



# CONVENTION ON MIGRATORY SPECIES

UNEP/CMS/COP15/Report

Original: English

15<sup>th</sup> MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES  
Campo Grande, Brazil, 23 to 29 March 2026

## REPORT OF THE 15<sup>TH</sup> MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF MIGRATORY SPECIES OF WILD ANIMALS

### INTRODUCTION

1. At the invitation of the Government of Brazil, the 15<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS COP15 or COP15) convened in Campo Grande, Brazil, from 23 to 29 March 2026. COP15 convened under the theme “Connecting Nature to Sustain Life”, underscoring the importance of ecological connectivity in conserving migratory species.
2. A High-Level Segment convened on 22 March 2026. The event was moderated by His Excellency (HE) Mr João Paulo Ribeiro Capobianco, Deputy Minister of the Environment and Climate Change, Brazil. HE Ms Marina Silva, Minister of the Environment and Climate Change, Brazil, stressed the importance of sustaining biodiversity across borders and protecting migratory species by safeguarding connected ecosystems. Two panels convened on the importance of wetlands and infrastructure. During a Presidential Segment, HE Mr Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, President of Brazil, signed three decrees to expand protected areas in Brazil.
3. The Conference was attended by representatives of the following 78 Parties and 4 non-Parties:

**Parties:** Algeria, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Belgium, Benin, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Chile, Cook Islands, Costa Rica, Côte d’Ivoire, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Estonia, Eswatini, Ethiopia, the European Union, Fiji, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Hungary, India, Ireland, Italy, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Liberia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Mauritania, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, the Netherlands, New Zealand, North Macedonia, Norway, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Portugal, the Republic of Moldova, Samoa, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Slovakia, Somalia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland, Uganda, Ukraine, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom, the United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan and Zimbabwe.

**Non-Parties:** Mexico, Suriname, the United States of America and Venezuela.

4. Observers from governmental and non-governmental bodies or agencies were also represented. The complete list of participants appears as Annex 3 to this report.

Opening and closing statements, made available to the Secretariat, are included in Annex 2 to this report.

## I. OPENING OF THE MEETING AND ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

### ITEM 1. OPENING OF THE MEETING

#### CEREMONIAL OPENING OF THE MEETING

5. The Opening Ceremony, held on Monday 23 March 2026, comprised ceremonial, cultural and official elements, and a welcome to Campo Grande, Brazil. A video presentation, showcasing migratory species and their habitats and the Pantanal biome, preceded the opening statements.

#### WELCOMING ADDRESSES

6. HE Ms Marina Silva, Minister of the Environment and Climate Change, Brazil, thanked the people of Campo Grande for hosting CMS COP15 and welcoming participants. Ms Silva highlighted the Pantanal as an environment that has multiple meanings for people and a place of transitions where life is in constant flux. Ms Silva reflected on pressures like climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution that threaten migratory species and food and water quality, calling for courageous action to support all migratory species.
7. Ms Elizabeth Mrema, Deputy Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), thanked the Government of Brazil for hosting CMS COP15, observing that the Pantanal, as the world's largest tropical wetland ecosystem, was a living example of ecological connectivity in action. Ms Mrema stressed the urgency of coordinated international action and shared responsibility to protect migratory species. Ms Mrema expressed UNEP's sincere appreciation to Ms Amy Fraenkel for her dedicated leadership as CMS Executive Secretary since 2019, noting she had greatly strengthened the Convention's work and its community. Ms Mrema then introduced Mr Andrew Raine, the new CMS Executive Secretary as of 1 June 2026.
8. Ms Amy Fraenkel, CMS Executive Secretary, expressed appreciation to the President of Brazil, HE Mr Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, and the Government of Brazil for hosting COP15 at the gateway to the Pantanal, a critical habitat for migratory species. She also thanked the Government of Uzbekistan for their leadership during the COP14 Presidency. Ms Fraenkel stated that the COP15 theme, "Connecting Nature to Sustain Life", underscored that ecological connectivity was not only essential for migratory species, but supported all life on earth, as well as our economies, livelihoods, health and security. She recalled the launch, at COP14, of the first [State of the World's Migratory Species](#) report, and said subsequent work underpinned much of the documentation for discussions taking place at COP15. She mentioned the [2026 Interim Report of the State of the World's Migratory Species](#), prepared for CMS by UNEP–World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP–WCMC), and the *Global Assessment of Migratory Freshwater Fishes*, both of which were to be launched at COP15. Ms Fraenkel also mentioned the publication of studies on the impacts of deep-sea mining and the effects of climate change on migratory species, among others.
9. Ms Fraenkel highlighted international cooperation success stories, including the recovery of the green turtle, the saiga antelope and the emperor goose. She said the COP15 agenda had a record number of species proposed for listing under the Convention's Appendices. On threats to migratory species, she highlighted overexploitation, including both targeted taking and incidental capture, and stressed

that illegal and/or unsustainable taking for domestic purposes was a greater threat than international trade. Ms Fraenkel mentioned that a new global initiative on taking of migratory species would be launched during the COP, and highlighted bycatch as the greatest threat to endangered aquatic species. Ms Fraenkel also recognized habitat destruction and fragmentation as a major threat, observing that CMS was a leader on ecological connectivity. Target 3 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), she added, could be achieved through well connected and effectively managed systems of protected areas and other conservation measures.

10. Mr Mauricio Lyrio, Secretary for Energy, Climate and Environment, Brazil, welcomed everyone to Brazil. He explained that flyways, wetlands and forest corridors, which acted as ecological highways, were crucial for migratory species, and that protecting them required climate, biodiversity and development policies. He stressed restoration, enforcement and community engagement as critical for ecosystem services. However, he emphasized that financial mechanisms, capacity-building and technical assistance, based on the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities (CBDR), must match political ambition to ensure connectivity. He said the Pantanal exemplified how climate change, biodiversity loss and vulnerability converge, and that conserving migratory species goes beyond borders, leading to positive development outcomes and strengthened ecosystems.
11. A cultural performance, with an indigenous dance by the Terena People, was followed by a statement by Adriane Quilombola, an indigenous leader from the Campo Grande region, who highlighted the threats to the Pantanal wetlands.
12. Dr Alexandre Zerbini, a Brazilian scientist, highlighted the importance of cetaceans as indicators of ocean health and the critical role of international cooperation in protecting migratory species. He called for moving from commitment to implementation, including by reducing bycatch through fishing gear modification, managing ship traffic to reduce underwater noise, and ensuring conservation actions are equitable and inclusive of coastal communities. Mr Zerbini stressed that sufficient data exists; CMS now needs to scale action to match the magnitude of the challenge.
13. Ms Tatiana Neves, a Brazilian biologist, said the case of the albatross appropriately reflected the COP15 theme, noting the species was highly adapted to marine life, travelling from New Zealand all the way to the Brazilian coast. She explained that albatrosses interact with fishermen by following boats to scavenge for food, resulting in their accidental capture or death. She urged global efforts and international cooperation to solve this problem, and suggested one solution was for fishers to work at night. She noted survival of the species depended, in part, on COP15 Decisions, and hoped this week would be guided by cooperation and a deep sense of purpose.
14. Mr Marcelo Loureiro, a renowned Brazilian instrumentalist, performed several musical pieces, including "Pantanal", an anthem for the region.

### **OPENING OF THE PLENARY SESSION**

15. Mr Otabek Babamuradov, Uzbekistan, on behalf of the COP14 Presidency, chaired the opening of the plenary meeting in accordance with Rule 12 of the Rules of Procedure, which states that a representative of the current COP Presidency must act as Chair of the meeting until the COP elects a new Chair at its first session.
16. Mr Babamuradov delivered introductory remarks. He said the Pantanal was a vital ecological artery for the Americas. He commended advances made on the Samarkand

Strategic Plan for Migratory Species (Samarkand SPMS) 2024-2032 and regional cooperation within the Central Asian Mammals Initiative (CAMI), with the adoption of a comprehensive Work Programme for 2026-2032. He explained that Uzbekistan had expanded protected areas to 14 per cent of its territory, launched a US\$ 10 million Bio-heritage project and had become the first Central Asian country to submit national targets aligned with the GBF. Mr Babamuradov then declared COP15 open.

## ITEM 2. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

17. The Chair recalled Rule 12 of the Rules of Procedure for the election of officers, including the Chair of the COP and the Chair of the Committee of the Whole (COW) – who also serves as Vice-Chair of the COP – and the Vice-Chair of the COW.
18. The Conference elected the following officers:  
  
**Conference of the Parties**  
Chair: HE João Paulo Ribeiro Capobianco (Brazil)  
Vice-Chair: Mr Khalid Cherki (Morocco)  
  
**Committee of the Whole:**  
Chair: Mr Khalid Cherki (Morocco)  
Vice-Chair: Ms Inka Gnittke (Germany)
19. The Chair then declared the Bureau of the Conference complete in accordance with the Rules of Procedure. Along with the newly elected officers, the Bureau comprised of all the members of the Standing Committee (StC) and the Chair of the Scientific Council (ScC).
20. HE Mr João Paulo Ribeiro Capobianco proceeded to take up his seat as the newly elected COP Chair.

## ITEM 3. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND MEETING SCHEDULE

### Item 3.1 Provisional Agenda and Documents

### Item 3.2 Provisional Annotated Agenda and Meeting Schedule

21. Items 3.1 and 3.2 were taken together. The Chair presented documents [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.3.1/Rev.1](#) *Provisional Agenda and Documents* and [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.3.2/Rev.1](#) *Provisional Annotated Agenda and Meeting Schedule*. There were no comments, and the agenda was adopted.

## ITEM 4. RULES OF PROCEDURE OF THE COP

22. The Chair informed delegates that the applicable [Rules of Procedure](#) for this meeting would be those adopted by COP13. There were no comments, and the Rules of Procedure were adopted.

## ITEM 5. ESTABLISHMENT OF IN-SESSION COMMITTEES

### Item 5.1 Credentials Committee

23. The COP Chair recalled that Rule 3.3 of the Rules of Procedure provided for the establishment of a Credentials Committee comprised of not more than five representatives from at least three regions to examine the credentials submitted by Parties to the Secretariat and report thereon to the Meeting. In line with the COP's practice of electing one representative from each of the five CMS regional groups, each region was called on to nominate their representative.
24. The following nominations were made:

**Oceania:** Australia

**Africa:** Zimbabwe

**Asia:** Saudi Arabia

**Europe:** the Netherlands

**South and Central America, and the Caribbean:** Peru

25. There being no objections, the COP confirmed the constitution of the Credentials Committee.

### Item 5.2 Committee of the Whole

26. In accordance with Rule 6 of the Rules of Procedure, the COP established the COW.

## ITEM 6. ADMISSION OF OBSERVERS

27. The COP Chair introduced document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.6](#) *Admission of Observers*, stating that, consistent with the criteria set out in the Convention and the Rules of Procedure, UN specialized agencies, the International Atomic Energy Agency, and any State not a Party to the Convention may be represented by observers at COPs. The COP was invited to admit international and national agencies or bodies listed in the document that had informed the Secretariat of their desire to be represented at the meeting by observers. As there were no objections, the COP Chair confirmed that organizations listed in Document 6 were permitted to be represented at COP15.

## II. REPORTS

### ITEM 7. REPORT OF THE OUTGOING COP PRESIDENCY

28. Uzbekistan reported on activities of the outgoing COP Presidency since COP14, including initiatives focused on expanding protected areas, strengthening ties with global environmental agreements, and regional cooperation under the Samarkand SPMS.

## **ITEM 8. REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SUBSIDIARY BODIES OF THE CONVENTION**

### **Item 8.1 Standing Committee**

29. The United Kingdom (UK), acting as StC Chair, presented the report on activities undertaken by the Committee since COP14. The report highlighted strengthened measures against illegal taking and species conservation programmes, including the International Single Species Action Plan (SSAP) for the Sooty Falcon and the West African Vulture Conservation Action Plan, along with new Working Groups (WGs) and recommendations that had led to their adoption. Constraints were highlighted, including delays in recruitment; this, however, resulted in a positive trust fund balance, and the subsequent approval of the movement of funds between calendar years to enable Secretariat staff to travel to the COP. Information on the first Review Mechanism file reviewed by the StC concerning Albania was also highlighted, including an overview of the actions undertaken upon agreement of StC57. This included a follow-up letter to the Government of Albania, issuing a warning and calling for the halt of activities until mitigation measures were addressed. The UK's participation as an observer in the recruitment process for the new Executive Secretary was also highlighted.

### **Item 8.2 Scientific Council**

30. The ScC Chair, Ms Narelle Montgomery, reported on ScC activities since COP14, explaining that the vast majority of COP15 papers were either actively produced or reviewed by the ScC during the intersessional period. Ms Montgomery highlighted a number of important areas including: the production of the interim State of the World's Migratory Species report; the identification of a suite of avian species that may benefit from inclusion in the CMS Appendices; the considerable work undertaken to refine and strengthen the CMS Flyways agenda; and the identification of an important gap in relation to seabirds, with a proposal to formally recognize marine flyways under CMS. She mentioned the leadership shown by the COP-appointed Councillor for Climate Change, Mr Des Thomson, in re-establishing the Climate Change WG, convening an expert workshop in Edinburgh in 2025, and advancing technical guidance on climate barriers and adaptation strategies. The need for a global transition to renewable energy in a manner that minimizes impacts on migratory species and protects ecological connectivity was also underscored. On freshwater fish, Ms Montgomery thanked the COP-appointed Councillor for Fish, Mr Zeb Hogan, for his leadership in bringing this issue to COP15, highlighting the global assessment, which identifies 349 transboundary freshwater fish species that may meet CMS-listing criteria. Currently, only 24 are listed.
31. Ms Montgomery cited additional activities advanced through WGs and task forces addressing, for example, illegal hunting and unsustainable take, animal culture and deep-sea mining. Ms Montgomery acknowledged Ms Ruth Cromie, COP-appointed Councillor for Wildlife Health, who would be stepping down after COP15, necessitating the appointment of a new COP-appointed Councillor. In addition, the COP was expected to appoint an additional expert to share the responsibilities of the COP-appointed Councillor for Terrestrial Mammals.
32. Ms Amy Fraenkel gratefully acknowledged the work undertaken by Ms Montgomery as ScC Chair for two terms.

## ITEM 9. REPORT OF THE DEPOSITARY

33. Germany, as the Depositary, presented document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.9 Report of the Depositary](#), noting that the CMS currently had 133 Parties. Since the last Report of the Depositary in January 2025, Germany had received no notifications regarding accessions or withdrawals. Germany informed the COP that the Czech Republic had notified CMS of the withdrawal of its reservations in regards to the amendments to the Appendices of the Convention adopted at COP14. The Depositary was not aware of any other reservations and pointed to efforts to increase country accession to the Convention.

## ITEM 10. STATEMENTS

### Item 10.1 Parties, including Regional Economic Integration Organizations (REIOs)

34. The COP Chair invited Parties to make brief statements and encouraged them to provide written statements.
35. India highlighted the establishment of an initiative for the Central Asian Flyway, and provided updates on progress since COP14, including the creation of a national project management team to support national implementation.
36. Cyprus, on behalf of the EU and its Member State Parties to the CMS, highlighted the implementation of the GBF as a key tool in conserving migratory species. The EU welcomed the entry into force of the Agreement on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biodiversity beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ Agreement), noting it will also play an important role in the protection of migratory species. The EU highlighted their proposal for a SSAP for the Tope Shark in the North-East Atlantic and Mediterranean Sea and the Multi-species Action Plan (MsAP) to conserve African, Eurasian and Australian bustards, expressing hope that Parties would support them.
37. Panama, on behalf of South and Central America and the Caribbean, highlighted growing coordination among countries in the region, including on jaguar conservation, strengthened action for marine mammals, significant progress on shark and whale conservation through national and regional plans, progress on freshwater fish conservation, and implementation of action plans and strengthened routes for migratory birds. They appealed for increased multilateral financing, including through innovative mechanisms.
38. New Zealand, on behalf of Oceania, discussed national and regional progress to conserve migratory species, including seabirds, shorebirds, marine mammals, and fish and turtles that migrate across oceans.
39. Zimbabwe, on behalf of Africa, recognized the challenges faced by wild animals that need to cross borders for their survival. It noted that the African Union Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (2023-2033) connected Africa's prosperity to its rich biodiversity and unique wildlife. The importance of regional and global cooperation was underscored, including partnerships to prevent illegal killing and trade, and the role of indigenous peoples and local communities, and women.
40. Brazil highlighted its role as one of the world's most biodiverse countries and home to migratory species such as the jaguar, the Amazonian catfish, and migratory sharks and birds. It recalled that during the High-Level Segment, HE Mr Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, President of Brazil, had signed three decrees, which, together, expanded protected areas in the country by 148,000 hectares and strengthened connectivity between them.

Brazil also noted it had submitted proposals to include shark and bird species in the CMS Appendices, including the Pantanal seedeater in Appendix II. It highlighted the support for the MsAP for Amazonian Migratory Catfish, developed in partnership with Amazon Basin countries, including from those that were not yet Parties to the Convention. Brazil called for deepening the dialogue on resource mobilization within CMS to respond to the needs of all migratory species, including those that move exclusively among developing countries, noting that implementing conservation measures in these countries is often constrained by more limited capacities and resources. Brazil stressed that progress at COP15 on financing, capacity-building and technology transfer could play a decisive role in advancing the universalization of the Convention.

41. Ukraine lamented destruction of natural habitats in its territory by the Russian Federation and noted it remains committed to CMS implementation.

#### **Item 10.2 Non-Parties**

42. There were no statements from non-Parties.

#### **Item 10.3 CMS Agreements**

43. Representatives of the following CMS Agreements made short statements summarizing progress made during the intersessional period since CMS COP14: Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP), as reflected in [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Inf.10.3.2](#); Agreement on the Conservation of Small Cetaceans of the Baltic, North-East Atlantic, Irish and North Seas (ASCOBANS), as reflected in document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Inf.10.3.1](#); Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and Contiguous Atlantic Area (ACCOBAMS), as reflected in [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Inf.10.3.3](#); Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (AEWA), as described in [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Inf.10.3.4](#); and the Agreement on the Conservation of Populations of European Bats (EUROBATS), as described in [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Inf.10.3.5](#).

#### **Item 10.4 IGOs and NGOs**

44. The International Whaling Commission (IWC) acknowledged its close collaboration with CMS and shared its institutional evolution over its 80-year history. IWC looked forward to further strengthening synergies with CMS.
45. The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) welcomed its long-standing partnership with CMS, highlighting the CMS-CITES Joint Work Programme and collaboration on many agenda items, including coordinating conservation actions for shared species like jaguars, cheetahs, lions, leopards, marine turtles, sharks and rays, the saiga antelope, and saker falcon.
46. The World Wildlife Fund for Nature (WWF) – speaking also on behalf of the Animal Welfare Institute (AWI), the Benin Environment and Education Society, Birdlife, Born Free Foundation, the Charles Darwin Foundation, the Deep Sea Conservation Coalition, Fundación Cethus, Humane World for Animals, International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW), the Irish Basking Shark Group, the Marine Research and Conservation Coalition, the Manta Trust, OceanCare, the Pan African Sanctuary Alliance, Panthera, Pro Wildlife, Save our Seas, TRAFFIC, and the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) – explained that the lack of protected and conserved areas was as a key factor in continued species decline, and welcomed CMS's

emphasis on ecological connectivity. WWF welcomed the initiatives on the illegal and unsustainable take of and trade in CMS-listed species, supported proposals to add new species to Appendices I and II, and urged Parties to take the necessary steps to scale up implementation of both CMS and the GBF.

47. The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) called for stronger alignment between CMS and the GBF to enhance and restore ecological connectivity and build resilient ecosystems, and for strengthened action on the main drivers of species decline, particularly bycatch. IUCN encouraged enhanced efforts to address human–wildlife conflict and to support nature-positive planning, including Key Biodiversity Areas, Important Marine Mammal Areas (IMMAs), and Important Shark and Ray Areas (ISRAs).
48. ICLEI–Local Governments for Sustainability highlighted the unique role of local governments in promoting and supporting the protection of migratory species through awareness-raising, regulating and reducing light pollution, restoring ecosystems or creating ecological corridors, and considering migratory species in land use planning and frameworks. ICLEI encouraged local governments to take actions in line with national targets to support Parties in protecting migratory species.
49. Born Free Foundation described how its efforts on habitat protection, community engagement, wildlife law enforcement support, and promoting coexistence between people and wildlife help advance international efforts to conserve migratory species and maintain ecological connectivity.
50. Amazon Waters Alliance highlighted the migratory catfish as emblematic of the urgent need for transboundary cooperation and stronger commitments for rivers and communities. It encouraged regional cooperation for Amazonian aquatic ecosystems.

#### **ITEM 11. REPORT OF THE UN ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME**

51. A representative of UNEP introduced document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.11](#) *Report of the UNEP Executive Director*, emphasizing UNEP’s commitment to ensuring that conservation of migratory species and connectivity are driving forces in National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs), the GBF, the Samarkand SPMS, and national and regional plans. UNEP highlighted its long-standing collaboration with CMS and welcomed CMS’s contributions to the GBF.

#### **ITEM 12. REPORT OF THE SECRETARIAT**

#### **ITEM 13. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME OF WORK 2024-2026**

52. Items 12 and 13 were taken together. Ms Amy Fraenkel reported on the Secretariat’s activities since COP14, including those in the Programme of Work (POW). Ms Fraenkel highlighted the significant amount of work undertaken to advance CMS objectives and implement the POW 2024-2026. On the Samarkand SPMS, it was explained that a StC WG had worked on the development of the monitoring framework for the Plan. On the Review Mechanism, it was reported that StC57 had reviewed its first file and agreed on next steps. The Secretariat also continued to support Parties in strengthening implementation of the Convention, with the total number of Parties participating in the National Legislation Programme growing to 70.
53. With respect to resource mobilization, Ms Fraenkel explained that the Secretariat had worked to secure and diversify funding for CMS implementation, including through the Kunming Biodiversity Fund, and had secured approximately €7 million in voluntary

contributions since COP14. She thanked those who had contributed. She also noted intensified efforts to promote accession to the Convention through targeted outreach and engagement, with several non-Party States beginning internal processes, with a view to joining CMS.

54. On transparency, accountability and efficiency, Ms Fraenkel reported that an audit of the CMS, AEWA and EUROBATS Secretariats in 2024 did not contain any findings of concern. She noted the Secretariat had implemented recommended actions to strengthen internal procedures and strategies. With respect to cross-cutting achievements, she shared accomplishments including: the launch of key modules for the Migratory Species Atlas; the finalization of the first phase of the Global Partnership on Ecological Connectivity (GPEC) and the first meeting of its partners; and the expert workshop to advance scientific understanding and policy coordination on climate change.
55. On taxonomic groups, Ms Fraenkel noted the advancement of species-focused conservation, including through the development and implementation of SSAPs for, among others, aquatic species such as the Mediterranean angelshark, European eel, Arabian Sea humpback whale, South Atlantic whale, Atlantic humpback dolphin, and the protection of hawksbill turtles in South-East Asia and the Western Pacific. Other highlights included: engagement in the implementation process for the BBNJ Agreement; strengthened efforts to combat illegal bird taking; efforts on Global Flyways and the Americas Flyways Framework; progress in supporting conservation of birds of prey; development and endorsement of the new work programmes and action plans for all species covered by CAMI; and, in cooperation with the CITES Secretariat, an in-person meeting of jaguar Range States, resulting in the development of the Regional Action Plan for Jaguar Conservation, which was approved by StC57 for consideration at this COP.
56. After completion of item 10 on Statements, the Chair adjourned the Plenary of the COP and gave way to the opening of the COW.

### **OPENING OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (COW)**

57. The COW opened on 23 March 2026, with the COW Chair, Mr Khalid Cherki (Morocco), thanking the Government of Brazil for hosting the COP and the Secretariat for their work in preparing for the Conference. He stressed the need for strict time management throughout the week and encouraged regional and coordinated statements when possible.
58. The COW Chair proposed establishing the following WGs: a Budget WG; an Aquatic WG; an Avian WG; a Terrestrial WG; and a Cross-Cutting Issues WG. These would convene to discuss items not resolved in the COW. The COW could also establish additional contact groups as needed.
59. The Parties agreed on the establishment of the following WGs – with the Secretariat appointing the Chair for each group – which would meet through the week to discuss issues that required further work and contribute to the development of Conference Room Papers (CRPs):
  - Budget WG, chaired by Holly Kelley-Weil, United Kingdom;
  - Aquatic WG, chaired by COP-appointed Councillor, Barry Baker;
  - Avian WG, chaired by COP-appointed Councillor, Rob Clay;

- Terrestrial WG, chaired by Patience Gandiwa, Zimbabwe; and
  - Cross-cutting WG, chaired by COP-appointed Councillors, Des Thompson and Ruth Cromie.
60. The COW Chair recognized that smaller delegations may not be able to attend every WG and encouraged regional coordination for input to the relevant WGs.
61. The Secretariat drew attention to two proposed changes in terminology across all relevant COP15 documents, as proposed by the ScC Chair. First, the term ‘indigenous peoples and local communities’ would be lower case in all COP documents. Second, references to the need for additional resources to undertake a proposed activity would read as ‘subject to the availability of resources’.

