific findings on aquatic mammal-related matters.

Membership

- A. Membership of the Working Group is open to:
 - a. Members of the Scientific Council;
 - b. Party representatives;
 - c. Representatives of the scientific or advisory bodies of all CMS aquatic mammal agreements;
 - d. Representatives of relevant MEAs and NGOs;
 - e. Other relevant experts.
- B. The Working Group strives to maintain a balance of gender, regional representation and areas of expertise.
- C. The involvement of Working Group members is entirely on a voluntarily basis.
- D. If and when needed, additional experts interested in contributing to the objectives of the Working Group may occasionally be invited to join meetings or to support specific tasks.

¹ Resolution 10.15 was repealed and consolidated into Resolution 14.9 at COP14. Resolution 14.9 requests the Scientific Council to continue supporting this working group.

Organization of Work

- A. The Working Group will be chaired by the COP-Appointed Councillor for Aquatic Mammals. If the Chair has to leave her/his position, a new Chair will be appointed from among the remaining Scientific Council members of the Working Group.
- B. The Working Group will mainly operate electronically, making use of a dedicated workspace on MS Teams, supplemented by email communication if necessary. Meetings (in-person or virtual) will be held as required, with in-person meetings generally held as part of Sessional Committee meetings.
- C. The Chair of the Working Group will report on progress to the Sessional Committee.
- D. The Secretariat will support and facilitate the coordination of the activities and the organization of meetings of the Working Group.

Duration

The Working Group will remain in place until the Sessional Committee decides that its work is complete or an alternative arrangement is made.