### III. ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY MATTERS

#### ITEM 14. BUDGET AND ADMINISTRATION

##### Item 14.1 Execution of the CMS Budget 2024-2025

62. On 23 March, in the COW, the Secretariat presented [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.14.1 Execution of CMS Budget 2024-2025](#), highlighting the status of assessed contributions for 2024 and 2025 as of 22 March 2026, distinguishing between contributions paid by 31 October 2025 (€5,187,371) and after 31 October (€593,345). For 2024, 45 Parties still had outstanding dues, and for 2025, 58 Parties had outstanding dues. Together, a combined €328,977 in contributions were still due for 2024 and 2025. Prior to 2024, as of 22 March 2026, 34 Parties were still in arrears for 2021-2023, 23 for 2018-2020, and 14 prior to 2018. An execution rate of 95 per cent for the 2024-2025 budget was noted. Parties in arrears were requested to settle their outstanding contributions.
63. It was noted that several countries had paid off their arrears but more needed to do so. It was reported that CMS had been able to effectively utilize its core budget – while aiming to remain fiscally responsible – deliver on its mandates, and multiply its impact globally through diverse partnerships.
64. On 29 March, the final COP Plenary took note of the document.

##### 14.2. CMS Budget for 2027-2029 and Programme of Work for the intersessional period between COP15 and COP16

65. This agenda item was first addressed on 23 March in the COW.
66. Ms Amy Frankel presented document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.14.2/Rev.1 CMS Budget for 2027-2029 and Programme of Work for the Intersessional Period between COP15 and COP16](#), with details of the POW set out in Annex 7/Rev.1. Ms Fraenkel explained that, while the budget was published on time in December 2025, it had to be adjusted after the UN reviewed the cost of living at the Bonn duty station in January 2026. As a result, the Secretariat produced a revised budget proposal and had to reduce some funding requests. Ms Fraenkel reviewed the three budget scenarios in the revised document and described the changes made to the original proposed budget.

67. Scenario 1, zero nominal growth, provides funding for regular staff positions, based on the updated standard salary costs with a 2 per cent increase per annum. This Scenario involves cuts to the core budget for meetings of Governing Bodies and travel, and the need for significant fundraising efforts for in-person meetings and other unfunded areas.
68. Scenario 2, zero real growth, applies the 2 per cent increase to all budget items except for the servicing of the Governing Bodies and travel for COP16. Scenario 2 includes an increased budget for StC and ScC-SC meetings; the budget for these meetings during the 2024-2026 triennium was inadequate due to the rise in the number of delegates eligible for funding and the increase in the costs of servicing meetings in Bonn. Scenario 2 includes a small amount of funding for two core Secretariat responsibilities: analysing national reports and upgrading online reporting systems; and keeping information on Range States for CMS species up to date.
69. Scenario 3, moderate growth, included funding for several key positions, including: a P2 Programme Officer for the Aquatic Unit, given the significant need for extra capacity in this area; an additional position in the Scientific Unit, originally envisioned as a P2 Programme Officer, but later revised to a P2-level contractor; and a contractor, at the G6 level, for information services, including for the website. Ms Fraenkel also stressed the need for a Documents Officer but said that this had to be cut from the revised budget, although she hoped such a position could be established through a consultancy. It was clarified that the original funding proposal was for a P2 Documents Officer and P2 Programme Officer, both of which were now converted to a contractor.
70. For the draft Resolution, Ms Fraenkel highlighted new operative text that would authorize the Executive Secretary to transfer money between years within the triennium and between meetings of Convention bodies. This adjustment would provide more flexibility and avoid having to go back to the StC.
71. There were no comments from the floor.
72. The Secretariat then introduced the POW 2026-2029, which is based on a template approved by StC56 in March 2025. The POW follows a results-based methodology linked to the goals and targets of the Samarkand SPMS, and contains specific mandates and budgets itemized by expenditure estimates. The Secretariat informed the COW that the POW would be updated during COP15 to reflect any amendments to proposed Decisions and Resolutions.
73. There were no comments or interventions on the POW.
74. On 26 March, Ms Amy Fraenkel intervened to clarify that the budget resolution included language stating that the Resolutions and Decisions adopted by the COP that established, inter alia, bodies, mechanisms or activities with financial implications not provided for in the budget were subject to available funds from voluntary contributions, and that this should be implicit throughout all the Resolutions and Decisions, whether or not the phrase “subject to the availability of resources” was explicitly mentioned.
75. On 28 March, Ms Amy Fraenkel said the Annex to the POW was still being updated and would be addressed in the afternoon.
76. Brazil suggested returning to the issue on 29 March and the COW agreed.
77. On 29 March, the COW addressed document [CRP14.2](#).

78. Brazil thanked the Budget WG Chair and the delegations for their flexibility in reaching an agreed outcome and appreciated efforts to find a balanced outcome that would enable the Secretariat to maintain its core functions and implement its mandate. Regarding arrears, Brazil stressed the importance of ensuring a practical solution that encouraged the regularization of outstanding contributions while avoiding cumulative restrictions that could reduce Parties' participation in the Convention's work. While recognizing the importance of timely payments of assessed contributions, Brazil believed the Convention should avoid punitive measures that disproportionately affect developing countries facing genuine constraints. In many cases, the issue was due to an inability to pay rather than an unwillingness. Brazil called for an outcome that addressed arrears in a constructive manner, including through continued engagement by the Secretariat, the provision of regular information to Parties, and support for payment plans where necessary. It was noted that the agreed text moved in that direction, and Brazil thanked the Budget WG for their efforts to find a way forward on arrears. Brazil also welcomed the inclusion of language on the importance of securing funds to implement the resource mobilization Decision agreed to by Parties.
79. South Africa supported Brazil, agreeing that punitive measures should not prevent participation in the Convention. It was explained that enhanced resource mobilization could increase participation in CMS and its bodies, and that the resource mobilization strategy would be defined at COP16. Observing the significant funding gap for programmes in the POW, South Africa stressed the critical need for resource mobilization in the next triennium to COP16 and beyond.
80. Senegal supported Brazil and South Africa on the need to avoid punitive measures for arrears, stressing that, while 60 Parties had the credentials that allowed them to vote, some countries in arrears were prevented from doing so; thus, a system was needed to enable participation.
81. The Netherlands supported the document and thanked everyone for achieving a consensus.
82. The document was recommended to the COP Plenary for adoption.
83. On 29 March, the final COP Plenary adopted the draft Resolution and its annexes as contained in [CRP14.2](#).

#### **Item 14.3 Resource Mobilization**

84. On 24 March, in the COW, the Secretariat introduced document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.14.3 Resource Mobilization](#), describing the two annexes and their draft amendments, both of which contained text requesting the Secretariat to explore options for strengthening the Global Environment Facility's (GEF) support for CMS, including the GEF becoming the financial mechanism for CMS.
85. Brazil said it had acceded to CMS in 2015, explaining that one reason for its late accession was that CMS lacked a financial mechanism to support developing countries. Brazil observed that the international legal framework had evolved since the adoption of CMS, noting that the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities (CBDR) guided implementation of multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs). Brazil evoked the CBDR to highlight how much more CMS could achieve if developing countries were supported more effectively. Brazil recommended establishing a dedicated financial mechanism, accompanied by a methodology for addressing needs and gaps, alongside a time-bound resource mobilization strategy. The importance of providing predictability, strengthening coordination among Parties, and ensuring clear

- timelines and monitoring mechanisms was underscored. Brazil proposed additional text stating that the Secretariat shall develop, in consultation with the StC, a financial needs assessment and a resource mobilization strategy, with particular attention to the challenges faced by developing countries in implementing the Convention, and submit it for consideration and approval at COP16.
86. Panama, Chile, Costa Rica and South Africa supported Brazil's proposal.
  87. The EU did not support the GEF becoming the financial mechanism for CMS but rather encouraged strengthening support within the GEF for CMS programmes and activities, including through increasing national coordination and providing additional guidance to the GEF.
  88. The UK supported the EU's intervention and did not support establishing a dedicated funding mechanism, arguing that it would risk duplicating existing mechanisms and divert resources away from practical conservation action.
  89. New Zealand supported exploring options to strengthen the relationship between CMS and the GEF Secretariat, and further supported the EU and the UK stance against the GEF becoming the financial mechanism for CMS at this time.
  90. Norway and Monaco supported the EU, UK and New Zealand. Monaco observed that the document showed both significant financial progress alongside unmet needs. Monaco did not support a dedicated financial mechanism for CMS, saying this would duplicate efforts and reduce investments.
  91. The COW Chair noted the two positions: one which supported the creation of a CMS dedicated financial mechanism; and a second position in support of strengthening synergies and making use of existing mechanisms. The COW agreed to refer the issue to the Cross-Cutting Issues WG.
  92. On 28 March, the COW considered CRP14.3. The UK noted it could accept and advance the CRP on the understanding that brackets in paragraphs 15 on the Samarkand SPMS and CRP28.8 on insect decline would be removed and the text deleted.
  93. The COW agreed to recommend the document to the COP for adoption.
  94. On 29 March, the final COP Plenary adopted the COW's recommendation on the provision of guidance to the Secretariat on resource mobilization and further engagement with the GEF, as reflected in the draft amendments to Resolution 10.25 (Rev COP14) and the draft Decisions as contained in [CRP14.3/Rev.1](#).

#### **IV. STRATEGIC AND INSTITUTIONAL MATTERS**

##### **ITEM 15. SAMARKAND STRATEGIC PLAN FOR MIGRATORY SPECIES 2024-2032**

95. On 24 March, in the COW, the Secretariat introduced documents UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.15 *Samarkand SPMS 2024-2032* and [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.15/Add.1](#) *ScC comments arising from ScC-SC8*.
96. New Zealand thanked UNEP–WCMC and the Intersessional WG for their efforts in producing the actions, baselines and indicators document and to the Secretariat for supporting this work. Switzerland was thanked for their voluntary contributions that

enabled the work to continue. The process involved a lot of work by UNEP–WCMC, five Intersessional WG meetings, several rounds of comments from the Intersessional WG, input from the SC on scientific aspects, and a final review by the StC. New Zealand highlighted outstanding issues relating to indicators and actions under Target 4.3, and hoped these could be resolved among Parties. On Target 4.3, New Zealand expressed support for Indicators 4.3.1, 4.3.2, and 4.3.3, but did not support 4.3.4 or 4.3.5, noting they included terminology not defined or used in CMS. Moreover, they were seen as more specific than other indicators – which were aimed at all Parties rather than a subset – and would be difficult to monitor since there were no data from CMS or other sources to measure them. On the actions for Target 4.3, New Zealand said they could be flexible, noting that the actions were potential actions to guide Parties and other stakeholders on the activities that could be undertaken to increase progress towards the Samarkand SPMS targets. New Zealand encouraged Parties to be flexible on this and stressed that once the issues around 4.3 were resolved, they could accept the proposed amendments to Resolution 14.1 and the draft Decision, taking on board the SC comments.

97. The EU welcomed the Samarkand SPMS Monitoring Framework and its alignment with Resolutions on climate change and ecological connectivity, and appreciated the linkages to the GBF and the BBNJ Agreement.
98. The UK and Australia supported comments from New Zealand and the EU regarding Indicators 4.3.4 and 4.3.5. The UK noted finance was a critical enabler and that the Convention’s partnership model made it clear that each Party contributed according to their national priorities. Australia said the indicators were broad and the data required to support them would be difficult to find. The EU said no differentiation should be made between developed and developing countries.
99. Brazil noted its previous comments on Resource Mobilization, reiterating the need for a financial needs assessment, and disagreed with the previous comments on the undefined terminology used in Indicators 4.3.4 and 4.3.5. Brazil stressed the UN had parameters for what was considered a developing country, and that the monitoring framework needed to differentiate between developed and developing countries.
100. The COW Chair referred this matter to the Cross-Cutting Issues WG to advance progress towards consensus.
101. On 27 March, the COW considered CRP15.
102. Brazil recommended discussing the CRP after the resolution of Item 14.3 Resource Mobilization.
103. The COW agreed to postpone discussion on the CRP.
104. On 28 March, the COW returned to further consider CRP15.
105. Brazil requested the bracketed text in the document be deleted.
106. The COW agreed with Brazil’s proposal and that the Secretariat would revise the CRP accordingly. The COW agreed to recommend the adoption of the draft amendments to Resolution 14.1 and the draft Decisions as contained in the CRP.
107. On 29 March, the final COP Plenary adopted the draft amendments to Resolution 14.1 and the draft Decisions contained in [CRP15/Rev.1](#).

## ITEM 16. SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL

### Item 16.1 Sessional Committee Members

108. On 24 March, in the COW, the Secretariat introduced documents UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.16.1/Rev.2 *Sessional Committee (SC) Members*, [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.16/Add.1](#) *SC Members Candidate Profiles for the COP-appointed Councillor for Wildlife Health* and [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.16/Add.2](#) *SC Members Candidate Profiles for the COP-appointed Councillor for Terrestrial Mammals*. Ms Ruth Cromie, the outgoing COP-appointed Councillor for Wildlife Health, was praised for the achievements during her tenure, including increased recognition of wildlife health as part of the One Health approach and three key studies on wildlife health prepared for COP14 and COP15.
109. The Secretariat also noted the proposal to share the position of COP-appointed Councillor for Terrestrial Mammals, and that the new appointments would be considered in the final COP Plenary. It was explained that a review of these subject areas had taken place at ScC-SC8, which recommended maintaining the current subject areas, but changing the title of 'Invasive species, disease, feral animals, insects, and marine pests and weeds' to 'Wildlife Health'.
110. Ms Ruth Cromie, outgoing COP-appointed Councillor for Wildlife Health, mentioned Mr Craig Stephen and Mr Chris Walzer as two outstanding candidates for replacements to consider.
111. The UK echoed Ms Cromie's comments on the breadth of good candidates. The UK noted that it had nominated Mr Craig Stephen and the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) said they had nominated Chris Walzer. WCS also thanked Ms Cromie for her contributions.
112. This issue was referred to the Cross-Cutting Issues WG.
113. On 29 March, at the final COP Plenary, the COP Chair thanked the outgoing ScC Chair for her work in the last triennium. The Chair also thanked the outgoing ScC-SC members and COP-appointed Councillors. The regions were then invited to present nominations for the SC members and their alternates for the next triennium.
114. The COP agreed to reconfirm the COP-appointed Councillors for the next intersessional period for the following subject areas:
- Aquatic Mammals
  - Birds (shared position)
  - Bycatch
  - Climate Change
  - Connectivity/Networks
  - Fish (shared position)
  - Marine Pollution
  - Terrestrial Mammals
115. The COP then accepted the following experts as COP-appointed Councillors: Mr Craig Stephen for Wildlife Health, and Ms Nandintsetseg Dejid as the second councillor for the shared position on Terrestrial Mammals.

116. The COP Chair then invited regions to nominate the Party-appointed regional members of the ScC-SC.
117. Zimbabwe, on behalf of Africa, nominated Mr Kahsay Gebretensae Asgedom (Ethiopia), Professor Azwianewi Benedict Makhado (South Africa) and Mr Kely Malé Roger (Côte d'Ivoire). Mr Erasmus Henaku Owusu (Ghana), Mr Sandile Gumedze (Eswatini) and Mr Djibril LY (Mauritania) were nominated as alternates.
118. Saudia Arabia, on behalf of Asia, nominated Ms Elena Bykova (Uzbekistan), Dr Bayarbaatar Buuveibaatar (Mongolia) and Dr R Suresh Kumar (India). Mr Sergey Skylyarenko (Kazakhstan) and a yet to be confirmed representative from Saudi Arabia were nominated as alternates.
119. Monaco, on behalf of Europe, nominated Mr Boris P. Nikolov (Bulgaria), Ms Caterina Fortuna (Italy) and Mr James Williams (UK). Mr Jean-Philippe Siblet (France) and Mr Rubén Moreno-Opo Diaz-Meco (Spain) were nominated as alternates.
120. Uruguay, on behalf of South and Central America and the Caribbean, nominated Mr Andrei Langeloh Roos (Brazil), Mr Héctor Samuel Vera Alcaraz (Paraguay) and Mr. Carlos J. Polo Silva (Panama). Mr Victor Eduardo Chocho Sanchez (Ecuador) and Mr Francisco Javier Concha Toro (Chile) were nominated as alternates.
121. New Zealand, on behalf of Oceania, nominated Mr. Krishneel Nand (Fiji), Ms Samantha Kwan (Samoa) and a nominee yet to be confirmed from the Philippines. Ms Narelle Montgomery (Australia) was nominated as an alternate.
122. As there were no objections, the COP agreed to these nominations.

#### **Item 16.2 Overview of the Working Groups and Task Forces established under the CMS Scientific Council and its Sessional Committee**

123. On 24 March, in the COW, the Secretariat introduced documents [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.16.2/Rev.1](#) *Overview of the WGs and Task Forces established under the ScC-SC* and [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.16.2/Add.1](#) *ScC comments arising from ScC-SC8*, noting a change in the duration of several of the WGs to open-ended to ensure work could resume immediately after the COP.
124. On 29 March, the final COP Plenary noted the document.

#### **ITEM 17. ELECTION OF PARTIES TO THE STANDING COMMITTEE**

125. On 24 March, in the COW, the Secretariat introduced document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.17](#) *Election of Parties to the StC* and recognized the work of members who had completed two terms. 11 regional representatives and 11 regional alternates would be elected, and the Chair and Vice-Chair would be elected by StC58 immediately following COP15. The COW Chair invited regional coordinators to provide an update on Party nominations. Regional representatives asked for additional time to discuss nominations. The COW Chair urged consultations within regional groups.

126. On 29 March, at the final COP Plenary, the COP Chair praised the StC Chair and the outgoing StC members, thanking them for their work in the last triennium. He then invited the regions to present their nominations for StC members and their alternates for the next triennium.
127. Zimbabwe, on behalf of Africa, nominated Zimbabwe, Morocco and Uganda to serve on the StC, with Seychelles as an alternate for Zimbabwe, Ethiopia as an alternate for Uganda, and Senegal as an alternate for Morocco.
128. Saudi Arabia, on behalf of Asia, nominated India and Bahrain, with Saudi Arabia serving as an alternate.
129. Monaco, on behalf of Europe, nominated Belgium, Montenegro and the UK to the StC, with France and North Macedonia as alternates.
130. Uruguay, on behalf of South and Central America and the Caribbean, nominated Costa Rica and Brazil to the StC, with the Dominican Republic and Peru as alternates.
131. New Zealand, on behalf of Oceania, nominated the Cook Islands to the StC, with Australia as the alternate.
132. The nominations were accepted.

## **ITEM 18. COLLABORATION WITH OTHER ENTITIES**

### **Item 18.1 Synergies and Partnerships**

133. On 24 March, in the COW, the Secretariat introduced documents [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.18.1](#) *Synergies and Partnerships* and [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Inf.18.1](#) *Overview of Accreditation Schemes for NGOs*, noting the draft Decisions, if adopted, would contribute to all SPMS targets, especially Target 6.4.
134. CITES pointed to partnerships as essential to address complex challenges facing migratory and CITES-listed species, and highlighted the saiga antelope as a powerful example of such collaboration. CITES also underscored the important role of partnerships in advancing collaborative action on wildlife conservation and sustainable use, including the [Collaborative Partnership on Sustainable Wildlife Management](#).
135. UNEP supported strengthened synergies and partnerships to support effective implementation of the Convention and as essential for coherent, effective implementation of all MEAs. UNEP noted the importance of the Party-led Bern Process for dialogue, collaboration and synergies among biodiversity-related conventions and other MEAs and called for strengthening partnerships, including with indigenous peoples, youth-led organizations and local communities to ensure their meaningful participation in environmental decision-making and to promote inclusivity.
136. As there were no objections, the document was recommended to the COP for adoption.
137. On 29 March, the final COP Plenary, adopted the draft Decisions contained in the Annex of the document.

## Item 18.2 Cooperation with the Intergovernmental Science–Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES)

138. On 24 March, in the COW, the Secretariat introduced document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.18.2](#) *Cooperation between the Intergovernmental Science–Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) and CMS*.
139. IPBES provided an update on the work of the organization that is of relevance to CMS and affirmed the importance of continued cooperation between them.
140. Norway encouraged further strengthening of cooperation between CMS and IPBES, recognizing that IPBES provides high-quality assessments on critical issues for CMS and other environmental agreements, providing the scientific basis for Decisions. Norway further encouraged the continued and increased uptake and use of findings from key assessments such as those on the sustainable use of wild species, valuation of nature, and spatial planning and ecological connectivity.
141. The EU supported engagement of the ScC and the Secretariat in relevant IPBES processes and suggested several amendments in this regard.
142. South Africa encouraged engagement in the ongoing IPBES work programme, particularly with respect to its spatial planning and ecological connectivity assessment. The UK echoed the statements of Norway and South Africa.
143. Born Free Foundation underscored the need for CMS to remain actively engaged in IPBES scoping and review processes to ensure alignment, maximize mutual benefits, and promote coherent and complementary implementation. Support was expressed for giving special attention to the IPBES spatial planning and ecological connectivity assessment and the second global assessment on biodiversity and ecosystem services, both of which provide valuable guidance for strengthening conservation actions for migratory species.
144. The Chair said the Secretariat would prepare a CRP for consideration by the COW.
145. On 25 March, the COW considered [CRP18.2](#) and recommended it to the COP for adoption.
146. On 29 March, the final COP Plenary adopted the draft Decisions as contained in [CRP18.2](#).

## Item 18.3 CMS Contribution to the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework

147. On 24 March, in the COW, the Secretariat introduced document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.18.3](#) *CMS Contribution to the to the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework* and referred to the related [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Inf.18.3 Report of the Bogis-Bossey Expert Workshop 2025](#) on the Bern Process.
148. Brazil supported efforts to contribute to the GBF and, in regards to draft Decision 15AA b), proposed consideration of all outcomes, not just “relevant” outcomes, as countries should be able to determine relevance according to their national priorities.
149. The EU suggested additional text on national reports to the CBD reflecting CMS objectives; and that the Secretariat, subject to the availability of resources, should continue contributing to the global review of the collective progress on GBF

- implementation, including involvement in the planning, monitoring, reporting and review of the GBF, and report to the StC and to COP16 on progress in implementing the Decision.
150. Switzerland cautioned that the development of additional and compounding guidelines could hinder progress. In regards to 15.BB c), it was suggested that referring to the “new” Joint Work Programme was misleading as the Programme was under way. The Secretariat responded that the Joint Work Programme had not yet been formally established.
  151. Senegal and Kenya supported strengthening synergies with the CBD and GBF.
  152. UNEP commended the CMS Secretariat for strengthening cooperation and synergies with the biodiversity-related conventions and welcomed work to integrate migratory species into NBSAPs. UNEP underscored the critical need to ensure migratory species and ecological connectivity were reflected in national planning processes.
  153. The COW Chair said that the Secretariat would prepare a CRP.
  154. On 25 March, the COW considered CRP18.3 and agreed to recommend it to the COP for adoption, with the understanding that a change requested by Brazil would be taken into account.
  155. On 29 March, the final COP Plenary adopted the draft Decisions as contained in [CRP18.3](#).

## ITEM 19. COMMUNICATIONS, OUTREACH AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

156. On 24 March, the Secretariat introduced [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.19 Communications, Outreach and Information Management](#), reviewing activities carried out since COP14, including modernization of the CMS website. Increased interest in CMS by major media outlets was noted: on the first day of COP15, over 2,200 articles were published in 80 languages across 53 countries.
157. In regards to draft Decision 15.AA, Brazil requested language encouraging Parties to provide broad support, including but not limited to financial support.
158. The EU requested adding language to 15.BB a) on communications tailored to the public and, in 15.BB b), proposed a reference to “other MEAs” with regard to partnerships with “other entities”.
159. In regards to 15.AA a), Kenya proposed adding reference to voluntary contributions specifically earmarked for producing multilingual content and two new subparagraphs on: i) designating or confirming national communication focal points to facilitate local dissemination of global CMS campaigns; and ii) utilizing and promoting the findings of the *State of the World’s Migratory Species* report within national educational and policy frameworks.
160. The COW Chair said the Secretariat would circulate a CRP with suggested amendments.
161. On 25 March, the COW considered CRP19. Following suggested edits by Australia and Zimbabwe, the Secretariat agreed to revise the CRP document based on these comments.

162. On 26 March, the COW considered UNEP/COP/CMS/COP15/CRP19/Rev.1. As there were no comments, the CRP was recommended to the COP for adoption.
163. On 29 March, the final COP Plenary took note of document UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.19 and adopted the draft Decisions as contained in [CRP19/Rev.1](#).

## V. SCIENTIFIC ASSESSMENTS AND REPORTS

### ITEM 20. CONSERVATION STATUS OF MIGRATORY SPECIES

#### Item 20.1 Development of the Next Report on State of the World's Migratory Species

164. On 24 March, in the COW, the Secretariat presented document [UNEP/CMS/COP/15/Doc.20.1/Rev.1](#) *Development of the Next Report on State of the World's Migratory Species*, which was revised by the ScC-SC8.
165. Kenya supported the draft Decisions, underscoring support for the development of mechanisms that would help Parties improve reporting.
166. The EU supported the adoption of the draft Decisions and proposed new text on technical and scientific support, including reviewing the scope of the second State of the World's Migratory Species report, validating case studies, ensuring an integrated approach, and advising on the development of the CMS Data Dashboard.
167. South Africa appreciated the report and proposed new text on preparing targeted information material and on engaging with the CITES management authorities.
168. Uganda welcomed the proposal to prepare a second State of the World's Migratory Species report and proposed a standardized protocol for data submission. Uganda also emphasized the importance of dissemination of this and other reports.
169. The COW Chair proposed Parties work together to amend the draft Decisions in the Cross-Cutting WG.
170. On 27 March, the COW reviewed [CRP20.1](#).
171. As there were no requests for the floor, the COW recommended the document to the COP for adoption.
172. On 29 March, the final COP Plenary adopted the draft Decisions contained in [CRP20.1](#).

#### Item 20.2 State of the World's Migratory Species – Interim Report (2026)

173. On 24 March, in the COW, the Secretariat introduced documents [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.20.2/Rev.1](#) *State of the World's Migratory Species – Interim Report (2026)* and [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.20.2/Add.1](#) *ScC comments arising from ScC-SC8*, noting they did not receive voluntary funding to cover the report's cost, and that UNEP–WCMC had developed the report using their own resources.

174. The Secretariat invited UNEP–WCMC to present the findings, which included: an update on recently reported changes to the conservation status of species listed in CMS Appendices, their population trends and distribution (26 CMS species, 18 of which were migratory shorebirds, were moved to a higher risk category, and 7 species, including the Mediterranean monk seals and the saiga antelope, were moved to a less threatened category); a summary of recent efforts to identify and protect important habitats for migratory species and to map migratory pathways; and a recognition that the data showed the status of migratory species was worsening, driven by habitat loss and overexploitation. UNEP–WCMC explained that despite important successes, the overall picture was heading in the wrong direction.
175. Brazil noted, with concern, the trends in the report, and the COW took note of the report and recommended it to the COP.
176. On 29 March, the final COP Plenary took note of the report.

#### **ITEM 21. ATLAS ON ANIMAL MIGRATION**

177. On 24 March, in the COW, the Secretariat introduced [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.21/Rev.1](#) *Atlas on Animal Migration* and [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.21/Add.1](#) *ScC comments arising from ScC-SC8*.
178. The COW accepted the document as originally presented and agreed to recommend it to the COP for adoption.
179. On 29 March, the final COP Plenary adopted the draft Decisions contained in Annex 1 of the document and recommended noting the *Overview of current modules of the CMS Atlas on Animal Migration* contained in Annex 2.

### **VI. INTERPRETATION AND REPORTING ON IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION**

#### **ITEM 22. NATIONAL REPORTS**

180. On 27 March, the Secretariat introduced [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.22](#) and [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Inf.22](#) *Recommendations for Revising the CMS National Report Template: Proposal for Consideration*, noting the revised template was intended to align with the Samarkand SPMS. It was suggested that StC58 could establish a WG to further provide input to the development of the template for consideration and adoption by StC59. UNEP–WCMC provided an analysis of National Reports, based on reports from 59 Parties submitted by the reporting deadline, and highlighted broad themes from these reports, including key successes and challenges.
181. Brazil stressed they were committed to reporting, and supported the simplification and streamlining of the reporting framework. They suggested adding text to the draft Decision ensuring that any information requested under existing Resolutions be appropriately integrated and consolidated within the National Report templates to avoid duplication of reporting requirements, and that any future reporting requests are, as far as possible, addressed through the National Reports mechanism.
182. Parties agreed to this suggestion and the COW Chair said the Secretariat would prepare a CRP and recommended it to the COP for adoption.

183. On 29 March, the final COP Plenary adopted the draft Decision in [CRP22](#) and took note of the *Analysis of CMS National Reports to COP15* contained in Annex 2 of the document.

### ITEM 23. REVIEW MECHANISM AND NATIONAL LEGISLATION PROGRAMME

184. On 24 March, in the COW, the Secretariat presented documents [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.23](#) *Review Mechanism and National Legislation Programme*, [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Inf.23a](#) *Global Workshop on CMS Legislation: Summary of Discussions*, [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Inf.23b](#) *Legislative Guidance Document: Exceptions to the Prohibition on Taking of Appendix I-Listed Species under CMS Article III.5*, and [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Inf.23c](#) *Legislative Guidance for Maintaining, Improving, and Restoring Ecological Connectivity*.
185. The EU stressed the importance of clarity in the Review Mechanism and the central role of the National Legislation Programme in supporting Parties in implementing the Convention, and proposed deleting reference to “subject to the availability of resources”.
186. With respect to commissioning a study to determine whether national legislation allows for effective, deterrent and proportionate penalties for Appendix I species taken in violation of the Convention – as set out in the draft Decisions – Australia clarified this task would be subject to the availability of resources.
187. On the point raised by the EU, Zimbabwe reiterated that this process could help address existing gaps and challenges through a legal lens.
188. Initially, Brazil did not support the creation of a CMS Multi-stakeholder Task Force on Legislation, raising questions regarding CMS’s mandate to create such a group, and supported deleting the reference to the creation of a task force in the Decision. However, support was later given to the Decision.
189. UNEP supported adoption of the draft Decisions, particularly those aimed at strengthening national legal frameworks and enhancing implementation of the Convention. UNEP supported strengthened coordination and knowledge exchange, and continued collaboration across relevant initiatives, noting work with the CMS Secretariat to promote accession of non-Party countries, to support the translation of CMS obligations into national legislation, to convene regional workshops under the Montevideo Programme for the Development and Periodic Review of Environmental Law, and to strengthen tools such as the Online Reporting System and InforMEA to enhance coherence and access to information across MEAs. UNEP also cited ongoing consultations with the Secretariat to advance collaboration in support of the National Legislation Programme.
190. In regards to 15.BB e), Kenya initially proposed reporting to COP16 on progress in implementing the Decision. Kenya supported the creation of a CMS Multi-stakeholder Legal Task Force on Legislation and requested StC59 to adopt its TOR, noting Kenya was in the process of reviewing its national legislation.
191. The COW Chair said the Secretariat would prepare a CRP based on the proposed amendments and encouraged informal discussions to reach a consensus-based proposal.
192. On the 26 of March, the COW considered [CRP23](#) and recommended it to the COP for adoption.

193. On 29 March, the final COP Plenary adopted the draft Decisions in CRP23, and the COW's recommendation to create a CMS Multi-stakeholder Task Force on Legislation and to request StC59 to adopt its TOR.

## ITEM 24. REVIEW OF DECISIONS

194. On 24 March, in the COW, the Secretariat introduced document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.24](#) *Review of Decisions*, listing Decisions to be renewed or deleted that were not referred to in other COP15 documents.
195. The EU did not support the deletion of: Decisions 14.38 and 14.39 on the maltreatment and mutilation of seabirds and fisheries, noting this would imply removing priority to the issue; Decision 14.54 on marine wildlife watching; and Decision 14.223 on impacts of plastic pollution on aquatic, terrestrial and avian species, as there was no evidence this work was being undertaken elsewhere.
196. On 29 March, the final COP Plenary agreed to the deletion of paragraph (b) of Decision 14.56, and Decisions 14.143, 14.224, 14.225 and 14.266. The COP also agreed to renew Decisions 14.40, 14.55, paragraph (a) of Decision 14.56, and Decisions 14.65, 14.66, 14.67, 14.68, 14.87, 14.88, 14.89, 14.90, 14.91 and 14.92.
197. In response to the issues raised by the EU, and given that no CRP was issued, the COP agreed on the renewal of Decisions 14.38, 14.39, 14.54 and 14.223 as per the EU's request.

## VII. IMPLEMENTATION OF TAXA-SPECIFIC AND CROSS-CUTTING MANDATES

### ITEM 25. AQUATIC SPECIES CONSERVATION ISSUES

#### Item 25.1 Fisheries-induced Threats and Direct Take

##### Item 25.1.1 Bycatch and other fisheries-induced mortalities

198. On 25 March, the Secretariat introduced documents [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc 25.1.1](#) *Bycatch and Other Fisheries-induced Mortalities*, [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.25.1.1/Add.1](#) *ScC-SC comments*, [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Inf.25.1.1](#) and [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Inf.25.1.1b](#), noting ongoing discussions in the Aquatic WG.
199. Peru mentioned the need for agreement on the definition of bycatch, designated as the capture of any species, and urged inclusion of marine birds. Panama and Senegal supported Peru's proposal.
200. The AWI, Pro Wildlife, Save Our Seas Foundation, WCS, Fundación Cethus, OceanCare, Law of the Wild and WWF made a joint statement, welcoming the inclusion of Decision text on the impacts of the fish maw trade. These organizations stressed that the global trade in fish maw served the same high-value, high-demand market as shark fin and other dried marine products. They noted that CITES regulation of trade in shark products had reduced the availability of shark fins, and that the global demand for, and the value of fish maws, had increased rapidly, with serious consequences for both target fishes and bycaught species, including 15 CMS-listed species of marine mammals, sharks, rays and marine turtles. They said the proposed draft Decisions provided a timely and practical pathway for CMS to address this issue

before it became a crisis for other species. They supported collaboration with the IWC to mitigate cetacean bycatch in maw fisheries and hoped similar efforts could be established for other impacted taxa. They also recommended cooperation with CITES to improve data collection on the maw trade and its impacts, and to strengthen trade oversight. They urged adoption of the Decisions, working to ensure the global maw trade is sustainable and to eliminate associated bycatch.

201. Australia supported the development of effective measures to eliminate more bycatch, and noted cooperation with Papua New Guinea and regional partners, including the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP).
202. The COW Chair returned the item to the Aquatic WG for further discussions and for preparation of a CRP.
203. On 28 March, the COW considered CRP25.1.1, noting two bracketed text options in paragraph 15.
204. Brazil preferred maintaining the second option on further encouraging Parties to utilize the GBF Fund to provide financial and technical support to implement the Resolution, noting this action was in line with the Budget WG discussions. The EU and the UK agreed.
205. The COW Chair explained that the CRP would be updated to reflect this agreement and recommended it to the COP for adoption.
206. On 29 March, the final COP Plenary noted the summary and recommendations in *A Review of Technical and Operational Measures to Mitigate Bycatch of Marine Turtles in Commercial Fisheries* in Annex 1 of UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc 25.1.1. The COP adopted the draft amendments to Resolution 12.22 on Bycatch and the adoption of the draft Decisions as contained in [CRP 25.1.1/Rev.1](#), which included Decisions for both Items 25.1.1 and 25.1.2.

#### **Item 25.1.2 Bycatch of chondrichthyan species**

207. On 25 March, the Secretariat introduced document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.25.1.2 Bycatch of Chondrichthyan Species](#), noting the Aquatic WG had discussed the document.
208. Argentina shared information on domestic progress on responsible fisheries, traceability, monitoring and registration systems.
209. The COW Chair said Decisions to be carried over would be merged into the CRP prepared for document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.25.1.1](#).
210. On 29 March, the final COP Plenary took note of the summary *Bycatch of Chondrichthyan Species: Key Elements Found in Domestic Legislation* contained in the Annex of document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.25.1.2](#).

#### **Item 25.1.3 Fish-aggregating devices**

211. On 25 March, the Secretariat introduced document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.25.1.3 Fish Aggregating Devices \(FADs\)](#), noting the Aquatic WG had begun discussing the document.

212. New Zealand supported further work to reduce the environmental impact of FADs on marine species.
213. The COW Chair said discussions would continue in the Aquatic WG.
214. On 26 March, the COW considered CRP25.1.3 and recommended it to the COP for adoption.
215. On 29 March, the final COP Plenary noted the summary and recommendations of the report *Relationship between FADs and Marine Debris in the Mediterranean Sea* in Annex 1 of Document 25.1.3 and adopted the draft Decisions contained in [CRP25.1.3](#).

#### **Item 25.1.4 Aquatic wild meat**

216. On 25 March, the Secretariat introduced document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.25.1.4/Rev.1](#) *Aquatic Wild Meat*, noting the Aquatic WG had discussed the document and finalized the CRP.
217. The EU, Senegal and Panama recognized aquatic wild meat as a significant, under-addressed and growing threat to migratory species. Benin regretted that aquatic wild meat had not received sufficient attention at the international level beyond CMS, highlighting CMS's role as a significant platform to address the topic.
218. New Zealand described the increasing challenge of migratory seabirds being consumed by crew operating on high-seas vessels, explaining that hunting and trapping was the fourth biggest threat to seabirds, and that consumption of aquatic wild meat also posed a threat to human health.
219. Côte d'Ivoire called for implementing a One Health approach. Liberia, the Dominican Republic and Ghana supported efforts to address aquatic wild meat.
220. The COW Chair noted a CRP had been published and the COW agreed to recommend it to the COP for adoption.
221. On 29 March, the final COP Plenary noted the summary and recommendations of the *Global Review of the Direct Take of Seabirds* in Annex 1 of UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.25.1.4/Rev.1, adopted the TOR for the WG on Aquatic Wild Meat in Annex 2 of UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.25.1.4/Rev.1, and adopted the draft Decisions as contained in [CRP25.1.4](#).

#### **Item 25.2 Marine Pollution and Other Threats**

##### **Item 25.2.1 Marine pollution**

222. On 25 March, the Secretariat introduced [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.25.2.1](#) *Marine Pollution* and [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Inf.25.2.1](#) *Report of the CMS Marine Pollution Workshop*, noting discussions were taking place in the Aquatic WG.
223. The COP-appointed Councillor for Marine Pollution, Mr Mark Simmonds, stressed the importance of taking advice from marine pollution experts and the relevant workshop. Mr Simmonds noted the proposal for a WG comprised of experts from around the world to advise the CMS and Parties on the best way to address this complex nexus of threats.

224. The Cook Islands supported the adoption of the draft Resolution and Decisions in the document, noting marine pollution was a direct and growing pressure on migratory species, ocean health, and the livelihoods and cultures of people in the Cook Islands. They welcomed the recognition that marine pollution was multidimensional, including plastics, chemical pollutants, wastewater, abandoned fishing gear and emerging threats. They expressed support for the emphasis on cumulative and synergistic impacts, particularly the interaction between pollution and climate change. In this regard, four priorities were highlighted: addressing land-based and transboundary sources of pollution; tackling plastic pollution and abandoned fishing gear; strengthening monitoring and science–policy linkages; and applying the precautionary principle to emerging threats. From a Small Island Developing State (SIDS) perspective, implementation depended on adequate, effective, transparent and predictable support, including for monitoring, response systems and capacity-building, to address shared pollution challenges across migratory routes.
225. Peru supported the adoption of the draft Resolution and Decisions in the document.
226. New Zealand, Samoa and Fiji noted the importance of this issue for the Oceania region and supported the Cook Islands.
227. Somalia said it had banned single use plastic and called for capacity-building to combat marine pollution.
228. Senegal welcomed progress made but stressed the need for international cooperation and capacity-building.
229. Argentina proposed avoiding reference to the exploitation of marine seabirds as this issue was being addressed under the International Seabed Authority (ISA) and said duplication of themes covered elsewhere should be avoided. The Dominican Republic supported Argentina.
230. UNEP welcomed the document, particularly the Decision requesting strengthened engagement on marine pollution with Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans, highlighting the Protocol on Land-Based Sources of Pollution, which provided established regional governance frameworks through which countries cooperate to prevent, reduce and control marine pollution from land-based activities. Together with the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (GPA), they stressed that these frameworks provided a coherent global and regional approach to addressing marine pollution affecting migratory species. Strengthening collaboration between CMS and the UNEP's Regional Seas Programme was important, and UNEP reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening practical, implementation-oriented synergies.
231. OceanCare supported adoption of the Decisions and the establishment of a WG on Marine Pollution to address this issue and offered its support in this regard.
232. ACCOBAMS said marine pollution was on the agenda of its Scientific Committee and agreed with the intervention of the Cook Islands.
233. The COW Chair sent the document back to the Aquatic WG for further discussion.
234. On 27 March, the COW considered CRP 25.2.1 and, as there were no comments, agreed to recommend it to the COP for adoption.

235. On 29 March, the final COP Plenary noted the recommendations of the Report of the CMS Marine Pollution Workshop in Annex 1 of UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.25.2.1 and adopted the TOR for the Marine Pollution WG, the draft Resolution and the Decisions as contained in [CRP25.2.1](#).

#### **Item 25.2.2 Underwater noise**

236. On 25 March, the Secretariat introduced document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.25.2.2/Rev.1](#) *Underwater Noise*.
237. Australia welcomed the document and supported efforts under the Convention to expand work on underwater noise to freshwater ecosystems. Panama and WCS also supported work in freshwater ecosystems. WCS urged the use of a precautionary approach when integrating underwater noise considerations into marine and spatial planning.
238. South Africa supported work on this topic.
239. The Dominican Republic and Senegal highlighted specific threats to cetaceans.
240. Monaco supported CMS collaboration with other instruments on underwater noise to ensure they consider the impacts on migratory species. The IWC also supported joint work on the topic, including with the International Maritime Organization (IMO).
241. The COW Chair said discussion on the topic would continue in the Aquatic WG.
242. On 27 March, the COW considered CRP25.2.2.
243. Chile explained that it could not support the draft Decision with its current language on military activities in 15.AA. Also, 15.BB b) was not acceptable as formulated and could generate ambiguity in relevant regulatory frameworks.
244. Norway supported Chile's position and did not accept language in 15. AA b) on "research, development, and commercialization of equipment for the detection of underwater targets, targets on the sea surface, or detonation of unexploded ordinances that reduces the impacts to migratory species and their habitats". Brazil supported Norway and said it could also propose compromise text or would support deletion of the relevant text. The EU also proposed compromise text.
245. The EU also expressed appreciation for the proposal to review the guidelines developed by Australia before assessing whether peer review was necessary.
246. Norway did not support the EU's proposal.
247. The COW Chair encouraged Parties to find a solution and said the COW would return to the issue.
248. On 28 March, the COW returned to CRP25.2.2.
249. Norway, supported by Brazil and Chile, requested deletion of paragraph 15AA b) on research development and commercialization of equipment for the detection of underwater targets, targets on the sea surface, or detonation of unexploded ordinance. Brazil and Chile supported its deletion.

250. The COW Chair explained that the CRP would be revised to include this amendment and submitted to the COP for adoption.
251. On 29 March, the final COP Plenary noted the Work Plan for the Joint Noise WG and the summary and recommendations of the report, *Anthropogenic Underwater Noise Impacts and Mitigation Strategies for CMS-listed Freshwater Mammals (Cetaceans, Sirenians, Otters) and Their Prey* contained in UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.25.2.2/Rev.1. The COP adopted the draft Decisions as contained in [CRP25.2.2/Rev.1](#).

### Item 25.2.3 Deep-sea mining

252. On 25 March, in the COW, the Secretariat introduced document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.25.2.3 Deep-Sea Mining](#) and the report annexed in [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.25.2.3/Annex 1 Impacts of Deep-sea Mining on Migratory Species: Review and Knowledge Gaps](#), noting it would be discussed in the Aquatic WG.
253. Brazil observed that the International Seabed Authority (ISA) was the relevant authority on deep-sea mining and said Brazil could support voluntary, non-binding guidance that follows the precautionary principle.
254. France called for a precautionary pause on exploitation and noted some recommendations of the report in Annex 1 of the document fell mainly within the ISA's exclusive mandate.
255. Argentina did not support the recommendations, noting the document exceeded the Convention's mandate and the topic fell under the ISA.
256. The UK welcomed progress on the topic since COP14 and thanked Australia and Monaco for funding the highly valuable report. The UK supported development of rigorous environmental guidelines and standards by the ISA.
257. South Africa observed that the findings were inconclusive on the degree of impact on species and supported a precautionary approach to deep-sea mining to ensure minimal impact on migratory species, their prey and their ecosystems.
258. The EU highlighted its Biodiversity Strategy for 2030, which stated that deep-sea mining could not be explored until the impacts and risks were fully understood and it could be demonstrated that no serious harm to the environment would take place. The EU also supported a precautionary approach and recalled the strong mandate from COP14.
259. Panama reiterated the call for a moratorium on deep-sea mining, arguing it was necessary to ensure that irreversible damage to migratory species is prevented.
260. Germany did not support licensing of deep-seabed mining activities and called for a precautionary pause until the ISA adopted a set of rules to ensure any deep-sea mining activities would not have any harmful effects on the marine environment. Cyprus aligned with Germany, supporting a precautionary pause.
261. Norway also expressed concerns with the report, noting the existence of newer research and reports, but said it could "take note" of the report. Poland said it could not endorse the report but could further discuss the issue in the Aquatic WG.

262. The Deep-Sea Conservation Coalition (DSCC) agreed with Parties' concerns, stressing that determining whether mitigation measures could prevent harm to ecosystems, marine species and the environment was not possible. DSCC urged a precautionary approach.
263. Brazil requested that discussions on proposed text take place in the Aquatic WG, a position supported by the EU, the UK, Germany, Cyprus, Poland and WWF.
264. On 27 March, the COW considered CRP25.2.3. Chile considered that the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) addressed and was responsible for deep-sea mining through the ISA. Chile stressed the need for sufficient scientific evidence before undertaking activities and for the adoption of a precautionary approach.
265. Brazil, supported by New Zealand, Chile and the UK noted that those concerns are already covered in Resolution 14.6.
266. The Netherlands supported the document without any changes.
267. The COW recommended the CRP to the COP for adoption.
268. On 29 March, the final COP Plenary noted the report contained in Annex 1 of Document 25.2.3 and adopted the draft Decisions as contained in [CRP25.2.3](#).

### **Item 25.3 Marine Area-based Conservation Management**

#### **Item 25.3.1 Priorities for area-based conservation of marine migratory species**

269. On 25 March, in the COW, the Secretariat introduced documents [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.25.3.1](#) *Priorities for Area-based Conservation of Marine Migratory Species*, [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.25.3.1/Add.1](#) *ScC Comments*, and [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Inf.25.3.1a-c](#).
270. Supporting the Resolution, South Africa recognized that IMMAs, ISRAs, Important Marine Turtle Areas (IMTAs), Ecologically and Biologically Significant Marine Areas (EBSAs), Important Bird Areas (IBAs) and other similar scientific frameworks were key advisory tools for guiding spatial conservation and management, including for marine spatial planning and the design of marine protected areas (MPAs) and any other areas outside of them. South Africa highlighted the Southern Coastal and Shelf Waters of South Africa IMMA, noting ongoing research on CMS-relevant species and associated habitats.
271. New Zealand recognized the success of marine turtle conservation efforts, mentioned an ISRA identified in 2025 in New Zealand, and noted increased concern for manta rays in the Oceania region.
272. Argentina highlighted that national fisheries research institutions provided important information, including cartilaginous fish and commercial fleet data. Argentina noted concrete management measures and collaborative fisheries management across jurisdictions, including between Argentina and Uruguay. A permanent ban on shark fishing, restricted trawling and managing reproduction of cartilaginous species, including sharks, was highlighted.

273. Kenya supported science-based spatial identifiers and said the technical tools detailed in the document helped advance GBF Target 3. Kenya supported linking the BBNJ Agreement with national efforts and blue corridors.
274. Brazil supported the overall direction on IMTAs and noted the value in strengthening the scientific identification of such areas. Brazil stressed the importance of contributing to environmental impact assessment (EIA) processes, including under the BBNJ Agreement. They further highlighted the ecological role of coastal and marine ecosystems, coral reefs and seagrass beds, and supported strengthened synergies with other international efforts.
275. UNEP supported the priorities identified for area-based conservation, highlighting the role of the Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans, particularly their Protocols on Specially Protected Areas and Biodiversity, which provide regional legal and governance frameworks for the establishment and management of MPAs, ecological networks and other area-based management tools. UNEP supported the conservation of important areas for migratory species within national jurisdictions, which could contribute to ensuring coherence and complementarity between area-based management measures adopted within national jurisdictions and those adopted in areas beyond national jurisdiction, including under the BBNJ Agreement, particularly regarding ecological connectivity.
276. ACCOBAMS proposed adding a reference to Resolution 9.20 on area-based measures for cetacean conservation adopted by the ACCOBAMS Meeting of the Parties. Monaco supported the ACCOBAMS proposal.
277. WWF noted the importance of IMTAs and explained how the WWF-coordinated Blue Corridors for Turtles initiative supports the IUCN SSC Marine Turtle Specialist Group (MTSG). WWF emphasized the role of IMTAs for marine spatial planning, particularly in areas beyond national jurisdiction, and the need to apply consistency across tools.
278. The Dominican Republic noted that it was the first country in the Caribbean region to achieve the 30x30 target on MPAs, and stressed that blue corridors are critical for the protection of marine turtles.
279. Australia proposed that the comments from the ScC be incorporated into the document.
280. IWC stressed the importance of regional fisheries bodies for gathering data for the identification of areas, as well as for monitoring and management.
281. OceanCare supported this work area, and the adoption of the draft Resolutions and draft Decisions, while encouraging the use of CMS-relevant data and tools to help inform the designation of area-based management tools under the BBNJ Agreement. More generally, support was expressed for building meaningful synergies between CMS and the BBNJ Agreement to enhance implementation of the conservation commitments embedded in the BBNJ Agreement.
282. SPREP reported that IMMAs, IBAs and ISRAs had all been initiated in the Pacific Ocean to support protected area identification and threat management. SPREP risk assessments found that four of the five marine turtle species in the Pacific were at risk of extinction within a generation. SPREP welcomed the criteria and identification process for IMTAs developed by the IUCN SSC MTSG and the availability of the IMTA Guidance Document on the MTSG website. The initiation of an EU-funded project on

identifying IMTAs to support collaboration across the Pacific islands and increase protection for these threatened species was noted.

283. The Aquatic WG further considered this issue, as instructed by the COW.
284. On 28 March, the COW considered CRP25.3.1.
285. The COP-appointed Councillor for Marine Fish requested updated language in the Resolution on Important Marine Turtle Areas to reflect the change in species status in accordance with the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species since the document had been drafted, explaining that the status of green turtles had changed to 'Least Concern'. Australia supported the proposal.
286. IUCN proposed correcting the reference to EBSAs in paragraph 15 to ecologically or biologically significant "marine" areas. Ecuador supported the proposal.
287. The COW Chair explained that the CRP would be revised to include these amendments and recommended them to the COP for adoption.
288. On 29 March, the final COP Plenary adopted the draft Resolutions and draft Decisions as contained in [CRP25.3.1/Rev.1](#).

#### **Item 25.3.2 Vessel strikes**

289. On 25 March, in the COW, the Secretariat introduced document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.25.3.2/Rev.2](#) *Vessel Strikes*.
290. The UK supported the amendments from the ScC in Addendum 1 to the document and proposed an addition to the text to reflect similar work already under way for cetaceans under the IWC, clarifying that any CMS-led guidance should apply to species "not subject to existing advice from the IWC". IFAW and OceanCare supported this proposal.
291. South Africa supported: efforts to promote ship strike risk assessment in ship hotspots; improved monitoring, reporting and data-sharing; and integration of ship strike mitigation into marine spatial planning. South Africa urged close cooperation with the IWC, port authorities and the shipping industry to ensure the alignment of guidelines and protocols.
292. Kenya called for a technical bridge between CMS, IWC and IMO, stated that mitigation measures must move beyond voluntary guidelines and be integrated into IMO safety mitigation protocols.
293. The EU proposed changes to the text to reflect ongoing work on the topic by IWC and IMO, and recommended inclusion of text on the benefits of CMS aligning with IWC and IMO on the issue.
294. The COW Chair referred the topic to the Aquatic WG.
295. On 28 March, the COW considered CRP25.3.2 and recommended the CRP to the COP for adoption.
296. On 29 March, the final COP Plenary adopted the draft Decisions contained in [CRP25.3.2](#).

### Item 25.3.3 Conserving seamount ecosystems

297. On 25 March, Panama, on behalf of Monaco and Panama, introduced document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.25.3.3](#) *Conserving Seamount Ecosystems*. The proposal was said to be aligned with the Samarkand SPMS, particularly Targets 2.1 and 2.2, and it was recommended that the COP adopted the draft Resolution and Decisions.
298. Different Parties, including Monaco, Peru, Ecuador, Dominican Republic, Brazil, the EU and Fiji, recognized the ecological importance of seamounts as critical habitats. OceanCare, DSCC, Bird Life, IFAW, WCS, WWF, IUCN, and the Instituto Baleia Jubarte also stressed the vital role of seamounts.
299. Costa Rica highlighted the importance of seamount protection for both migratory species and for maintaining sustainable fisheries, and stated that CMS was an ideal platform to make progress on protection.
300. IUCN also noted that CMS is uniquely placed to protect seamounts through the lens of migratory species. Brazil highlighted the role of seamounts in supporting fisheries. Fiji said support for seamounts could contribute to the GBF.
301. The Dominican Republic drew attention to the importance of baseline data and supported increased data-sharing.
302. Norway suggested two small text changes to note the entry into force of the BBNJ Agreement and to encourage coordination with Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs).
303. Argentina stressed terminology should align with UNCLOS and RFMOs.
304. Australia proposed text amendments to ensure alignment with the BBNJ Agreement's objectives and language agreed to by the UN General Assembly, as well as language agreed within RFMO processes. Australia also said it would propose a new paragraph during the WG.
305. The EU suggested broadening the wording to emphasize coordinated action through relevant global processes.
306. The COW Chair referred the topic to the Aquatic WG for further discussion.
307. On 28 March, the COW considered CRP25.3.3 and agreed to recommend it to the COP for adoption.
308. On 29 March, the final COP Plenary adopted [CRP25.3.3](#).

### Item 25.4 Marine Mammals

#### Item 25.4.1 Conservation priorities for cetaceans

309. On 25 March, in the COW, the Secretariat introduced document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.25.4.1/Rev.1](#) *Conservation Priorities for Cetaceans*, [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.25.4.1/Add.1](#) ScC comments, and [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Inf.25.4.1a-c](#), noting the issue had not yet been discussed in the Aquatic WG.

310. Argentina supported cooperation with the IWC but said the current proposed wording in the document did not incorporate sufficient safeguards to prevent duplication of work. Argentina supported amending the text to ensure complementarity and avoid duplication of CMS and IWC mandates. The Dominican Republic supported Argentina's statement.
311. The UK supported the proposal to investigate the development of a joint work programme with the IWC Secretariat on the conservation of cetaceans, noting the existing MOU had already led to excellent collaboration between the IWC and CMS. The UK stated that a formal work programme could build on existing collaboration.
312. The EU noted the crucial role of cetaceans in ecosystem functioning but also highlighted threats from climate change and underwater noise. The EU underscored coordinated science-based action, including with ACCOBAMS and ASCOBANS, building on existing expertise and avoiding duplication of work, and strengthening the role of CMS on threats posed by chemicals to cetaceans.
313. South Africa commended the Secretariat for identifying the critical stressors facing these migratory marine mammals. As a Range State to numerous cetacean species, the Party's delegate highlighted South Africa's significant expansion of MPAs; deployment of new acoustic technology to better track marine species and manage noise-related threats, particularly in sensitive nursery areas like the southern right whale aggregation sites; successful testing of gear modifications, such as sinking groundlines and mitigation of entanglements in trap fisheries; and finalization of its National Coastal Climate Change Adaptation Plan to address shifting migratory patterns and prey availability caused by climate change. South Africa encouraged the Secretariat to support capacity-building and the sharing of data and technology, and said collaborative frameworks that support long-term monitoring and enforcement were required for effective implementation among developing countries.
314. The COW Chair referred the issue to the Aquatic WG for further consideration.
315. On 28 March, the COW reviewed CRP25.4.1 and recommended it to the COP for adoption.
316. On 29 March, the final COP Plenary noted the summary and recommendations of the reports on: *Contemporary Whaling and Aquatic Wild Meat Take of CMS Appendix I-Listed Cetaceans; Impacts of Climate Change on Cetacean Welfare and Conservation*; and *Out of Habitat Cetaceans* – found in Annexes 1, 2 and 3 of UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.25.4.1/Rev.1. The COP also noted the *Compilation of Recommendations that could be Directed to the ScC at COP15 and Future COPs* contained in Annex 4 of the same document. The COP adopted the TOR for the Aquatic Mammals WG and the draft Decisions as contained in [CRP25.4.1](#).

#### **Item 25.4.2 Cetacean action plans**

317. On 25 March, in the COW, the Secretariat introduced [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.25.4.2 Cetacean Action Plans](#), [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Inf.25.4.2a Analysis of Implementation Reports for the Action Plan for the Protection and Conservation of South Atlantic Whales](#) and [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Inf.25.4.2b Analysis of Implementation Reports for the Single Species Action Plan for the Atlantic Humpback Dolphin](#).
318. There were no comments and the COW agreed to recommend the document to the COP for adoption.

319. On 29 March, at the final COP Plenary, the Secretariat responded to a request for clarification from the EU regarding the absence of a CRP. The Secretariat explained the COW agreed to recommend that the COP: noted the summaries and analyses of the Implementation Reports for the Action Plan for the Protection and Conservation of South Atlantic Whales and the Implementation Reports for the SSAP for the Atlantic Humpback Dolphin; endorsed the Conservation Management Plan for Arabian Sea Humpback Whales; and adopted the draft Decisions, as contained in UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.25.4.2.
320. These recommendations were agreed by the COP and the draft Decisions adopted.

#### **Item 25.5. Marine Turtles**

321. On 25 March, in the COW, the Secretariat introduced document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.25.5](#) *Marine Turtles*, [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.25.5/Add.1](#) *ScC comments*, [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Inf.25.5a](#) *Beach Management and Hatchery Practices* and [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Inf.25.5b](#) *Analysis of Implementation Reports for the Single Species Action Plan for the Hawksbill Turtle*.
322. Kenya highlighted ongoing work under the Indian Ocean and South-East Asia MOU, and acknowledged progress achieved in improving the conservation status of several populations. Kenya noted threats posed by fisheries bycatch, climate change, coastal development, pollution and habitat degradation, as well as the need for further research on vulnerable early-life stages. Support was expressed for strengthening protection and management of nesting beaches, emphasizing the importance of enhanced cooperation, improved reporting, and increased technical and financial support to facilitate effective implementation of conservation measures, including the Hawksbill Turtle SSAP. Reservations regarding Decisions directed to non-Party Range States were also expressed, noting such States were not obligated to undertake actions. Australia agreed with Kenya on the difficulty of asking non-Party Range States to implement action.
323. Australia regretted that comments made by the ScC had not been incorporated into the document and suggested that the Secretariat consider alternative reporting mechanisms and cycles to streamline the reporting process and reduce the burden on Parties. For example, as this was a joint SSAP with the IOSEA Marine Turtle MOU, reporting could potentially be integrated into the MOU National Reporting. Thus, it was suggested deleting reference in the draft Decision to reporting “once every intersessional period” to retain more flexibility in reporting.
324. New Zealand noted that while the country was a Range State for the Hawksbill turtle, they did not nest in New Zealand; thus, bycatch was low and there was no trade.
325. Ghana called for strengthened regional action among Range States to ensure effective conservation and to secure the future of marine turtles.
326. Senegal reaffirmed its strong commitment to the conservation of marine turtles and shared its efforts to monitor and protect turtles during the breeding season. Senegal hoped for future progress on the Atlantic Turtle MOU with the Secretariat.
327. The Dominican Republic said it had recorded a new impact on marine turtles, from contact with small vessels involved in tourism.

328. The COW Chair said the Secretariat would prepare a CRP.
329. On 26 March, the COW considered CRP25.5 and recommended it to the COP for adoption.
330. On 29 March, the final COP Plenary noted the *Report on Relevant Scientific Information on Conservation and Threats to Post-hatchling Sea Turtles*, the *Recommendations for the Conservation of Sea Turtles through appropriate Beach Protection Measures in the face of Climate Change*, and the *Summary and Analysis of the Implementation Reports for the SSAP for the Hawksbill Turtle* contained in Annexes 1, 2 and 3 of Document 25.5. The COP also adopted the draft Decisions contained in [CRP25.5](#).

## Item 25.6 Fish

### Item 25.6.1 Freshwater fish

331. On 25 March, in the COW, the Secretariat introduced document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.25.6.1/Rev.1](#) *Freshwater Fish*.
332. Peru and Senegal supported the draft Decisions.
333. Uganda expressed concern that it was mentioned as a Range State for three species of anguillids (*Anguilla bengalensis*, *Anguilla bicolor* and *Anguilla mossambica*) in Annex 3 of the document. They noted these species had never been recorded in Ugandan waters and requested the reference to Uganda be deleted.
334. Brazil underscored the important role of small-scale fisheries.
335. The EU said it would submit comments regarding certain fish species listed for the Netherlands and Belgium. The EU also proposed language emphasizing the importance of exchanging monitoring and surveillance data and information-sharing on conservation actions.
336. WCS welcomed the document and supported the focus on technical, governance and expert support, and coordination with other conventions and partners.
337. IUCN welcomed recognition of rivers as essential migratory corridors and the inclusion of additional migratory fishes in the CMS Appendices, underscoring that maintaining free-flowing rivers was critical for feeding, spawning and nursery habitats.
338. The COW Chair referred the discussion to the Aquatic WG.
339. On 28 March, the COW considered CRP25.6.1 and recommended it to the COP for adoption.
340. On 29 March, the final COP Plenary noted the summary and recommendations of the *Global Assessment of Migratory Freshwater Fishes* found in Annex 2 of Document 25.6.1/Rev.1. The list of *Migratory Freshwater Fishes that meet the criteria for listing on CMS*, contained in Annex 3 of the same document, was also noted, bearing in mind the change requested by Uganda. The COP adopted the draft amendments to Resolution 10.12 and the draft Decisions as contained in [CRP25.6.1](#).

### Item 25.6.2 European eel

341. On 25 March, the Secretariat introduced [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.25.6.2](#) and [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.25.6.2/Add.1](#) ScC Comments.
342. The EU, with Monaco, supported the draft Single Species Action Plan (SSAP) for the European eel, underscoring the importance of cooperation among Range States. Monaco noted the Action Plan would promote a collective response.
343. CITES offered to collaborate on and support the implementation of the SSAP, specifically with reference to objective 4, which focuses on eliminating unsustainable exploitation and strengthening range-wide management, and which identified CITES as a key partner for implementation. CITES stated that it could contribute through its ongoing work on international trade controls, traceability mechanisms, enforcement platforms and trade data. CITES suggested that this collaboration – also called for in the draft Decisions – could be considered in the development of the new CITES–CMS Joint Work Programme to be agreed by the CITES Standing Committee.
344. The COW Chair said the Secretariat would prepare a CRP.
345. On 28 March, the COW considered CRP25.6.2 and recommended it to the COP for adoption.
346. On 29 March, the final COP Plenary adopted the SSAP contained in Annex 2 of [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.25.6.2](#) and the draft Resolution and draft Decisions contained in [CRP25.6.2](#).

### Item 25.6.3 Sharks and rays

347. On 26 March, in the COW, the Secretariat introduced document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.25.6.3/Rev.1](#) *Sharks and Rays* and [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.25.6.3/Add.1](#) ScC Comments.
348. The EU supported adoption of the draft Decisions, taking into account the ScC comments. They proposed several additions to the text to consider and apply the recommendations for area-based management of the angelshark in the Mediterranean and encourage cooperation with the International Working Group of the SSAP for the Angelshark in the Mediterranean Sea (*SSAP Angelshark Med*).
349. Kenya expressed concern that the oceanic whitetip shark continued to be caught despite its listing on Appendix I. Support was expressed for the draft Decision, and Parties were called to strengthen domestic legislation to prohibit the taking of the oceanic whitetip shark and to strengthen enforcement and monitoring of trade and fisheries data. Kenya supported the proposal to develop a comprehensive list of shark and ray species that meet the criteria for CMS listing, and urged the ScC to prioritize species found in the Western Indian Ocean in this assessment.
350. The COW Chair said the Secretariat would prepare a CRP.
351. On 27 March, the COW considered CRP25.6.3 and recommended it to the COP for adoption.
352. On 29 March, the final COP Plenary adopted the *Governance Structure to Support the Implementation of the SSAP Angelshark Med*, noted the summary and recommendations of both the *Analysis of Implementation Reports on the SSAP*

*Angelshark Med* and the *Implementation of the CMS Appendix I listing for the oceanic whitetip shark* – contained respectively in Annexes 1, 2 and 3 of UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.25.6.3/Rev.1 – and adopted the draft Decisions as contained in [CRP25.6.3](#).

#### **Item 25.6.4 Single Species Action Plan for the Northeast Atlantic and Mediterranean Sub-Population of the Tope Shark**

353. On 26 March, in the COW, the EU introduced document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.25.6.4/Rev.1](#) *SSAP for the Northeast Atlantic and Mediterranean Sub-Population of the Tope Shark*, noting that the [In-Depth Review of the Conservation Status of Individual CMS-listed species](#) concluded that the tope shark had an elevated extinction risk and would benefit from continued international cooperation. The EU underlined the need for comprehensive international conservation action to improve the conservation status of the tope shark and its habitats.
354. The UK supported the SSAP, draft Resolution and draft Decisions, and noted existing protections for the tope shark in the UK.
355. The Dutch Elasmobranch Society strongly supported the SSAP.
356. As there were no text changes, the COW Chair said the document would be recommended to the COP for adoption.
357. On 29 March, the final COP Plenary adopted the draft Resolution and the draft Decisions as contained in document UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.25.6.4/Rev.1.

#### **Item 25.6.5 Multi-species Action Plan for Amazonian Migratory Catfish**

358. On 26 March, Brazil introduced document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.25.6.5](#) *Multi-species Action Plan for Amazonian Migratory Catfish*.
359. Bolivia supported the Decision, noting the Amazonian Migratory Catfish MsAP was a clear example of the importance of coordinated work among States and consideration of local knowledge in conservation.
360. Ecuador, Peru and the EU also strongly supported the Decision.
361. Venezuela reaffirmed its support for the Action Plan, explaining that while Venezuela was not a Party to CMS, it was a Range State to the species covered.
362. Amazon Waters, with 30 organizations working in the Amazon River Basin, welcomed the Action Plan, underscoring its willingness to contribute to its implementation.
363. The COW recommended the document to the COP for adoption.
364. On 29 March, the final COP Plenary adopted the draft Resolution, Amazonian Migratory Catfish MsAP and the draft Decisions contained in document UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.25.6.5.

## ITEM 26. AVIAN SPECIES CONSERVATION ISSUES

### Item 26.1. The Prevention of Illegal Killing, Taking and Trade of Migratory Birds

365. On 26 March, in the COW, the Secretariat introduced documents [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.26.1](#) *The Prevention of Illegal Killing, Taking and Trade of Migratory Birds*, [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.26.1/Add.1](#) ScC comments, and UNEP/CMS/COP15/Inf.26.1a and b.
366. Ghana underscored the importance of strengthened enforcement measures and increased awareness to reduce illegal bird hunting. AEWA's efforts to improve monitoring and reporting were welcomed, noting that sustainable solutions could only be achieved once communities were empowered.
367. Australia supported the proposed amendment to the TOR for the Asia-Pacific Illegal Taking of Migratory Birds Intergovernmental Task Force (ITTEA) to include migratory water birds. Australia commended the ITTEA for bringing together experts and fostering collaboration and best practices, and said Task Force operations were the cornerstone of regional cooperation to address this threat.
368. Chile noted that integrating the Task Force's work with emerging approaches, including One Health, helped to avoid duplication of existing efforts, and that strengthening existing mechanisms was essential.
369. The Secretariat of the East Asian–Australasian Flyway Partnership (EAAFP) highlighted the problem of illegal take and trade in their region, and the problems of mist nets, emphasizing the need for the Task Force to gather data on the use and trade of mist nets and provide guidance for enforcement priorities.
370. The CRP was developed and recommended to the COP for adoption.
371. On 29 March, the final COP Plenary noted the summary of the report on *Assessing the use and impact of nets on wild bird populations in Asia and the Mediterranean* as contained in Annex 3 of the document and adopted the draft amendments to Resolution 11.16 (Rev.COP14), including the proposed amendments to the Terms of Reference of the ITTEA contained in the Annex of the Resolution, and the draft Decisions as contained in [CRP26.1](#).

### Item 26.2 Preventing Poisoning of Migratory Birds

372. On 26 March, in the COW, the Secretariat presented document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.26.2](#) *Preventing Poisoning of Migratory Birds* and [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.26.2/Add.1](#) *Preventing Poisoning of Migratory Birds* ScC comments.
373. Argentina cited progress made with ammunition producers, including addressing lead in ammunition. The need to address the use of toxic bait was underscored and the ScC's comments supported.
374. The EU questioned deletion of the WG on Preventing Poisoning of Migratory Birds and wanted to retain the WG with a narrower mandate. ScC comments were supported. The EU requested more time to consider the document.
375. The Chair said the COW would revisit this issue, following discussion in the Avian WG.

376. On 27 March, the COW considered CRP26.2 and agreed to recommend it to the COP for adoption.
377. On 29 March, the final COP Plenary adopted the draft amendments to Resolution 11.15 (Rev.COP14) *Preventing Poisoning of Migratory Birds* and the draft Decisions as contained in [CRP26.2](#).

### **Item 26.3 Flyways**

#### **Item 26.3.1 Flyways**

378. On 26 March, the Secretariat introduced document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.26.3.1 Flyways](#) and [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.26.3.1/Add.1 ScC comments](#).
379. Costa Rica, on behalf of South and Central America and the Caribbean, highlighted the fact that the region had proposed the development of a new CMS institutional framework to strengthen work in this area and foster cooperation, and would share the text with the Avian WG.
380. The EU supported the Decisions, with the addition of a mandate for the Secretariat to support the establishment of the Central Asian Flyway Initiative.
381. Australia supported the recommendations and draft Decisions, and strongly supported exploring a permanent instrument under the CMS for the East Asia-Australian Flyway.
382. New Zealand and the Cook Islands also supported the Decision.
383. Mongolia noted that some EAAFP members are not CMS Parties and, expressing concern about duplication, opposed exploring a new CMS instrument. Bangladesh also expressed concerns about duplication of work.
384. Australia explained that such an instrument would not be a duplication of existing work and looked forward to further discussing the proposal in the Avian WG.
385. The EAAFP Secretariat said the Partnership had already delivered effective conservation outcomes, engaging both CMS Parties and non-Parties, and called for avoiding duplication of efforts.
386. The Central Asian Conservation Network said EAAFP had proven effective in a region that spanned many country contexts and had helped avoid the duplication of efforts. Concern was expressed about institutional fragmentation.
387. BirdLife International and the National Audubon Society welcomed the proposal and offered support to the Americas Flyway WG.
388. Wetlands International welcomed language on enhanced monitoring of migratory bird populations and their habitats, underscoring the importance of such efforts in conservation and sustainable management.
389. WWF observed that the EAAFP had provided a well-established, voluntary and highly inclusive platform that delivered meaningful conservation outcomes for migratory waterbirds and their habitats, underlining the Partnership's ability to engage both CMS and non-Parties. WWF expressed concern that a new permanent flyaway instrument under CMS could risk unintended duplication.

390. The COW Chair referred the topic back to the Avian WG.
391. On 28 March, the COW discussed CRP26.3.1.
392. Ecuador thanked Parties for the work undertaken in the Avian WG and highlighted draft Decision 15.BB, which calls for the development of a new CMS initiative for the Americas Flyways to be presented at COP16. Ecuador said this would help coordinate and facilitate implementation of the Americas Flyways Framework and Action Plan. It hoped the initiative would be adopted at COP16, and invited all Party Range States to protect vultures and other migratory birds.
393. The COW agreed to recommend the CRP to the COP for adoption.
394. On 29 March, the final COP Plenary adopted the draft amendments to Resolution 12.11 (Rev.COP14) *Flyways* and the draft Decisions as contained in [CRP26.3.1](#).

### **Item 26.3.2 Seabirds and marine flyways**

395. On 26 March, in the COW, the Secretariat introduced [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.26.3.2/Rev.1](#) *Seabirds and Marine Flyways* and [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Inf.26.3.2](#) *Policy Gap Analysis on Marine Flyways*, noting the ongoing discussions in the Avian WG.
396. Australia noted seabirds were powerful indicators of ocean health and ecological connectivity but were threatened by bycatch, marine pollution, habitat loss and climate change. They supported the CMS Flyways WG, the appointment of a marine flyways coordinator, and active engagement with the BBNJ Agreement.
397. The EU explained that the development of offshore energy facilities and related infrastructure could affect migratory species, and the assessment of appropriate design was an essential part of the permitting process and must be conducted on a case-by-case basis. Therefore, they called for clarification regarding the text on "inappropriately designed and/or sited" offshore energy infrastructure.
398. The UK said it had proposed, within the Avian WG, the removal of maps in the Annex that showed the six marine flyways, noting limitations in the extent of the data used, including the exclusion of high-breeding areas and the Arctic Ocean.
399. BirdLife International was in agreement with the UK on this data. The UK proposed amendments to the text to explain that as new seabird tracking data and further knowledge became available, the delineation and species composition of the marine flyways could be updated, particularly to reflect changes in distribution or movements as species adapt to pressures such as climate change. BirdLife International said COP15 presented an opportunity to close the gap with respect to flyways, noting marine flyways would also benefit other fauna, such as whales and turtles, and supported area-based management and other CMS targets.
400. New Zealand noted BirdLife International's valuable contribution regarding seabird tracking data and their leading role in the production of a recent journal article on marine flyways. New Zealand acknowledged that it was an early document and there would be updates as more information became available.
401. Norway expressed concern for the decreasing populations of migratory seabirds and supported the document.

402. The EAAFP Secretariat highlighted the value of a flyway-based, partnership-driven approach, and welcomed the recognition of the six global marine flyways as a basis for stronger, coordinated action. Support was expressed for the proposed listing of multiple species of gadfly petrels and the flesh-footed shearwater to strengthen global conservation efforts. The EAAFP Seabird Working Group and World Migratory Bird Day were highlighted as ongoing coordinated efforts to halt seabird declines.
403. Panama underscored that existing instruments focused too heavily on breeding sites and not on broader migratory routes. It was observed that poorly sited offshore energy could lead to habitat loss and that offshore planning was a critical issue for Latin America. Community impact must also be considered.
404. South Africa said the identification of six global marine flyways, based on robust tracking data, represented a major scientific and policy advance, as these flyways demonstrated ecological connectivity at an ocean-basin scale and provided an essential framework for coordinated conservation action across national jurisdictions. South Africa was a key Range State for seabirds, supporting globally significant breeding populations and foraging habitat across the Benguela and Agulhas Current systems. South Africa welcomed the emphasis on multi-species, flyway-scale approaches, which better reflected seabird ecology and cumulative threats than site-based measures alone. However, it was noted that current flyways were not representative of all flyways; they would be updated when new data became available. South Africa stressed the importance of addressing fisheries bycatch, and said the marine flyways framework offered a practical mechanism to strengthen coherence between CMS, RFMOs and national fisheries authorities.
405. Senegal noted the creation of more than 15 MPAs in their country.
406. ACAP supported the concept of marine flyways, highlighting the particular benefit to albatrosses and petrels, while welcoming new technologies and other ways to protect seabird species.
407. The COW referred the discussion to the Avian WG.
408. On 27 March, the COW considered CRP26.3.2 and recommended it to the COP for adoption.
409. On 29 March, the final COP Plenary noted the Executive Summary and High-Level Recommendations of the *Policy Gap Analysis* contained in Annex 2 of the document and adopted the draft Resolution and draft Decisions as contained in [CRP26.3.2](#).

## **Item 26.4 Action Plans for Birds**

### **Item 26.4.1 Action plans for birds**

410. On 26 March, in the COW, the Secretariat introduced document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/26.4.1](#) *Action Plan for Birds*.
411. Kazakhstan supported the Global Action Plan for the Conservation of the Steppe Eagle (*Aquila nipalensis*) (Steppe Eagle Global Action Plan), noting that the country hosted the majority of the global breeding population of the species.

412. Saudi Arabia and India also supported the Steppe Eagle Global Action Plan. Saudi Arabia explained that they had conducted a census of the steppe eagle during its 2025-2026 wintering season, strengthening scientific understanding of the species within the country.
413. The EU, the Cook Islands and the EAAFP Secretariat welcomed the action plans.
414. The COW Chair observed that this topic was connected to the agenda item on Multi-species Action Plan to conserve African, Eurasian and Australian Bustards (Bustard MsAP) and the Steppe Eagle Global Action Plan, and proposed discussing the documents as a package.
415. As there were no objections, the Secretariat introduced documents UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.26.4.2 *Multi-species Action Plan to conserve African, Eurasian and Australian Bustards* and UNEP/CMS/COP15/26.4.3 *Global Action Plan for the Conservation of the Steppe Eagle (Aquila nipalensis) 2025-2035*.
416. Saudi Arabia, Mongolia, the EU, IUCN, Senegal and Burkina Faso supported adoption of the Bustard MsAP. Senegal shared its development of a national action plan to conserve bustards.
417. Uganda supported the Steppe Eagle Global Action Plan.
418. On 27 March, the COW considered CRP26.4.1 and recommended it to the COP for adoption.
419. On 29 March, the final COP Plenary adopted the draft amendments to Resolution 12.12 (Rev.COP14) *Action Plans for Birds* and the draft Decisions as contained in [CRP26.4.1](#).

#### **Item 26.4.2 Multi-species Action Plan for Bustards**

420. On 26 March, in the COW, Hungary introduced document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.26.4.2](#) *Multi-species Action Plan to conserve African, Eurasian and Australian Bustards*.
421. The item was discussed within item 26.4.1, as detailed above.
422. On March 29, the COP adopted the draft amendments to Resolution 12.12 (Rev.COP14) *Action Plans for Birds*, including the Bustards MsAP.

#### **Item 26.4.3 Steppe Eagle Global Action Plan**

423. On 26 March, in the COW, the Secretariat introduced [UNEP/CMS/COP15/26.4.3](#) *Global Action Plan for the Conservation of the Steppe Eagle (Aquila nipalensis) 2025-2035*.
424. The item was discussed within item 26.4.1, as detailed above.
425. On 29 March, the final COP Plenary adopted the draft amendments to Resolution 12.12 (Rev.COP14) *Action Plans for Birds*, including the *Global Action Plan for the Conservation of Steppe Eagle (Aquila nipalensis) (2025-2035)*.

### **Item 26.5. Action Plan for Migratory Landbirds in the African-Eurasian Region**

426. On 26 March in the COW, the Secretariat introduced document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.26.5](#) *Action Plan for Migratory Landbirds in the African-Eurasian Region*, noting that discussions had taken place in the Avian WG and a CRP had already been posted.
427. Switzerland supported the amendments made by the Avian WG.
428. The COW Chair said the CRP would be recommended to the COP for adoption.
429. On 29 March, the final COP Plenary adopted the draft amendments to Resolution 11.17 (Rev.COP14) and the draft Decisions as contained in [CRP26.5](#).

### **Item 26.6 Conservation of African-Eurasian Vultures**

430. On 26 March, in the COW, the Secretariat introduced document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.26.6](#) *Conservation of African-Eurasian Vultures*, noting that discussions had taken place in the Avian WG and a CRP had already been posted.
431. Ghana, Senegal, and Burkina Faso supported the draft Decisions.
432. The Chair said the CRP would be recommended to the COP for adoption.
433. On 29 March, the final COP Plenary adopted the draft Decisions as contained in [CRP26.6](#).

### **Item 26.7 Saker Falcon Global Action Plan**

434. On 26 March, in the COW, the Secretariat introduced [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.26.7](#) *Saker Falcon (*Falco cherrug*) Global Action Plan (SAKERGAP)*, noting discussions were already under way in the Avian WG.
435. On March 27, as there were no comments on UNEP/CMS/COP15/CRP26.7, the COW recommended the CRP to the COP for adoption.
436. On 29 March, the final COP Plenary adopted the proposed CMS decision-making structure for the conservation and adaptive management of the saker falcon as contained in Document 26.7 and the draft amendments to Resolution 11.18 (Rev.COP14) [Saker Falcon \(\*Falco cherrug\*\) Global Action Plan \(SAKERGAP\)](#) and the draft Decisions as contained in [CRP26.7](#).

### **Item 26.8 Internationally Important Raptor Areas**

437. On 26 March, the Secretariat introduced document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.26.8](#) *Internationally Important Raptor Areas* and [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.26.8/Add.1](#) *ScC Comments*, noting discussions had taken place in the Avian WG.
438. On 27 March, the COW considered and agreed to recommend CRP26.8 to the COP for adoption.
439. On 29 March, the final COP Plenary adopted the draft Resolution and the draft Decisions as contained in [CRP26.8](#).

## ITEM 27. TERRESTRIAL SPECIES CONSERVATION ISSUES

### Item 27.1 Joint CITES–CMS African Carnivores Initiative

440. On 26 March, in the COW, the Secretariat introduced document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.27.1](#) *Joint CITES–CMS African Carnivores Initiative*, noting discussions had taken place in the Terrestrial WG and several amendments were now reflected in a CRP.
441. The Cheetah Conservation Fund (CCF) supported the document as a policy framework that provided useful guidance and had the potential to serve as a useful conservation platform. CCF underlined the urgent need to ensure that the African Carnivores Initiative (ACI) had the resources to become fully functional and to implement its POW.
442. On 27 March, the COW discussed document CRP27.1.
443. IUCN described its support for the ACI since its inception, with IUCN and CMS signing an MOU to recognize the role the IUCN Save Our Species (SOS) regranting mechanism could play. IUCN noted funding from the EU had helped action on the ground but that the funding had ended. IUCN expressed readiness to channel funding directly to ACI POW priorities, noting a private donor had made a pledge, but that funding had to be matched before the contribution could be unlocked and secured. It was stressed that the funding opportunity would be lost without matching funds and called on donors for support.
444. Uganda noted its active support for the ACI, including through hosting a Joint ACI meeting where several threats were identified.
445. CITES highlighted the adoption of relevant Decisions by its COP and said the CITES Secretariat would work to help implement the revised ACI POW.
446. The COW recommended the document to the COP for adoption.
447. On 29 March, the final COP Plenary adopted the draft Decisions as contained in [CRP27.1](#).

### Item 27.2 Sahelo-Saharan Megafauna Initiative

448. On 26 March in the COW, the Secretariat introduced document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.27.2](#) *Sahelo-Saharan Megafauna Initiative*, noting discussions had taken place in the Terrestrial WG and a CRP had been prepared. The document was supported with no further amendments.
449. The Chair said the CRP would be recommended to the COP for adoption.
450. On 29 March, the final COP Plenary adopted the draft Decisions as contained in [CRP27.2](#).

### Item 27.3 Central Asian Mammals Initiative

451. On 26 March, in the COW, the Secretariat introduced document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.27.3](#) *Central Asian Mammals Initiative* and [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.27.3/Add.1](#) *ScC Comments*, noting discussions had taken place in the Terrestrial WG. The document was supported with no amendments.

452. The COW Chair said the document would be recommended to the COP for adoption.
453. On 29 March, the final COP Plenary adopted the draft amendments to Resolution 11.24 (Rev.COP13) *Central Asian Mammals Initiative (CAMI)* and the draft Decisions as contained in the document.

#### **Item 27.4 Jaguar**

454. On 26 March in the COW, the Secretariat introduced document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.27.4/Rev.1](#) *Jaguar* and [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.27.14/Add.1](#) *ScC Comments*, noting discussions had taken place in the Terrestrial WG.
455. The EU asked if the UNEP Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean (ROLAC) could confirm sustainable funding for hosting the Secretariat to oversee the implementation of the Regional Action Plan. The EU lamented the severe fragmentation of the current species range, noting the jaguar population was continuing to decline. It supported the new Action Plan and its six objectives as critical for addressing the decline of the species.
456. On 27 March, the COW considered CRP27.4.
457. UNEP welcomed the Regional Action Plan for Jaguar Conservation, supported the establishment of an Intergovernmental Platform for Jaguar Conservation, and said UNEP could facilitate its implementation through ROLAC, if appropriate.
458. Responding to the question the EU had posed on 26 March, UNEP said that although they lacked the necessary resources for establishing and operating the platform, they could help mobilize resources, including by supporting the efforts of the Intersessional WG of the CITES Standing Committee. UNEP highlighted the need for coherent implementation among MEAs, ensuring alignment of mandates, reporting flows and technical guidance.
459. CITES supported the Intersessional WG on this issue, establishing the TOR and modalities for a platform, and identifying potential sources of financing and activities that could be implemented through the CMS-CITES Joint Programme of Work.
460. Panthera thanked Brazil and Mexico for their efforts on this issue and called on all Range States to reach agreement on the Regional Action Plan. A recent Ibero-America ministerial declaration on the jaguar was highlighted, noting that the jaguar's resilience was threatened by habitat fragmentation and illegal killing.
461. The COW recommended the CRP to the COP for adoption.
462. On 29 March, the final COP Plenary noted the *Regional Action Plan for Jaguar Conservation* and adopted the draft amendments to Resolution 14.14 *Jaguar* and the draft Decisions as contained in [CRP27.4](#).

## ITEM 28. CROSS-CUTTING CONSERVATION ISSUES

### Item 28.1 Illegal and Unsustainable Taking of Migratory Species

463. On 24 March, in the COW, the Secretariat introduced documents [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.28.1](#) *Illegal and Unsustainable Taking of Migratory Species*, [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.28.1/Add.1](#) *ScC Comments*, [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Inf.28.1a](#) *Illegal and Unsustainable Taking of Migratory Species – A Scoping Analysis*, and [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Inf.28.1b](#) *Impacts of Take and Trade of Migratory Birds for Consumption in Africa-Eurasia*.
464. Brazil proposed that, in paragraph 16 of the draft Resolution, the COP “urges” rather than “proposes” that Parties and relevant funding agencies provide financial support, to reflect a greater level of ambition.
465. The EU supported efforts on this agenda item, recognizing its importance for achieving Target 5 of the GBF. The EU did not support the proposal to place multiple types of knowledge on an equal footing with scientific knowledge, and proposed adding “science-based” to management and adding “where appropriate using other systems of knowledge as well”.
466. Born Free Foundation supported work on this issue and proposed referencing “science-based” management to ensure the approach is grounded in science.
467. Australia did not agree with the EU that multiple systems of knowledge were not science-based but said it could accept the proposal to include “where appropriate”.
468. Zimbabwe suggested only referencing the global level of illegal and/or unsustainable taking, observing the global level could also include domestic use and trade.
469. Kenya supported the Decision and the proposed amendments, underscoring that addressing such threats required a dual approach: strengthening enforcement and promoting community stewardship. Kenya stressed that the country’s experience confirmed that community-based conservation paired with incentives was an effective approach.
470. WCS strongly supported the Global Initiative on Taking of Migratory Species and appreciated the suggested edits by Brazil and the EU.
471. The COW Chair suggested that the Secretariat prepare a CRP to address and include the amendments and suggestions made.
472. On the morning of 26 March, the COW considered CRP28.1.
473. Australia requested that comments arising from ScC-S8 – as contained in [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.26.1/Add.1](#) – be included. It highlighted, among other things, the new paragraph urging Parties to engage with coordinating bodies of key user groups such as hunting and fishing organizations to increase compliance with laws and regulations, promote accurate reporting of take, implement sustainable principles, and provide species identification training. Australia also requested inclusion of text on supporting and recognizing approaches based on multiple systems of knowledge and deleting reference to the prosecution of offenders and the pursuit of any illicit proceeds.
474. The COW Chair requested the Secretariat draft a revised CRP based on these comments for further consideration by the COW.

475. On 28 March, the COW considered document CRP28.1/Rev.1.
476. In paragraph 16, the EU preferred that the COP “encourages” rather than “urges” Parties and relevant funding agencies to provide adequate, predictable, and timely financial support for implementing the provisions of this Resolution.
477. Brazil opposed the EU’s proposal.
478. The COW Chair encouraged Parties to find a solution. Following informal consultations, the EU accepted the use of “urges” in the document.
479. The COW recommended the document to the COP for adoption.
480. On 29 March, the final COP Plenary noted the *Review of Cross-Cutting Aspects, the Scoping Analysis Summary and Recommendations*, and the *Review on the Impacts of Take and Trade of Migratory Birds for Consumption in Africa-Eurasia - Executive Summary* presented as annexes of Document 28.1. The COP adopted the draft Resolution and Decisions contained in [CRP28.1/Rev.1](#).

### **Item 28.2 Ecological Connectivity**

481. On 24 March, in the COW, the Secretariat introduced document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.28.2/Rev.1](#) *Ecological Connectivity*, which was revised by the ScC-SC8.
482. Brazil proposed two amendments to the text to recognize long distance trails and green corridors.
483. The EU supported adoption of the draft Decisions, observing they align with the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 and the GBF. The EU proposed several text changes related to, among others: identifying data gaps, and providing scientific direction on assessing links between connectivity, ecosystem integrity, and climate resilience; and an assessment of research needs. The EU also endorsed the GPEC as a vital platform for collective action and urged continued resource mobilization to address implementation gaps, such as research on climate impacts and data capabilities.
484. Senegal welcomed the progress, underscoring ecological connectivity as essential to the survival of migratory species, including the African elephant and marine turtles.
485. The EAAFP Secretariat highlighted the role of institutional connectivity in ecological connectivity and species conservation outcomes, explaining that while only a limited number of countries in their flyway are Parties to CMS, the EAAFP brings together both CMS and non-CMS Parties under a common framework. The EAAFP Secretariat called for strengthened cooperation between regional flyway partnerships and CMS.
486. The COW Chair said the Secretariat would prepare a CRP with the proposed amendments.
487. On 25 March, the COW considered [CRP28.2](#) and agreed to recommend it to the COP for adoption.

488. On 29 March, the final COP Plenary adopted the amendments to Resolution 14.16 and the draft Decisions as contained in CRP28.2. The COP also took note of the *Summary of the Analysis of the CMS Survey on Ecological Connectivity and Infrastructure* in Annex 3 of Document 28.2.

### Item 28.3 Transfrontier Conservation Areas

489. On 24 March, in the COW, the Secretariat introduced document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.28.3](#) *Transfrontier Conservation Areas* and [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.28.3/Add.1](#) *ScC Comments*, noting it contained one annex with Decisions and an addendum.
490. The EU supported the adoption of the draft Decisions and called for maximizing the practical use of the tool for identifying opportunities for transboundary conservation, including through broad engagement in testing.
491. Brazil encouraged a streamlined approach through national reporting, rather than through separate notifications or parallel reporting exercises, to reduce administrative burden.
492. Zimbabwe supported the draft Decisions and streamlined approaches to reduce reporting burdens.
493. CCF encouraged efforts to develop Transfrontier Conservation Areas (TFCAs) as a conservation instrument, and provided an update on a regional initiative in the Horn of Africa.
494. South Africa highlighted the country's experience as a pioneer of the transfrontier conservation model and supported deletion of language requesting the Secretariat to raise awareness of the UNEP–WCMC pilot transboundary tool as it had not been subject to adequate consultation throughout the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region.
495. Ethiopia, Senegal and Benin supported adoption of the draft Decision. Ethiopia and Senegal also highlighted the role of bilateral agreements in TFCAs.
496. UNEP supported adoption of the draft Decision and said any further investment in the tool should be based on clear demand, consultation and a cost-benefit assessment.
497. The COW Chair noted that the Secretariat would prepare a CRP based on the discussions.
498. On 28 March, the COW considered CRP28.3 and recommended it to the COP for adoption.
499. On 29 March, the final COP Plenary adopted the draft Decisions as contained in [CRP28.3](#).

### Item 28.4 Communities and Livelihoods

500. On 24 March, in the COW, the Secretariat introduced document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.28.4](#) *Communities and Livelihoods* and [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.28.4/Add.1](#) *ScC Comments*.

501. Brazil supported this draft Decision, noting it was consistent with participatory approaches long valued in their national practices. It was noted, however, that the implementation of such approaches should also reflect aquatic and fishery contexts, including that of transboundary basins and coastal zones, and recognize artisanal fishing communities as key actors in conservation and sustainable management. Brazil stressed the vital role of indigenous peoples and local communities in protecting breeding areas, stopover sites and migratory corridors of migratory species, and the need to support such groups in the sustainable management and use of their biomes, taking into account their traditional knowledge and rights related to land, territories and resources.
502. The EU proposed that the ScC establish a dedicated WG to deal with scientific issues related to human–wildlife conflicts and the coexistence of communities and CMS-listed species. Ethiopia also supported establishing such a WG to address interactions between communities and CMS-listed species.
503. Kenya endorsed the 10 Guiding Principles and urged practical implementation through capacity-building, exchange visits and funding to empower local communities as the principal conservation and management partners on migratory species. Kenya stressed the importance of ecological sustainability and the adoption of a precautionary approach where the conservation status of the migratory species across its range remained uncertain, and proposed text to reflect this. It also underscored the need to prioritize the management of human–wildlife conflict as such conflicts could potentially lead to mortality and population declines. In addition, Kenya proposed adding text on facilitating broader consultations with CMS Parties, indigenous peoples and local communities, civil society organizations and others to support inclusive and effective implementation of the Guiding Principles given that migratory species were shared resources and part of a common heritage. Senegal supported Kenya’s statement.
504. South Africa proposed text to reflect a whole-of-society and whole-of-government approach, including the application of the relevant recommendations from the *Potential for Community-based Wildlife Management in Central Asia* study, as appropriate, beyond the Central Asia region. South Africa also proposed: reference to innovative funding proposals; language on mobilizing funding resources that integrate community-based wildlife management with sustainable livelihood opportunities; text on enabling the scaling up of community-based initiatives; and a new subparagraph on supporting capacity-building at the community level, including for indigenous peoples and local communities.
505. WCS, Born Free Foundation and UNEP appreciated the interventions of Brazil, Kenya and South Africa to strengthen the Decisions. WCS recommended that Parties do not adopt the ScC recommendation to establish a WG to address the “strategic issues related to interactions between communities and CMS-listed species”. While recognizing it was vital to work with communities to understand such interactions, these issues were not exclusively scientific and the need for an official WG under the ScC was questioned.
506. Born Free Foundation explained that efforts to implement the Guiding Principles should include, among others: emphasis on the need to ensure ecological sustainability and the adoption of a highly precautionary approach to the extractive utilization of migratory species; with reference to Principle 9, an emphasis on the need to consider human–wildlife conflict resolution in the context of the International Consensus Principles for Ethical Wildlife Control, and the experiences of wider

human–wildlife conflict mitigation efforts that focus on benefiting both wildlife and people; and wider consultation with stakeholders in implementing the draft Decision.

507. UNEP said effective operationalization required a broader societal perspective in evaluating the role that community-based wildlife management could play as part of the wider economy, and how it interacts with other sectors, such as forestry, agriculture and tourism. UNEP said transitioning to action required mechanisms tailored to the local context, combining clear rules, monitoring, enforcement and locally adapted institutions. UNEP underscored that community-based conservation was not only a social consideration, but a critical condition for effective and sustainable conservation outcomes. They also highlighted UNEP’s *Core Human Rights Principles for Private Conservation Organizations and Funders*, developed in collaboration with indigenous peoples and community representatives across all regions.
508. The COW Chair suggested the Secretariat develop a CRP, based on the discussions.
509. On 26 March, the COW considered CRP28.4.
510. The EU, in regards to 15. AA a), proposed deleting “joint” and “innovative” in reference to funding proposals so as not to limit the scope of financing for integrating community-based wildlife management with sustainable livelihood opportunities.
511. The COW agreed to the amendments, and a revised CRP that took into consideration these changes was recommended to the COP.
512. On 29 March, the final COP Plenary adopted the draft Decisions as contained in [CRP28.4/Rev.1](#).

#### **Item 28.5. Wildlife Health**

513. On 24 March, in the COW, the Secretariat introduced document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.28.5/Rev.1](#) *Wildlife Health*, which was revised by the ScC-SC8.
514. Argentina expressed their disagreement with the One Health approach and requested deletion of the reference to the WHO Pandemic Agreement from the draft Resolution, given that Argentina had withdrawn from the World Health Organization (WHO).
515. The EU proposed that the WGs on Migratory Species and Health and on Climate Change, as well as other relevant workstreams in CMS family agreements, be tasked with jointly collating and discussing measures to monitor, prevent and mitigate mass mortality events of populations of migratory species and inform COP16 of actions that could be taken in that regard.
516. Senegal supported the One Health approach, noting it had operationalized it at the national level. Including an amendment on the surveillance of epidemics to ensure wildlife and public health were addressed more holistically was also supported.
517. Brazil suggested many amendments, including in regards to the need for predictable and sustainable financial resources; consistency with the principle of CBDR; the lack of resources and investment, particularly in developing countries; and facilitating resource mobilization, including by exploring innovative financial resources.

518. Peru suggested referring to domestic and production animals and pets as cases of zoonoses.
519. UNEP added that the spread of High Pathogenicity Avian Influenza not only affected birds but also migratory mammals like seals. It was emphasized that an effective One Health approach must prioritize the environmental dimension and prevention at source over reactive approaches. UNEP urged all Parties to align their national actions with the CBD Global Action Plan on Biodiversity and Health, and to consider the response options outlined in the IPBES Nexus Assessment, noting that this was essential to meeting GBF Target 5. The Secretariat's collaborative work with the Quadripartite on Avian Influenza was welcomed.
520. WCS noted its formal designation by the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) as a Collaborating Centre for Research, Diagnosis and Surveillance of Wildlife Pathogens with a focus on health and biodiversity, recognizing WCS's global leadership in science, One Health, transboundary disease surveillance and biodiversity conservation. WCS supported the suggested additions from the EU, Peru, UNEP and many of Brazil's suggestions.
521. Born Free Foundation proposed several amendments, including, among others: recognition of the CMS workstream on animal culture and social complexity, as well as a new preambular paragraph recognizing the relevance of ongoing work at UNEP on the animal welfare-environment-sustainable development nexus to improve wildlife health and efforts to mitigate the risk of emerging diseases with zoonotic potential.
522. Noting the text currently lacked recognition of the connection between population health and individual animal welfare, Born Free Foundation proposed adding text on: measures aimed at securing the cultural and social integrity of migratory species populations; a precautionary approach to interventions involving migratory species in relation to prevention of health risks; and the alignment of planning goals with other relevant international mechanisms aimed at securing wildlife health.
523. The COW Chair suggested continuing discussions in the Cross-Cutting Issues WG, which the COW agreed to.
524. On 28 March, the COW considered document CRP28.5.
525. Brazil requested deletion of bracketed text in operative paragraph 16 that requested the Secretariat to facilitate resource mobilization, noting the issue had been covered in the Decisions on Resource Mobilization. The EU supported this deletion.
526. In the eighth preambular paragraph, the EU requested using "phasing out" rather than "sustainable management and prevention" with respect to certain forms of animal farming as this was more likely to achieve One Health objectives.
527. The EU also expressed concern about operative paragraph 14 on funding needs, The noting the relationship to decisions on the Resource Mobilization Strategy.
528. Brazil encouraged Parties to accept the document, noting discussions had already taken place in the WG. The EU requested more time to consider the document and, following informal consultations, accepted the document.
529. The COW recommended the document to the COP for adoption.

530. On 29 March, the final COP Plenary adopted the draft amendments to Resolution 12.6 (Rev.COP14) and the draft Decisions as contained in [CRP28.5/Rev.1](#). The COP Plenary further noted the Key Messages contained in Annex 3 and activities of the CMS–FAO Co-Convened Scientific Task Force on Avian Influenza and Wildlife since COP14, contained in Annex 4 of document UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.28.5/Rev.1.

#### **Item 28.6. Pastoralism**

531. On 24 March, in the COW, the Secretariat introduced document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc 28.6/Rev.1](#) *Pastoralism*, noting cost constraints made them unable to support implementation of these Decisions. The document suggested extending the WG's mandate so an in-person meeting could be convened and an in-depth analysis conducted.
532. Argentina reminded participants it had withdrawn from WHO and requested deleting references to the WHO Pandemic Agreement.
533. Kenya and Peru expressed interest in joining a potential WG on Pastoralism.
534. The Global Alliance for Rangelands and Pastoralists supported the Decision, underscoring the urgent need to promote pastoralist knowledge and evidence-based policy to support sustainable rangelands and species well-being.
535. The COW Chair said that the Secretariat would prepare a CRP incorporating the suggestions.
536. On 25 March, the COW considered CRP28.6 and agreed to forward it to the COP for adoption.
537. On 29 March, the final COP Plenary adopted the draft Decisions as contained in [CRP28.6](#).

#### **Item 28.7. Light Pollution**

538. On 24 March, in the COW, the Secretariat introduced document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/28.7/Rev.1](#) *Light Pollution*, which was drafted by the ScC and revised by the ScC-SC8. It was noted that Annex 2 contained the *Summary of Findings of the Expert Consultation on Light Pollution*.
539. New Zealand recognized light pollution as a growing threat to a wide range of migratory species and a key threat identified in the listing proposals for both gadfly petrels and the flesh-footed shearwater.
540. Switzerland proposed text for a new paragraph 12 on inviting the ScC to draw up recommendations to mitigate the direct and indirect effects of light pollution for migratory fish, particularly for those linked to other migratory species.
541. New Zealand and Switzerland supported adopting the draft amendments to Resolution 13.5 (Rev.COP14).
542. Australia informed Parties of a process to identify and review gaps in evidence on light impacts on marine species, including fish. Australia explained a new operative paragraph was not necessary because paragraph 11 included the mandate to bring new evidence regarding light pollution to the COP.

543. The EU suggested many changes, including recognizing that artificial light at night also contributes to human safety and increased productivity, leading to conflicting requirements for human safety and wildlife conservation. The EU proposed noting the death of marine turtle hatchlings by drawing them to artificial lights away from the ocean and welcoming the International Dark Sky Places programme. They expressed preference for replacing the phrase “night sky brightness” with “artificial outdoor light at night”.
544. The COW Chair said the Secretariat would prepare a CRP.
545. On 27 March, the COW considered CRP28.7. Brazil proposed “encouraging” rather than “imploring” Parties to manage artificial light so migratory species were not disrupted. The EU said it could accept this amendment.
546. In a paragraph on monitoring new evidence, the Dominican Republic requested reference to the impact of light pollution on marine turtles and their nesting sites on beaches. Senegal supported the proposed amendment.
547. Australia did not support singling out one species as light pollution impacted a range of migratory species. Australia proposed language on monitoring new evidence on the impacts of light pollution “on migratory species” and approaches to mitigation, “including relevant regulatory approaches”. The Dominican Republic accepted this proposed text.
548. The COW Chair explained that the CRP would be revised to include these amendments and recommended the document to the COP for adoption.
549. On 29 March, the final COP Plenary noted the report found in Annex 2 of the document. The COP also adopted the draft amendments to Resolution 13.5 (Rev.COP14) as contained in [CRP28.7/Rev.1](#).

#### **Item 28.8. Insect Decline**

550. On 24 March, the Secretariat introduced document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.28.8/Rev.1](#) *Insect Decline and its Threat to Migratory Insectivorous Animal Populations*, which was revised by the ScC-SC8. The Secretariat noted that the document focused on insect decline as a threat to migratory species.
551. The EU requested, in the preamble of the draft Resolution, reference to Rio Principle 15 on the precautionary approach and to the importance of insects for ecosystem services, including pollination, soil health and food production. They also proposed deletion of the phrase “subject to the availability of resources” as a condition for undertaking the provisions in the Resolution.
552. Brazil, recognizing the importance of the Rio Principles, said the entire Rio Declaration on Environment and Development should be referenced rather than singling out one Principle.
553. The COW Chair suggested that the Secretariat prepare a CRP incorporating the proposals.
554. On 28 March, the COW considered document CRP28.8.

555. The UK noted the document still contained bracketed text. The Secretariat clarified that Parties should provide guidance on what text to retain.
556. Brazil preferred a general reference to all principles of the Rio Declaration and opposed singling out individual Rio Principles. Brazil argued if the EU wished to retain Principle 15 on the precautionary approach, then Brazil would ask that that Rio Principle 7 on CBDR be referenced elsewhere, including in the document on Resource Mobilization. Brazil stressed insect decline as a key issue that demonstrated the interlinkages among all dimensions of sustainable development.
557. As a compromise, the EU said it could agree to delete the specific reference to Principle 15 in the preambular paragraph but maintain it in the operative text.
558. The UK suggested deleting both paragraphs referencing the Rio Principle, which Australia and Norway supported.
559. Following consultations, the EU said it could agree to include a general reference to the Rio Declaration in the preambular paragraph in the document on Resource Mobilization. Brazil pointed out this action would require reopening the document on Resource Mobilization, which Ecuador and Chile supported.
560. Australia, Norway and Monaco opposed reopening the text on Resource Mobilization.
561. Brazil sought clarification on the rules of procedure to reopen a document. The Secretariat read Rule 17 on motions to open and reopen debate on COW recommendations at the COP Plenary.
562. Brazil asked if Parties, in principle, would support adding a reference to the Rio Declaration in the Decisions on Resource Mobilization, to better understand whether prior objection was procedural or substantive.
563. Brazil observed that not all Parties agreed on reaffirming the Rio Declaration in the document, expressed disappointment, and said their country would work during the intersessional period to prepare a document on migratory species and sustainable development for discussion at CMS COP16. Brazil agreed to the deletion of references to the Rio Principle and the Rio Declaration.
564. The COW agreed to the deletions proposed by the UK and the Chair confirmed that the Secretariat would update the CRP and recommended it for adoption by the COP.
565. On 29 March, the final COP Plenary adopted the draft Resolution contained in [CRP28.8/Rev.1](#) as amended, and noted the *Summary of the Findings of the Consultative Group on Insect Decline and Migratory Species* contained in Annex 2 of Document 28.8/Rev.1.

#### **Item 28.9. Cumulative Effects Assessment**

566. On 24 March, in the COW, the Secretariat introduced documents [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.28.9/Rev.1](#) *Cumulative Effects Assessment* and [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Inf.28.9](#) *Cumulative Effects Assessment for Migratory Species*.
567. While appreciating the significance of cumulative effects assessment in mainstreaming biodiversity conservation, South Africa said the evaluation done by the Secretariat could not be considered conclusive as only two Parties responded to the call to provide information and because further information sourced was biased towards English-

speaking countries. Thus, it was argued, it was premature to adopt a Decision that assumed that EIA initiatives and policies were inadequate and that national legislation does not exist. South Africa proposed deletion of 15.AA to enable further development of the actions proposed in 15.BB and 15.CC on the condition that a further call be extended to Parties and other relevant organizations to expand the pool of data and information gathered. This would help inform more accurate and impactful guidance to Parties, including the practical application of the concept of animal culture in cumulative effects assessments, without further burdening developing countries in particular.

568. The EU requested Parties to consider ecological connectivity and ecological restoration when planning new linear infrastructure, and encouraged Parties to ensure involvement of relevant businesses and public authorities, to embed biodiversity conservation into public and private decision-making. However, the EU suggested awaiting the outcome of the ScC's work on developing a CMS definition of cumulative effects assessment before assessing its effectiveness to ensure a common understanding and enable effective implementation.
569. New Zealand expressed disappointment that only two Parties responded to the questionnaire and said many others were grappling with this issue. They expressed support for requesting the ScC to provide guidance on cumulative effects on migratory species.
570. Uganda wondered if the low response rate was due to lack of capacity and/or further guidance, and suggested further consultations were required prior to the adoption of the proposed Decision.
571. The Interamerican Association for Environmental Defense (AIDA) said CMS could advance more in the incorporation and implementation of the standards being clarified across international law by the International Court of Justice and the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea. AIDA believed future CMS work could usefully focus on operationalizing these standards in practice by: reinforcing precaution where uncertainty persists; improving transparency and data-sharing; and ensuring ecological connectivity and species movement were treated as central considerations in environmental decision-making. It was stressed that this was an important opportunity for CMS to help translate evolving international legal standards into more effective protection for migratory species and the ecosystems on which they depend.
572. The COW Chair suggested more in-depth discussion in the WG on Cross-Cutting Issues, to which the COW agreed.
573. On 27 March, the COW considered CRP28.9 and recommended it to the COP for adoption.
574. On 29 March, the final COP Plenary noted the report contained in Annex 1 of document 28.9/Rev.1 and adopted the draft Decision as contained in [CRP28.9](#).

#### **Item 28.10. Infrastructure**

575. On 24 March, in the COW, the Secretariat introduced document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.28.10/Rev.1](#) *Infrastructure*.
576. Brazil proposed changes to avoid overly broad definitions of infrastructure, emphasizing that the impacts of infrastructure were not uniform and could vary

according to typology, scale, location and regulations. Brazil also proposed deleting reference to precautionary triggers in the absence of adequate data and adding language on instructing the Secretariat to engage with financial institutions to raise awareness of CMS guidance.

577. The EU appreciated the work and proposed several text changes, including adding strategic environmental assessments, deleting references to social impact assessment, and adding language on conducting multi-season and multi-year baseline surveys.
578. The COW Chair said the Secretariat would prepare a CRP based on the Brazil and EU proposals.
579. On 26 March, the COW considered CRP28.10.
580. The EU requested further clarification on text referring to the conduct of multi-season/multi-year baseline surveys on species distribution in concerned development areas. The Secretariat responded that the baseline surveys would be conducted several times to determine whether a species occurred in certain areas. The Secretariat explained that “concerned development areas” referred to areas where infrastructure projects were under development. The EU said these clarifications were not fully reflected in the text.
581. In regards to draft Decision 15. AA on developing technical guidance for adapting critical habitat criteria to migratory species, including ecological connectivity and subpopulation considerations, Brazil proposed deleting the reference to “beyond population aggregation thresholds, and precautionary triggers in the absence of adequate data”.
582. The COW Chair proposed that the EU and Brazil develop consensus wording and recommend it to the Secretariat so a revised CRP could be prepared.
583. On 27 March, the COP considered [CRP28.10/Rev.1](#) and agreed to recommend the CRP to the COP for adoption.
584. On 29 March, the final COP Plenary adopted the draft amendments to Resolution 7.2 (Rev.COP14) and Decisions as contained in CRP28.10/Rev.1.

#### **Item 28.11. Renewable Energy**

585. On 24 March, in the COW, the Secretariat introduced documents [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.28.11](#) *Renewable Energy* and [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.28.11/Add.1](#) *ScC Comments*.
586. The EU noted renewable energy could pose risks for migratory species and did not support the reference to “nature-safe design”, proposing amendments to reflect this.
587. AIDA welcomed progress and stressed the importance of an avoidance-first approach, especially in ecologically sensitive marine and coastal areas and along migratory routes. AIDA further stressed the importance of inclusive participation and transparency in marine spatial planning and siting processes as well as other analyses.
588. The COW Chair said the Secretariat would prepare a CRP based on the proposals made by Parties.

589. On 26 March, the COW considered CRP28.11.
590. The EU requested more time to consider the document. Concerns regarding the concept of “nature-safe design” were raised, and it was argued that reverting to the original text was preferable.
591. Brazil also requested more time to evaluate the document, further questioned the concept of ‘nature-safe design’, and supported strengthening existing concepts like EIAs for which there was a better understanding.
592. Chile requested more time.
593. On 26 March, the COW returned to CRP28.11.
594. Brazil supported “encourages” rather than “urges” Parties and non-Parties to implement voluntary guidelines depending on the particular circumstance of each Party.
595. In regards to integrating biodiversity and migratory species considerations into national energy and climate policies, action plans and regulatory frameworks, Chile asked for an explicit reference to national biodiversity conservation frameworks. It also requested deleting a reference to EIAs beyond national borders considering the limited competencies. In regards to 15.CC a), Chile called for the removal of the reference to assessing and mitigating impacts beyond national jurisdiction. Alternative wording was proposed to emphasize the use of existing national mapping and detection tools, and support for a sustainable energy transition, based on inter-institutional inter-agency coordination.
596. The EU again proposed deleting reference to “nature-safe” design, noting it was not a well understood term.
597. The COW Chair said a revised CRP would be prepared based on these comments.
598. On 28 March, the COW considered a revised CRP CRP28.11/Rev.1.
599. The EU supported “urges” instead of “encourages” Parties and non-Parties to implement the voluntary guidelines. However, Brazil reiterated its support for retaining “encourages”. Following informal consultations on this and on Item 28.1 (*Illegal and unsustainable taking of migratory species*), Brazil said it could accept “urges” in this context if the EU accepted “urges” in Doc.28.1 in the paragraph on Parties and relevant funding agencies providing adequate, predictable and timely financial support.
600. Brazil and the EU agreed to this compromise, and the COW recommended the document to the COP for adoption.
601. The UK supported the EU’s earlier intervention to amend the language in operative paragraph 3 (c).
602. On 29 March, the final COP Plenary adopted the amendments to Resolution 11.27 (Rev.COP13) and the draft Decisions as contained in [CRP28.11/Rev.2](#).

**Item 28.12. Climate Change**

603. On 24 March, in the COW, the Secretariat introduced document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.28.12/Rev.1](#) *Climate Change and Migratory Species*, which was revised by the ScC-SC8, and the related documents [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Inf.28.12a](#) *Report of the Expert Workshop on Migratory Species and Climate Change*; [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Inf.28.12b](#) *Report on Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment Methodologies*; [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Inf.28.12c](#) *Case Studies Demonstrating the Role of Migratory Species in Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation*; and [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Inf.28.12d](#) *Report on the Interpretation of the Term "Barrier" in the Context of Migratory Species Conservation*.
604. Brazil welcomed efforts to coordinate on the impacts of climate change on migratory species, underscoring climate change as an increasingly important driver of habitat loss. Further clarification on proposed strategy definitions, time frames and scales of action was welcomed, noting their policy and implementation implications, and proposed amendments to the text of Annex 1 of Document.28.12/Rev.1 were submitted in writing.
605. The EU supported draft Decisions 15.AA and 15.BB and submitted changes to 15.CC and 15.DD in writing.
606. South Africa supported the adoption of the draft amendments to the Resolution; welcomed the case studies on how to strengthen resilience of migratory species; supported the identification of migratory species most likely to be affected by climate change (Decision 15.CC); supported draft Decisions requesting Parties to share case studies on climate change adaptation; and encouraged Parties to implement available guidelines for identifying areas for migratory species movements, including those caused by climate change.
607. The UK supported the document and its proposed amendments and encouraged the use of available guidelines to understand, plan for and respond to climate impacts on migratory species.
608. The IWC supported the revision of the decision framework and the draft Decisions on climate change, as proposed in Document 28.12/Rev.1.
609. IFAW supported strengthening the evidence base through case studies, and shared an example of its research on the positive role of dugongs for carbon capture and storage in seagrass ecosystems. Born Free Foundation also supported case studies, especially on climate adaptation and land restoration.
610. The National Audubon Society proposed an addition to 15.CC on initiating a process to identify existing assessments of the likely range of migratory species, and suggesting a pilot where such assessments do not exist.
611. The COW Chair said the Secretariat would prepare a CRP based on the proposals and suggestions.
612. On 27 March, the COW considered CRP28.12/Rev.1.

613. The EU proposed deleting the reference to sustainable use from Annex 2, noting that while appreciating the merit of sustainable use, they did not see an explicit relation to climate change. The EU stressed it was more relevant for consideration under Item 28.4 *Communities and Livelihoods*. The UK supported the EU, noting sustainable use was not an appropriate strategy to support climate-induced range shifts.
614. Brazil underscored the importance of sustainable use for climate change and migratory species, noting that some climate change adaptation measures were considered sustainable use. However, in the spirit of compromise, they withdrew their proposal.
615. The COW recommended the revised CRP to the COP for adoption.
616. On 29 March, the final COP Plenary adopted the draft amendments to Resolution 12.21 (Rev.COP14) and the draft Decisions contained in [CRP28.12/Rev.1](#). The COP also noted the findings of the Expert Workshop and of the WG meeting as contained in Annex 3 and 4 in Document 28.12/Rev.1.

### **Item 28.13 Conservation Implication of Animal Culture and Social Complexity**

617. On 24 March, in the COW, the Secretariat introduced documents [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc28.13/Rev.1](#) *Conservation Implication of Animal Culture and Social Complexity* and [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Inf.28.13](#) *Statement on Human and Animal Culture as Determinants of Dynamic Spatial Units for Species Conservation Action*, and recommended adoption of the TOR for the expert WG.
618. Kenya, Senegal and Somalia supported the recommendations and proposed Decisions.
619. South Africa urged a focus on illegal take and unsustainable use practices, and on species that had been identified as threatened, noting limited resources and concern over a lack of focus on priority areas. They proposed an amendment to the draft Decision to focus on identified threats. Zimbabwe agreed with South Africa, also stressing resource shortages.
620. OceanCare expressed support for the establishment of the ACCOBAMS–ASCOBANS joint working group on cetacean culture to complement the work under CMS, and encouraged other daughter agreements to consider culturally transmitted behaviours when determining conservation measures.
621. The COW Chair said the Secretariat would prepare a CRP based on proposals and suggestions.
622. On 26 March, the COW considered CRP28.13.
623. South Africa proposed several amendments, noting that the concepts were not yet mature enough to be prescriptive. In draft Decision 15.CC a) v, South Africa proposed replacing “hunting” with “illegal and unsustainable use”.
624. Senegal argued that the legality of a hunt is not what determines its potential impact on the social learning vital for the populations, and preferred retaining reference to hunting as a form of management.

625. Reflecting on 15.CC a) v, the COP-appointed Councillor for Marine Pollution, Mr Mark Simmonds, noted that the intention of this draft Decision was to encourage the development of a report on how removals from cultural populations may affect them. He suggested replacing “hunting” with “removals”. Zimbabwe, the UK, Senegal and Born Free Foundation supported this suggestion.
626. South Africa said it could agree with the COP-appointed Councillor’s suggestions. In line with the comments made by Zimbabwe, they felt it was important not to frame removals negatively but focus on the contribution of hunting to conservation.
627. Born Free Foundation stressed the Decision was not intended to prevent hunting or taking but was simply about monitoring and understanding the impact on the social behaviour of the remaining animals. They strongly encouraged adoption of the revised Resolution.
628. Conservation Force supported the interventions made by South Africa and Zimbabwe, agreeing that the concept of animal culture was not mature enough for some actions to be requested of the Parties. Regarding 15.CC a) v., Conservation Force suggested a need for balance regarding the word “impacts”, recognizing the possibility of positive impacts, and removal of the word “hunting” or further definition as “illegal and unsustainable” use, in recognition of national circumstances around hunting.
629. The COW Chair said the Secretariat would draw up a revised CRP for consideration.
630. On 27 March, the COW considered CRP28.13/Rev.1 and agreed to recommend it to the COP for adoption.
631. On 29 March, the final COP Plenary adopted the TOR for the Expert WG on Animal Culture and Social Learning and the draft Resolution contained in Document 28.13/Rev.1. The COP also adopted the draft Decisions as contained in [CRP28.13/Rev.1](#).

#### **Item 28.14 Multiple Systems of Knowledge**

632. On 25 March, in the COW, the Secretariat introduced document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.28.14/Rev.1](#) *Multiple Systems of Knowledge*, which was revised by the ScC-SC8. The Secretariat noted that the document also refers to amendments to Resolution 13.7 *Guidelines for Preparing and Assessing Proposals for the Amendment of CMS Appendices*, and Resolution 12.28 (Rev.COP14) *Concerted Actions*, which needed to be read in conjunction with document 28.14/Rev.1, and which would be discussed separately.
633. Brazil, Australia, New Zealand, Cook Islands, Panama and Fiji supported the adoption of the document and its Decisions.
634. Brazil stressed that operationalization of this agenda item should remain non-binding, subject to national circumstances, free, prior and informed consent (FPIC), protection of traditional knowledge, and respect for cultural specificities. Brazil urged inclusion of these terms in the draft Decisions. Australia appreciated Brazil’s emphasis on the benefits of indigenous and local knowledge to sustainable management, observing that they remained significantly under-represented within CMS processes.
635. Argentina requested including “relevant” every time indigenous and local knowledge was referenced.

636. The EU supported the document and requested that the Secretariat include consistent use of language when mentioning indigenous and local knowledge.
637. New Zealand highlighted the inclusion of traditional Māori knowledge on bird breeding and behaviour in developing the listing proposals for the flesh-footed shearwater.
638. The Cook Islands stressed that the need to ensure engagement with indigenous peoples and local communities was grounded in respect for their rights, including FPIC, while cautioning not all knowledge was meant to be shared.
639. Fiji described the contribution of local communities to conservation, such as taboo areas associated with marine closures that protected marine species, including sea turtles, cetaceans, and migratory species. Fiji emphasized the importance of FPIC when engaging indigenous peoples and local communities and supported an inclusive platform that enabled such groups to contribute to CMS.
640. A representative of indigenous peoples and local communities in the Pantanal region appreciated the document's recognition of the relevance of traditional knowledge in conserving migratory species, underscoring that effective inclusion of such groups could contribute to knowledge-sharing and strengthened participation in conservation.
641. The COW Chair said the Secretariat would prepare a CRP based on the suggestions.
642. On 26 March, the COW considered CRP28.14. In regards to draft Decision 15.BB b), the EU proposed deleting reference to "in accordance with national circumstances" with respect to the incorporation of multiple systems of knowledge.
643. South Africa opposed this deletion.
644. On 27 March, the COW returned to this issue and considered CRP28.14, with the EU clarifying it could accept retaining the text on "according to national circumstances", which they had initially proposed deleting.
645. The COW Chair said the CRP would be revised and recommended to the COP for adoption.
646. On 29 March, the final COP Plenary adopted the draft Decisions contained in [CRP28.14/Rev.1](#) and noted the report *Multiple Systems of Knowledge to Support Effective Migratory Species Conservation* contained in Annex 2 of Document 28.14/Rev.1.

## VIII. APPENDICES AND CONCERTED ACTIONS

### ITEM 29. CMS APPENDICES

#### Item 29.1 Treatment of Species included within Aggregated Families Listed in Appendix II

647. On 25 March, in the COW, the Secretariat introduced document [UNEP/CMS/Doc.29.1 Treatment of Species included within Aggregated Families listed in Appendix II](#).

648. As there were no requests for the floor, the COW agreed to recommend the document to the COP for adoption.
649. On 29 March, the final COP Plenary adopted the draft amendments to Resolution 14.19 and the draft Decisions contained in Annex 1 and 2 of Document 29.1.

### **Item 29.2 Maintaining Lists of Species included in CMS Appendices**

650. On 25 March, in the COW, the Secretariat introduced documents [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.29.2/Rev.1](#) *Maintaining Lists of Species included in CMS Appendices*, [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.29.2/Add.1](#) *ScC Comments arising from ScC-SC8*, and the related information documents [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Inf.29a](#) *Maintaining List of Species (Non-Avian) listed in CMS Appendices*; [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Inf.29b](#) *Maintaining List of Species (Avian) listed in CMS Appendices*; and [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Inf.29c](#) *Species+ Database: Current Features and Options for Future Development*.
651. As there were no requests for the floor, the COW agreed to recommend the document to the COP for adoption.
652. On 29 March, the final COP Plenary adopted the draft Decisions as contained in Annex 1 of the document, and noted the *Preliminary findings of the review of the taxonomy, nomenclature and Range State information for species listed on CMS Appendix I and II and CMS Instruments* in Annex 3 and the *Assessment of Migratory Movements of Birds for the Purpose of Disaggregating Families under Appendix II of the Convention on Migratory Species* in Annex 4.

### **Item 29.3 Taxonomy and Nomenclature Updates**

653. On 25 March, in the COW, the Secretariat introduced document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.29.3/Rev.1](#) *Taxonomy and Nomenclature Updates*, [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.29.3/Add.1](#) *ScC comments arising from ScC-SC8*, and [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Inf.29.3](#) *Excerpt from the Standard Reference for Fishes*. It was noted that the document was revised to reflect recent taxonomical changes to the standard reference for fish, specifically for sturgeons. As a result, the Secretariat proposed introducing a nomenclature reference for sturgeons that differed from the remaining fish species.
654. The EU said a updating process should be established on a regular basis and supported the draft Decision.
655. As there were no proposed amendments to the text, the COW agreed to recommend the document to the COP for adoption.
656. On 29 March, the final COP Plenary adopted the draft amendments to Resolution 12.27 (Rev.COP14) and the draft Decisions in the document. The COP also adopted the changes to taxonomy and nomenclature of species listed in Appendix I and II as contained in Annex 3.

### **Item 29.4 Species that Meet the Criteria for Listing on CMS Appendices**

657. On 25 March, in the COW, the Secretariat introduced document [UNEP/CMS/COP/29.4/Rev.1](#) *Species that meet the Criteria for Listing on CMS*

*Appendices*, which was revised by the ScC-SC8, noting that a list of *Migratory Freshwater Fishes that meet the Criteria for Listing on CMS* was now available as part of the *Global Assessment of Migratory Freshwater Fishes* and annexed to document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.25.6.1](#). It was proposed that, depending on the outcome of the discussion in the Aquatic WG, this list could be annexed to Resolution 14.20, as another Annex (next to birds and bats).

658. New Zealand stressed that only species meeting the migration criteria and poor conservation thresholds should be considered for listing, and that determining criteria for other taxonomic groups might be desirable.
659. Given the continuing discussions in the Aquatic WG, the COW Chair said the Secretariat would prepare a CRP taking into account the outcomes from the Aquatic WG.
660. On 28 March, the COW considered [CRP29.4](#) and recommended it to the COP for adoption.
661. On 29 March, the final COP Plenary adopted the draft amendments to Resolution 14.20 as contained in Annex 1 of the document, and the draft Decisions as contained in [CRP29.4](#).

#### **Item 29.5 Towards Harmonization of Taxonomy and Nomenclature**

662. On 25 March, in the COW, the Secretariat introduced document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.29.5](#) *Towards Harmonization of Taxonomy and Nomenclature*, noting that the Secretariat would delete a reference to “external” in relation to a reference to the availability of resources.
663. As there were no requests for the floor, the document was recommended to the COP for adoption, with the change noted by the Secretariat.
664. On 29 March, the final COP Plenary adopted the draft Decision included in the Annex of the document.

### **ITEM 30. AMENDMENT OF APPENDICES I AND II OF THE CONVENTION**

#### **Item 30.1 Guidelines for Preparing and Assessing Proposals for the Amendment of CMS Appendices**

665. On 25 March, in the COW, the Secretariat introduced document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.30.1/Rev.1](#) *Guidelines for preparing and assessing Proposals for the Amendment of CMS Appendices*, which was revised by the ScC-SC8. It was noted that multiple systems of knowledge, including indigenous and local knowledge, could be used when preparing listing proposals. The Secretariat said the document should be read in conjunction with document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.28.14/Rev.1](#) *Multiple Systems of Knowledge*.
666. The EU proposed amendments relating to the draft Resolution. Recognizing that multiple systems of knowledge, including indigenous and local knowledge, could provide insights in planning and implementation of conservation actions and management approaches, the EU supported their application, in particular for implementing Concerted Actions. However, the EU did not support incorporating this

concept in the Resolution and the appended Guidelines, noting that the best available science should be used.

667. Brazil underscored the need to align with other processes, such as the CBD, and to refer to indigenous “and” local knowledge, as there was some inconsistency throughout the document.
668. Australia supported Brazil’s proposed amendments and the need for consistent reference to indigenous and local knowledge. It was explained that the Guidelines included a prompt for Parties to indicate where it may be useful to include indigenous and local knowledge, where relevant.
669. New Zealand agreed with Australia and Brazil and supported the suggested changes to incorporate such knowledge, which Parties were invited, not obligated, to include.
670. The COW Chair suggested referring the discussion to the Cross-Cutting Issues WG, and the COW agreed.
671. On 28 March, the COW considered [CRP30.1](#) and agreed to recommend it to the COP for adoption.
672. On 29 March, the final COP Plenary adopted the draft amendments to Resolution 13.7 as contained in [CRP30.1](#).

### **Item 30.2 Proposals to COP15 for Amendment of Appendices I and II of the Convention**

673. On 26 March, the Secretariat introduced documents [UNEP/CMS/COP/Doc.30.2/Rev.1](#) *Proposals to COP15 for Amendment of Appendices I and II of the Convention*, [UNEP/CMS/COP/Doc.30.2/Rev.1/Add.1](#) and [UNEP/CMS/COP/Inf.30.2](#), noting that the COP would decide on the approval or rejection of proposals contained in [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.30.2.1/Rev.1](#) to [Doc.30.2.17](#).
674. The COW noted the document and recommended it to the COP.
675. On 29 March, at the final COP Plenary, the COP Chair noted that the COW had considered proposals for amendment of Appendices I and II and recommended the listing of 40 species.

#### **Item 30.2.1 Proposal for the inclusion of the populations of Cheetah (*Acinonyx jubatus*) of Zimbabwe on Appendix I and II of the Convention**

676. On 26 March in the COW, Zimbabwe introduced the proposal contained in document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.30.2.1/Rev.1](#) *Proposal for the inclusion of the Cheetah (*Acinonyx jubatus*) population of Zimbabwe on Appendix I and II of the Convention* and [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.30.2.1/Add.1](#) *ScC comments*, noting that the country had an existing cheetah management plan and planned to reintroduce the species in certain areas.
677. Senegal, Algeria, Panama, Brazil, Ghana, Kenya, South Africa, Saudi Arabia and the EU supported the proposal. Kenya noted that Namibia and Botswana were not CMS Parties but were encouraged to cooperate with other countries in the region. The EU commended Zimbabwe for its moratorium on hunting cheetah. South Africa offered to share its best practices in cheetah management with other countries.

678. Saudi Arabia mentioned that more than 50 mummified cheetahs had been found in a cave in the country and that Saudi Arabia was exploring the reintroduction of the species.
679. CCF noted that fewer than 7,000 wild cheetahs remained and that governments needed to take action on a country-by-country basis. CCF also noted the need for a Concerted Action on the cheetah.
680. The proposal was recommended to the COP for adoption.
681. On 29 March, the final COP Plenary adopted the proposal.

**Item 30.2.2 Proposal for the inclusion of the striped hyena (*Hyaena hyaena*) on Appendix I and II of the Convention**

682. On 26 March, in the COW, Uzbekistan, also on behalf of Tajikistan, introduced document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.30.2.2](#) *Proposal for the inclusion of the striped hyena (*Hyaena hyaena*) on Appendix I and II of the Convention and [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.30.2.2/Add.1](#) ScC Comments. Uzbekistan noted a higher threat level than in the current IUCN global assessment, which was considered outdated. It was explained that addressing data gaps required stronger international cooperation and that the striped hyena qualified as endangered in significant parts of its range. It was noted that the ScC had highlighted data deficiencies.*
683. Mongolia, the EU, Panama, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Kenya, Uganda, Brazil and WCS supported the proposal. Kenya noted movement of the species between protected areas and areas inhabited by humans, and that this listing would help stop the trade in hyena body parts for use in traditional medicine.
684. The COW recommended the proposal to the COP for adoption.
685. On 29 March, the final COP Plenary adopted the proposal.

**Item 30.2.3 Proposal for the inclusion of the giant otter (*Pteronura brasiliensis*) on Appendix I and II of the Convention**

686. On 26 March, in the COW, France introduced document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.30.2.3](#), noting difficulties in tracking this species found in the lower Amazon countries and categorized as endangered by the IUCN Red List. France noted that in French Guyana, gold mining had led to a decline in habitat and in the three types of fish it fed on. It stressed the need for improving knowledge of the otter's transboundary movements, and that only around 1,000 giant otters remained.
687. Peru, Bolivia, Panama, Ecuador, Brazil, Paraguay, Senegal, the EU and Venezuela supported the proposal. The EU highlighted threats to the species, whose numbers were expected to decline by more than 50 per cent over the next 25 years.
688. IUCN noted the giant otter's dependence on continuous freshwater systems, and the increased pressures from climate change. In the case of Argentina, extreme drought had impacted the river corridors that connect many South American countries and, thus, the species' migratory routes. IUCN stressed that conservation required international action and financial support for managing shared river basins, monitoring and habitat protection.
689. The proposal was recommended to the COP for adoption.

690. On 29 March, the final COP Plenary adopted the proposal.

**Item 30.2.4 Proposal for the removal of Bukhara deer (*Cervus elaphus yarkandensis*) from Appendix I of the Convention**

691. On 26 March, in the COW, Uzbekistan introduced document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.30.2.4 Proposal for the removal of Bukhara deer \(\*Cervus elaphus yarkandensis\*\) from Appendix 1 of the Convention](#), noting the Bukhara deer population had increased and would still be retained on Appendix II.

692. Saudi Arabia and Zimbabwe supported the proposal to remove the Bukhara deer from Appendix I.

693. The UK opposed removal, observing that despite increases in the Bukhara deer population, the overall population remained small.

694. The EU also opposed removal of the Bukhara deer from Appendix I, expressing concern that removal of this species could result in significant loss of protection and in the Bukhara deer becoming further endangered. The EU stressed that, although the population trend of the Bukhara deer was increasing or stable across most of its range, the numbers were still low. The EU also noted that the information in the initial proposal and in the subsequent document replying to remarks made by the ScC did not provide a clarification of taxonomy nor a satisfactory justification for delisting the species while still ensuring adequate protection.

695. Observing a lack of consensus on the proposal, the COW Chair requested interested Parties to consult informally.

696. On 27 March, the COW returned to this issue.

697. Uzbekistan thanked Parties for the constructive discussion and valuable feedback over the last few days and said it would consider their comments. It mentioned that a multi-stakeholder workshop would be convened in Uzbekistan and thanked the Government of Germany for its financial support. Parties were informed that the workshop would include field visits. Considering all the feedback, Uzbekistan withdrew the proposal.

698. The EU expressed its gratitude to Uzbekistan and looked forward to working together in the future.

**Item 30.2.5 Proposal for the inclusion of gadfly petrels (*Pterodroma sp.*) on Appendix I and II of the Convention**

699. On 26 March, in the COW, New Zealand introduced document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.30.2.5/Rev.1](#) and [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.30.2.5/Add.1 Consultations by the Secretariat with Parties and IGOs](#). They stressed the significant threat to the species, underscoring that some breeding sites were still being identified and petrels as a species required further conservation.

700. Fiji and the Cook Islands, co-proponents, aligned with New Zealand, with Fiji stressing the urgency of locating breeding grounds.

701. Chile, as a co-proponent, said that a failure to act would risk extinction of the species. Brazil, also a co-proponent, stressed that conserving petrels supported CMS's global efforts to safeguard migratory species.

702. The Dominican Republic, a co-proponent, described conservation challenges and stressed its listing as a fundamental step towards conservation of the highly migratory species. Australia, also a co-proponent, mentioned the benefits of listing the species, such as reducing bycatch and enhancing ecological connectivity.
703. The EU, Peru, Ecuador, Panama, UK, Costa Rica, Uruguay, Norway, Monaco, SPREP and ACAP supported the inclusion of gadfly petrels on Appendices I and II, with Peru stressing the urgency of protection.
704. As there were no objections to the proposed listing, the COW agreed to recommend the proposal to the COP for adoption.
705. On 29 March, the final COP Plenary adopted the proposal.

**Item 30.2.6 Proposal for the inclusion of flesh-footed shearwater (*Ardenna carneipes*) on Appendix II of the Convention**

706. On 27 March, in the COW, New Zealand introduced the listing proposal contained in document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.30.2.6](#), noting it had been prepared with Australia and France. Māori tribal authorities were also consulted and provided valuable knowledge about the ecological and cultural importance of this species, including its role as a seasonal marker in the annual calendar. New Zealand highlighted several benefits of the listing, which could lead to: increased international cooperation to improve the uptake and effectiveness of seabird bycatch mitigation use in fisheries across the range; improved compliance monitoring and bycatch data collection; and action to reduce threats like marine plastics and light pollution.
707. Australia, a co-proponent, described escalating threats, including climate change, marine pollution and bycatch, that jeopardized the survival of the species. Australia stressed the listing would strengthen international cooperation to tackle these threats.
708. Brazil, Panama, the EU, Monaco, Samoa, Senegal and ACAP supported the proposal. Samoa noted the species migrated across the Pacific and shared ongoing work in Samoa to protect the species, including tackling marine pollution and bycatch.
709. The proposal was recommended to the COP for adoption.
710. On 29 March, the final COP Plenary adopted the proposal.

**Item 30.2.7. Proposal for the inclusion of the Hudsonian whimbrel (*Numenius phaeopus hudsonicus*) on Appendix I of the Convention**

711. On 27 March, in the COW, Brazil presented the proposal contained in [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.30.2.7](#), which it had prepared with Chile. Brazil explained that the sub-species depended on habitats in more than 30 countries, including 11 CMS Parties. Threats include disturbance from unregulated recreational activities and vehicle traffic on some beaches, ecological change caused by climate change, exposure to heavy metal contamination, and hunting. Brazil noted the family to which this sub-species belonged was already listed in Appendix II and inclusion in Appendix I would strengthen collective conservation efforts.

712. Chile, a co-proponent, highlighted the Hudsonian whimbrel's vulnerability across its transboundary migratory route, with threats affecting resting and breeding areas. It was reported that the sub-species had experienced a 70 per cent population decline over the past three generations, which justified inclusion in Appendix I, and called for coordinated action to protect this sub-species.
713. The EU, Mauritania, Panama, Benin and the Dominican Republic supported the proposal.
714. The proposal was recommended to the COP for adoption.
715. On 29 March, the final COP Plenary adopted the proposal.

**Item 30.2.8. Proposal for the inclusion of the Hudsonian godwit (*Limosa haemastica*) on Appendix I of the Convention**

716. On 27 March, in the COW, Chile presented the listing proposal as contained in [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.30.2.8](#), which was submitted by Chile, Brazil and Peru. Chile, which hosts wintering sites for Hudsonian godwit, explained that the species were threatened by loss and degradation of habitat, hunting, the impacts of climate change and human disturbance.
717. New Zealand welcomed the proposal, explaining it was also a Range State, with a handful of Hudsonian godwit making the world's longest migration from Alaska to New Zealand.
718. Peru, Brazil, Uruguay, Ecuador, the Dominican Republic, the EU and Saudia Arabia supported the proposal.
719. The proposal was recommended to the COP for adoption.
720. On 29 March, the final COP Plenary adopted the proposal.

**Item 30.2.9. Proposal for the inclusion of the lesser yellowlegs (*Tringa flavipes*) on Appendix I of the Convention**

721. On 27 March, in the COW, Uruguay introduced the proposal contained in document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.30.2.9](#) and [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.30.2.9/Add.1](#) ScC *Comments*, noting the species, which visited 50 territories including 32 CMS Parties, had experienced a 60 per cent decline over last three generations, partly as a result of farming and agriculture practices in the species' range. Uruguay supported calling on agriculture ministries and farming representatives to better manage agricultural practices under their remit. Uruguay also explained that existing initiatives, such as the Atlantic Flyway Shorebird Initiative, Pacific Shorebird Conservation Initiative, Americas Shorebird Conservation Strategy 2016, the Midcontinent Shorebird Conservation Initiative, and Road to Recovery, would benefit from the listing of this species and that the ScC-SC had proposed including reference to these initiatives.
722. Peru, Argentina, Bolivia, Panama, the EU, Ecuador, the Dominican Republic, Costa Rica and Brazil supported the proposal.
723. The COW Chair noted the consensus and recommended that the COP adopt the proposal.

724. On 29 March, the final COP Plenary adopted the proposal.

**Item 30.2.10. Proposal for the inclusion of the snowy owl (*Bubo scandiacus*) on Appendix II of the Convention**

725. On 27 March, in the COW, Norway introduced [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.30.2.10](#) and [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.30.2.10/Add.1](#), explaining that the snowy owl faced increasing pressure from climate change, habitat alteration and declining prey availability. Norway explained that monitoring programmes across the Arctic had documented significant fluctuations and, in some regions, declines in snowy owl breeding success, distribution and population stability. It was noted that the listing proposal aligned with broader CMS priorities for Arctic species and supported ongoing scientific collaborations already under way among Arctic States, and that the Arctic Council recognized the snowy owl as a vital indicator of ecosystem health.

726. Saudi Arabia, Liberia, Monaco, EU, Panama and Brazil supported the proposal.

727. The COW recommended the proposal to the COP for adoption.

728. On 29 March, the final COP Plenary adopted the proposal.

**Item 30.2.11. Proposal for the inclusion of the Iberá seedeater (*Sporophila iberensis*) on Appendix II of the Convention**

729. On 27 March, in the COW, Brazil introduced the proposal contained in document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.30.2.11](#), on behalf of Brazil and Argentina. Brazil said the species, which had only recently been described, occurred in Argentina, Paraguay, Bolivia, and in Brazil, where occasional records were restricted to the state of Mato Grosso do Sul. It was argued that the species was threatened by unsustainable agricultural practices, further exacerbated by wildfires, and that some of its congeneric species, with which it shared habitat, were included in the MOU on the Conservation of Southern South American Migratory Grassland Birds and their Habitats. The inclusion of a species named after the Iberá wetlands during a COP held in the Brazilian Pantanal, could help draw attention to and promote the conservation of not only of this species, but of all habitats associated with the region.

730. The EU, Panama, Uruguay, Bolivia and Peru supported this listing proposal.

731. The COW recommended the proposal to the COP for adoption.

732. On 29 March, the final COP Plenary adopted the proposal.

**Item 30.2.12. Proposal for the inclusion of the pelagic thresher (*Alopias pelagicus*), the bigeye thresher (*Alopias superciliosus*), and the common thresher (*Alopias vulpinus*) on Appendix I of the Convention**

733. On 27 March, in the COW, Panama presented the proposal contained in document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.30.2.12](#), noting that the three species cross exclusive economic zones (EEZs) and areas outside national jurisdictions, have unique biological characteristics, such as slow growth, late maturity and a low reproductivity rate, and experience unsustainable mortality due to fisheries and bycatch. Panama observed that despite existing measures in some regions and current Appendix II listings, fisheries and misidentification continued to present a major threat/challenge. It stressed that national measures were insufficient and that precautionary

approach was necessary, explaining the proposal would prohibit targeted fishing and address threats throughout their range.

734. New Zealand, noting Decisions must be based on the best available science, said the criteria for Appendix I listing for the bigeye and common threshers had not been met, and decline was happening in some but not all areas. However, they supported the proposal to list the pelagic thresher as it was critically endangered and met the listing criteria. New Zealand cautioned against undermining CMS listings by diverting attention away from species that face extinction, ensuring that available resources went to those that need it the most.
735. Peru recognized the importance of addressing the conservation of these species. However, following a comprehensive evaluation of the biological, fisheries and socioeconomic criteria, Peru could not support the proposed Appendix I listing in its current form, arguing it had already developed a progressive, evidence-based fisheries management model that integrated conservation and responsible use. The listing would impose excessive obligations – beyond the limits of the current framework – that could generate severe impacts on the communities dependent on these fisheries.
736. While Peru recognized the biological vulnerability of thresher sharks and did not question the need to strengthen their conservation, it argued that Appendix I was not the appropriate instrument for this as it included limited exceptions that were inconsistent with the nature of Peruvian fisheries, where the capture of *Alopias* spp. occurred incidentally in multi-species fisheries. Peru went on to explain that such fisheries provided livelihoods for thousands of Peruvian artisanal fishers as well as a direct source of protein, and that prohibiting fishing under Appendix I would not eliminate interaction with these species, but rather incentivize discarding and illegal trade, while jeopardizing the food security of vulnerable populations. Appendix II provided for evidence-based management and represented an appropriate framework for guaranteeing both the conservation of the species and the livelihoods of those who depend on them. Peru emphasized the importance of evaluating the listing proposal in a manner consistent with other applicable international instruments, such as CITES and the measures in force under the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC), to avoid conflicting obligations that hinder effective implementation.
737. Peru argued proposals of this scope would benefit from earlier dissemination among Range States to ensure fully informed participation of relevant national sectors. This would allow Peru to uphold its commitment to thresher shark conservation and the sustainable use of fishery resources under sound scientific frameworks. Peru stressed that it would continue to promote evidence-based approaches that enable conservation, without compromising the livelihoods of coastal communities. Therefore, Peru opposed the proposal and reiterated its call to maintain the species in Appendix II.
738. Chile also opposed the proposal for listing all three species, adding that listing on Appendix I would require information from all Range States.
739. Following a suggestion from the COW Chair to consider each species separately, Panama said the three species must be considered together, noting difficulties in distinguishing between them.
740. The EU, Benin, Senegal, Uruguay, Monaco, Paraguay, Ghana, Dominican Republic and the UK supported the proposal. The Dominican Republic said it had banned the catch and trade of all the species for an undetermined amount of time.

741. WWF supported the proposal, noting the difficulties with and limited capacity for species-level identification, and arguing the listing would help ensure the three species were no longer overlooked, address data gaps, and allow populations to recover.
742. The COW Chair asked those opposed to the proposal to reconsider their positions. New Zealand, noting support in the room for the proposal, said they would not stand in the way of consensus. However, New Zealand requested that its views be recorded, citing the worrying precedent this could set for future listings that did not meet the listing criteria based on limited evidence.
743. Peru and Chile reiterated their objection to this proposal.
744. The Secretariat then informed Parties of the process for voting, noting that according to the Rules of Procedure a two-thirds majority was required for the proposal to be adopted.
745. Panama requested a roll-call vote.
746. The COW Chair, noting the consensus-based nature of the CMS process, asked if Chile, Peru and Panama could first consult to find a way forward before moving to a vote.
747. Peru reiterated its objection and Panama said it was not in a position to negotiate on the proposal.
748. The COW moved forward with a vote. The Secretariat explained the requirements to exercise the right to vote under the Rules of Procedure (holding valid credentials, according to the Credentials Committee assessment, and not being three or more years in arrears in their contributions). The Secretariat confirmed 60 Parties had valid credentials and 57 could exercise their right to vote, given that 3 Parties with valid credentials were three or more years in arrears.
749. The EU said it would vote as a bloc so 27 votes would be counted.
750. The following 49 Parties voted “yes”: Australia, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Côte D’Ivoire, Eswatini, Ethiopia, the EU (27 votes), Ghana, Liberia, Mauritania, Monaco, Montenegro, Norway, Panama, Paraguay, Republic of Moldova, Samoa, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Uganda, the UK and Uruguay.
751. The following Party voted “no”: Peru.
752. The following 6 Parties abstained: Argentina, Chile, Costa Rica, India, New Zealand and South Africa.
753. Since more than a two-thirds majority voted yes, the listing proposal was recommended by the COW to the COP for adoption.
754. On 29 March, the final COP Plenary adopted the proposal.

**Item 30.2.13. Proposal for the inclusion of the Patagonian narrownose smoothhound (*Mustelus Schmitti*) on Appendix II of the Convention**

755. On 27 March, the COW considered the proposal introduced by Brazil in document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.30.2.13](#), which explained that the population had declined by more than 80 per cent over the last three generations, driven by overexploitation and

incidental catch as well as degradation of coastal habitats. Brazil noted the species was listed on CITES Appendix II at COP20 in 2025 but stressed the need for listing on Appendix I given the current declines. Brazil thanked countries for providing additional information, explaining that this would be submitted as an information document.

756. Uruguay, as a Range State, supported the proposal and thanked Brazil for including their comments in the information document. Panama and Senegal also supported the proposal, with Panama noting the species was endangered throughout the world due to fishing in areas across its range.
757. WCS, on behalf of Bloom Association Hong Kong, Manta Trust, IFAW, Save Our Seas Foundation, Instituto Brasileiro de Conservação da Natureza (IBRACON), Instituto Baleia Jubarte, Charles Darwin Foundation, Unidos Serra da Bodoquena and Divers for Sharks, supported the proposal, stressing the critically endangered status of the species.
758. The COW recommended the proposal to the COP for adoption.
759. On 29 March, the final COP Plenary adopted the proposal.

**Item 30.2.14. Proposal for the inclusion of the scalloped hammerhead shark (*Sphyrna lewini*) on Appendix I of the Convention**

760. On 27 March, Ecuador presented [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.30.2.14](#), stressing that the species had declined by more than 80 per cent over the last three generations and was classified as critically endangered by IUCN. They highlighted threats including overfishing, both from direct fishing and bycatch, driven by international demand for fins and meat. Ecuador acknowledged the progress made by CITES and the CMS Sharks MOU but stressed that the population continued to decline and regulatory mechanisms were insufficient in the face of significant threats, including illegal fishing, climate change and habitat degradation. They emphasized that including the species on Appendix I was urgent to avoid irreversible collapse.
761. Peru welcomed the presentation but said biological data did not allow for the country to support the proposal and called for complementary work between CMS and CITES. Peru explained that transferring the species to Appendix I could have severe impacts on communities that depended on these fisheries. Furthermore, the difficulties in taxonomic distinction would likely create confusion over the species landed in Peru. The scalloped hammerhead shark was bycatch for many artisanal fisheries in Peru and banning its capture would not reduce the species mortality but would compromise the food security of many communities. Peru supported more discussion among Range States, reaffirmed commitment to conservation of the scalloped hammerhead, and called for keeping the species on Appendix II.
762. Panama, as a Range State, observed increased fishing of the scalloped hammerhead shark, noting that the species migration route heightens its vulnerability.
763. Brazil, Kenya, the Dominican Republic, the UK and Saudia Arabia supported the proposal. Kenya stressed that the transfer to Appendix I was necessary to avoid total collapse of the species and would be consistent with an Indian Ocean Tuna Commission Resolution.
764. The Charles Darwin Foundation, on behalf of Bloom Association Hong Kong, IFAW, Instituto Baleia Jubarte, Instituto Brasileiro de Conservação da Natureza, Manta Trust,

Projeto Tubarões, Divers for Sharks, and Save Our Seas Foundation, supported the proposal, pointing to strong scientific evidence demonstrating that hammerhead sharks undertake predictable, cyclical migrations between coastal nursery areas, aggregation sites around oceanic islands and seamounts, and in areas beyond national jurisdictions, demonstrating their migratory nature and strong ecological connectivity. They underscored the global nature of the combined threat facing hammerhead sharks and emphasized the urgent need to strengthen the coordinated international protection offered by the proposal.

765. Peru said they would not block consensus but wanted their objections to the proposal on record.
766. Thanking Peru for their flexibility, the COW Chair confirmed the COW recommended the proposal to the COP for adoption.
767. On 29 March, the final COP Plenary adopted the proposal.

**Item 30.2.15 Proposal for the inclusion of the Great hammerhead shark (*Sphyrna mokarran*) on Appendix I of the Convention**

768. On 27 March, in the COW, Ecuador introduced the proposal contained in [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.30.2.15](#), noting that the species was headed towards global extinction, and listing on Appendix I would send a unified and urgent message in support of its conservation.
769. Peru appreciated the presentation by Ecuador and shared its concern for the state of the species. However, Peru opposed the proposal, questioning whether listing would achieve the desired results. It argued that support could not be granted based on the biological criteria, noting insufficient global data, and said listing on Appendix I would have a negative impact on fishing communities. Peru said a proposal of this scope required prior discussion among Range States.
770. Panama supported the proposal and appealed to Parties to remain consistent in talking about conservation, stressing there was clear evidence of the great hammerhead shark's global decline.
771. The EU, Brazil, the Dominican Republic, Senegal, Monaco, Norway, Kenya, Liberia, Samoa, Fiji, Bangladesh, and Instituto Baleia Jubarte, also on behalf of Divers for Sharks, supported the proposal.
772. Peru noted its position was grounded in a holistic approach, based on scientific evidence, biological criteria and social aspects. Peru did not support the proposal but said it would not block consensus.
773. The COW agreed to recommend the proposal to the COP for adoption.
774. On 29 March, the final COP Plenary adopted the proposal.

**Item 30.2.16 Proposal for the inclusion of the angular angelshark (*Squatina Guggenheim*) on Appendix II of the Convention**

775. On 27 March, in the COW, Brazil introduced the proposal contained in [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.30.2.16](#), noting that Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay, the three Range States, had developed the proposal due to a severe decline in the species.

776. At the same time, the Range States agreed on the need to strengthen scientific knowledge of the dynamic status of the species, which could then be used to strengthen transboundary cooperation, enhance capacity and consolidate joint management measures. Brazil said the Range States would cooperate to enhance their understanding through a GEF project, with the aim of presenting concrete progress in advance of COP16, to strengthen the proposal.
777. Consequently, Brazil withdrew the proposal.
778. The COW Chair confirmed withdrawal of the proposal.

#### **Item 30.2.17 Proposal for the inclusion of the spotted sorubim (*Pseudoplatystoma corruscans*) on Appendix II of the Convention**

779. On 27 March, in the COW, Brazil introduced the proposal contained in [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.30.2.17](#), stressing the significant population decline. It was observed that protective measures were insufficient to ensure the species' survival, and that listing on Appendix II would support conservation, facilitate access to international funding, enhance the exchange of scientific data, and support alignment among Range States.
780. Ecuador, the EU, Peru, Paraguay, Uruguay, Panama, Senegal and WCS supported the proposal.
781. The COW Chair recommended the proposal to the COP for adoption.
782. On 29 March, the final COP Plenary adopted the proposal.

### **ITEM 31. CONCERTED ACTIONS**

#### **Item 31.1 Concerted Actions**

783. On 25 March, in the COW, the Secretariat introduced document [UNEP/CMS/COP/Doc.31.1/Rev.1](#) *Concerted Actions*, which was revised by the ScC-SC8, noting the recognition in the revised document of indigenous and local knowledge when preparing Concerted Actions.
784. Brazil stressed the need for consistency with language adopted in other conventions, including the CBD.
785. The COW Chair said that the Secretariat would prepare a CRP.
786. On 29 March, the final COP Plenary adopted the draft amendments to Resolution 12.28 (Rev.COP14) as contained in [CRP 31.1](#).

#### **Item 31.2. Progress in the Implementation of Concerted Actions**

787. On 27 March, in the COW, the Secretariat introduced [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.31.2](#) *Progress in the Implementation of Concerted Actions*.
788. The COW noted the report.

789. On 29 March, at the final COP Plenary, the COP Chair explained that the COW had considered reports of implementation of Concerted Actions for 11 species or groups of species. The COP noted the reports found in documents UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.31.2.1 to Doc.31.2.11, including four completed Concerted Actions.

**Item 31.2.1. Report on the implementation of the Concerted Action for Chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes*) behavioural diversity and cultures**

790. On 27 March, in the COW, the IUCN SSC Primate Specialist Group (PSG) Section on Great Apes (SGA) WG on Chimpanzee Cultures (WGCC) introduced the report contained in [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.31.2.1](#) and reviewed actions undertaken through the Concerted Action. It was explained that the WGCC was appointed as the Steering Committee for the Concerted Action, and that WGs were established to focus on specific activities outlined in the proposal. They recommended that the Concerted Action be renewed.
791. The COW noted the report.
792. On 29 March, the final COP Plenary noted the report.

**Item 31.2.2. Report on the implementation of the Concerted Action for the Straw-colored fruit bat (*Eidolon helvum*)**

793. On 27 March, in the COW, Uganda noted the document contained in [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.31.2.2](#), which was submitted by Bat Conservation International and the Max Planck Institute of Animal Behavior.
794. Ethiopia noted the benefits provided by the straw-colored fruit bat and commended Uganda for taking the initiative on this proposal. They noted the implementation report could have been presented in a more informative manner and the actions elaborated.
795. The COW noted the report.
796. On 29 March, the final COP Plenary noted the report.

**Item 31.2.3. Report on the implementation of the Concerted Action for the Pallas's cat (*Felis manul*)**

797. On 27 March, in the COW, the Association for the Conservation of Biodiversity in Kazakhstan, on behalf of the submitting organizations, presented the report contained in [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.31.2.3](#). The activities were considered complete, the species had been officially recognized under CAMI, and a proposal for continuing or renewing the Concerted Action would be considered ahead of COP16. A monitoring network for conservation across Kazakhstan and Mongolia was highlighted.
798. The COW noted the report.
799. On 29 March, the final COP Plenary noted the report.

**Item 31.2.4. Report on the implementation of the Concerted Action for the Eurasian lynx (*Lynx lynx*)**

800. On 27 March, in the COW, North Macedonia introduced the implementation report contained in [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.31.2.4](#), noting the Concerted Action would be finalized in the next implementation period.
801. The EU recognized that challenges in the process led to delays, preventing completion of the Concerted Action, and said they would support continuation of the Concerted Action. However, they urged Range States and relevant stakeholders to resolve any complications to achieve the required results.
802. The COW noted the report.
803. On 29 March, the final COP Plenary noted the report.

**Item 31.2.5 Report on the implementation of the Concerted Action for the Giraffe (*Giraffa camelopardalis*)**

804. On 27 March, in the COW, the Secretariat, on behalf of the Giraffe Conservation Foundation (GCF), presented document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.31.2.5](#), which proposed that the Concerted Action be closed and/or amended in line with the new four species taxonomy for giraffe, as recently published by the IUCN SSC Giraffe and Okapi Taxonomy Taskforce.
805. Ethiopia thanked the GCF for its support in developing the Ethiopian Giraffe Conservation Action Plan.
806. The COW noted the report.
807. On 29 March, the final COP Plenary noted the report.

**Item 31.2.6 Report on the implementation of the Concerted Action for Humpback whales (*Megaptera novaeangliae*) of the Arabian Sea**

808. On 27 March, in the COW, the Secretariat introduced the report contained in [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.31.2.6](#), which was prepared by the Arabian Sea Whale Network. The Secretariat highlighted progress and noted the development of a regional conservation management plan (CMP) for the Arabian Sea humpback whale, developed with all Range States as a joint CMP between the IWC and CMS. Following endorsement of the CMP by COP 15, it is expected to be adopted by the upcoming IWC meeting in 2026 and the CMS StC59 in 2027, after which the Concerted Action would be considered completed. Parties would then focus on implementation of the CMP.
809. The IWC commended progress and offered to support work towards the joint IWC-CMS CMP.
810. AWI welcomed meaningful progress for the humpback whale, noting it was one of the most endangered populations in the world.
811. The COW noted the report.

812. On 29 March, the final COP Plenary noted the report.

**Item 31.2.7. Report on the implementation of the Concerted Action for the Sperm whales (*Physeter macrocephalus*) of the Eastern Tropical Pacific**

813. On 27 March, in the COW, the Secretariat introduced the report in [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.31.2.7](#), noting advances in the understanding of sperm whale social structure and culture, improved monitoring and documentation of population status and movements, and expansion of acoustic and citizen-science monitoring.

814. The COW noted the report.

815. On 29 March, the final COP Plenary noted the report.

**Item 31.2.8. Report on the implementation of the Concerted Acton for the Franciscana dolphin (*Pontoporia blainvillei*)**

816. On 27 March, in the COW, Uruguay, on behalf of Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay, introduced the report contained in [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.31.2.8](#), underscoring the alarming levels of bycatch and budget limitations. Uruguay urged Parties to continue supporting regional technical work and working with other fora such as the IWC and RFMOs.

817. The UK welcomed progress and appreciated synergies between Concerted Actions and the work of the IWC. Panama echoed the UK and congratulated the proponents for progress made.

818. The COW noted the report.

819. On 29 March, the final COP Plenary noted the report.

**Item 31.2.9. Report on the implementation of the Concerted Acton for the Antipodean albatross (*Diomedea antipodensis*)**

820. On 27 March, in the COW, New Zealand, on behalf of Australia and Chile, introduced the report in [UNEP/CMS/COP15.Doc.31.2.9](#), noting good progress on fisheries management and research actions, and increased use of satellite tracking tools to determine overlap with high-seas fisheries.

821. SPREP thanked the proponents, noting SPREP had worked with Pacific Island countries on mitigation measures for Antipodean albatrosses in fisheries. ACAP commended the progress made.

822. The COW noted the report.

823. On 29 March, the final COP Plenary noted the report.

**Item 31.2.10. Report on the implementation of the Concerted Action for the Blue shark (*Prionace glauca*)**

824. On 27 March, in the COW, the Marine Research and Conservation Foundation (MARECO) presented document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.31.2.10](#), noting progress made in the identification of Important Shark and Ray Areas to improve understanding of critical habitats and engagement with the tourism sector. Despite progress,

MARECO noted that the blue shark was one of the most exploited species, with continued decline, and proposed an updated Concerted Action that aimed to build momentum and scale up efforts in key areas.

825. The COW noted the report.

826. On 29 March, the final COP Plenary noted the report.

**Item 31.2.11. Report on the implementation of the Concerted Action for the Common guitarfish (*Rhinobatos rhinobatos*) and the Bottlenose wedgefish (*Rhynchobatus australiae*)**

827. On 27 March, in the COW, the IUCN Shark Specialist Group (SSG) introduced document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.31.2.11](#), highlighting significant progress on the scientific and technical foundation for conservation of the species. International management of trade had been strengthened, with all species listed on Appendix II of CITES, and a zero-export quota established. Work was also under way with the CMS Sharks MOU, and the SSG anticipated that all remaining work could be completed under the MOU. Therefore, they recommended closing the Concerted Action, which was agreed.

828. The COW noted the report.

829. On 29 March, the final COP Plenary noted the report.

**Item 31.3. Proposals for Concerted Actions for the Triennium 2026-2029**

830. On 27 March, in the COW, the Secretariat introduced document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.31.3/Rev.1](#).

831. The COW discussed the specific proposals.

832. On 29 March, at the final COP Plenary, the COP Chair noted the COW had considered *Proposals for Concerted Actions for the Triennium 2026-2029*.

**Item 31.3.1. Proposal for a Concerted Action for Chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes*) behavioural diversity and cultures already listed on Appendix I and II of the Convention.**

833. On 27 March, in the COW, the IUCN SSC PSG Section on Great Apes presented the proposal as contained in [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.31.3.1](#), submitted together with the CMS Expert Working Group on Animal Culture, noting that discussions had taken place in the Terrestrial WG. They explained that this Concerted Action is one of two specifically focused on the practical application of knowledge on animal culture in conservation management. The proposed activities seek to achieve coordinated action across the chimpanzee range, focusing on behavioural diversity and culture as fundamental aspects of chimpanzee longevity and persistence. The proposal emphasizes integrating animal culture into conservation policy, safeguarding key habitats, and strengthening collaboration, research and stakeholder engagement to ensure these cultural traits are preserved alongside the species itself.

- 834. Senegal, as a Range State for the chimpanzee, supported the Concerted Action and called for making the financial and technical means available to implement it.
- 835. The Pan African Sanctuary Alliance (PASA), also on behalf of the Nigerian Conservation Foundation, strongly supported the proposal.
- 836. The COW recommended the proposal to the COP for adoption.
- 837. On 29 March, the final COP Plenary adopted the proposal.

**Item 31.3.2 Proposal for Concerted Action for the Straw-colored fruit bat (*Eidolon helvum*)**

- 838. On 27 March, in the COW, Uganda presented the proposal contained in [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.31.3.2](#).
- 839. The EU welcomed efforts made in raising awareness of bats in general and questioned why there were no plans to continue such efforts. The EU requested more information on linking bat conservation with citizen science and ecotourism. The EU supported approval of the Concerted Action but encouraged Parties to reconsider the discontinuation of the awareness-raising measures and instead encouraged them to strengthen these efforts through the Concerted Action.
- 840. The COW recommended the proposal to the COP for adoption.
- 841. On 29 March, the final COP Plenary adopted the proposal.

**Item 31.3.3 Proposal for a Concerted Action for the Eurasian lynx (*Lynx lynx*)**

- 842. On 27 March, in the COW, North Macedonia introduced the proposal contained in [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.31.3.3](#), noting that several activities were under way, including the development of the Carpathian lynx range-wide Conservation Strategy, which would be ready by the middle of 2026, the Guidelines for the Recovery of the Carpathian lynx, which would be ready by spring 2027, and baseline surveys on the conservation status of the two Asian sub-species (*Lynx lynx dinniki* and *Lynx lynx isabellinus*). North Macedonia said the Concerted Action would continue to be implemented and no change in approach was needed.
- 843. The EU supported the proposal, noting it was both a keystone and flagship species, but questioned whether the proponents intended to ensure the outcomes of these activities led to meaningful action.
- 844. The COW recommended the proposal to the COP for adoption.
- 845. On 29 March, the final COP Plenary adopted the proposal.

**31.3.4 Proposal for a Concerted Action for the Striped hyena (*Hyaena hyaena*) proposed for listing on Appendix I and II.**

- 846. On 27 March, in the COW, Uzbekistan introduced the proposal contained in [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.31.3.4](#), noting that discussions had taken place in the Terrestrial WG. It clarified that the proposal was based on the assumption that the striped hyena would be listed on Appendices I and II.

847. The COW recommended the proposal to the COP for adoption.

848. On 29 March, the final COP Plenary adopted the proposal.

**Item 31.3.5. Proposal for a Concerted Action for the Masai giraffe (*Giraffa tippelskirchi*) Northern giraffe (*Giraffa camelopardalis*), Reticulated giraffe (*Giraffa reticulata*) and Southern giraffe (*Giraffa giraffa*)**

849. On 27 March, in the COW, Ethiopia introduced the proposal in document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.31.3.5](#), noting that it was a renewal of the previous Concerted Action for the Giraffe, which was originally developed by Cameroon, Chad, Ethiopia, Kenya, Niger, Tanzania and Zimbabwe. Ethiopia observed that some Range States expressed concern during the discussion in the Terrestrial WG and that Ethiopia viewed the Action as a matter of coordinated action across Range States to conserve the species globally regardless of their status at the national level.

850. Senegal and Kenya supported the proposal.

851. South Africa proposed several amendments to reflect its unique position in giraffe conservation, noting it did not share the same challenges as other Range States.

852. Zimbabwe supported South Africa, noting there were inaccuracies, and proposed sending comments in writing to correct the CRP.

853. The COW Chair asked the Secretariat to prepare a revised CRP, taking into account amendments by South Africa and Zimbabwe.

854. On 28 March, the COW considered CRP31.3.5/Rev.1.

855. With minor amendments from Kenya and South Africa, the COW agreed to recommend the Concerted Action. The Chair said a revised CRP would be presented to the COP for adoption.

856. On 29 March, the final COP Plenary adopted the proposal as contained in [CRP31.3.5/Rev.2](#).

**Item 31.3.6. Proposal for a Concerted Action for the Sperm whales (*Physeter macrocephalus*) of the Eastern Tropical Pacific already listed on Appendix I and II of the Convention**

857. On 27 March, in the COW, the Secretariat introduced document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.31.3.6](#), on behalf of Red Cachalotes del Pacifico, and proposed the continuation of the Concerted Action, one of the two Concerted Actions focused on the interplay between animal culture and conservation. The proposal built on activities in the previous intersessional period focused on long-term monitoring, research collaboration and awareness and engagement. They highlighted the need for financial support across Range States.

858. OceanCare supported the Concerted Action, noting threats from vessel strikes, underwater noise and marine pollution.

859. The COW recommended the proposal to the COP for adoption.

860. On 29 March, the final COP Plenary adopted the proposal.

**Item 31.3.7. Proposal for a Concerted Action for the Franciscana dolphin (*Pontoporia blainvillei*)**

861. On 27 March, in the COW, Uruguay introduced the proposal contained in [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.31.3.7](#), prepared with Argentina and Brazil. They recommended renewing the Concerted Action.
862. AWI, Fundación Cethus, Humane World for Animals, Pro Wildlife, Instituto Baleia Jubarte, the Brazilian Institute for Nature Conservation and IFAW noted that this species was the smallest dolphin in the world and faced significant anthropogenic pressures. Remaining work was highlighted, including attaining new abundance estimates within Argentina, conducting conservation status assessments for Franciscana Management Areas as well as MPA-related assessments, and implementing actions to mitigate threats, particularly incidental mortality from fisheries and bycatch. Cooperation among the three governments and other stakeholders was encouraged, noting that the IWC-endorsed Franciscana Conservation Management Plan was a model for regional collaboration.
863. The Dominican Republic supported the proposal.
864. Brazil said it was proud to co-sponsor this proposal.
865. IWC observed that the Concerted Action complemented the IWC management plan for this species and said that the IWC Scientific Committee would undertake a comprehensive assessment of the species and share its results.
866. The COW agreed to recommend the proposal to the COP for adoption.
867. On 29 March, the final COP Plenary adopted the proposal.

**Item 31.3.8. Proposal for a Concerted Action for the Lahille bottlenose dolphin (*Tursiops truncatus gephyreus*) already listed on Appendix I and II of the Convention**

868. On 27 March, in the COW, Uruguay, on behalf of Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay, presented the proposal contained in [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.31.3.8](#).
869. Uruguay said the proposal was based on a shared responsibility among the three countries harbouring this population. It called for prevention before restoration, arguing that the small populations could not tolerate high levels of additional mortality. Ongoing collaboration between the IWC, CMS, Range States and other relevant stakeholders was highlighted as central to ensuring that the IWC *Conservation Management Plan for Lahille's bottlenose dolphins* and the proposed CMS Concerted Action operate in a fully complementary and harmonized manner, avoiding duplication and maximizing the effectiveness of subspecies conservation.
870. Brazil reaffirmed its commitment to a collaborative approach with all Range States. Brazil announced they would submit proposals for new Concerted Actions at COP16 for the Amazon River dolphin and the Guiana dolphin. They also noted the Brazilian Presidency's plans to increase CMS membership, particularly of Amazonian non-Party States.

871. AWI, Fundación Cethus, Humane World for Animals, Pro Wildlife and others, noted habitat degradation and pollution throughout the species' restricted range. They urged Range States to strengthen cooperation with CMS and IWC, develop a Regional Action Plan, and provide the necessary technical and financial support for implementation.
872. IWC highlighted collaboration between CMS and IWC, noting the Concerted Action would also benefit the Franciscana dolphin.
873. WWF supported Brazil's plan to table a Concerted Action at COP16 on the Amazon River dolphin.
874. The COW agreed to recommend the proposal to the COP for adoption.
875. On 29 March, the final COP Plenary adopted the proposal.

**Item 31.3.9 Proposal for a Concerted Action for the Antipodean albatross (*Diomedea antipodensis*) already listed on Appendix I of the Convention**

876. On 27 March, in the COW, New Zealand presented the Concerted Action contained in [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.31.3.9](#), which it had prepared with Australia and Chile. New Zealand noted the proposal aimed to address fisheries bycatch in the high seas and to progress management of breeding sites.
877. SPREP supported the proposal and shared plans to work with members on port-based outreach activities to improve mitigation actions on fishing vessels. ACAP also supported the proposal.
878. The COW recommended the proposal to the COP for adoption.
879. On 29 March, the final COP Plenary adopted the proposal.

**Item 31.3.10 Proposal for a Concerted Action for the flesh-footed shearwater (*Ardenna carneipes*) proposed for listing on Appendix II of the Convention**

880. On 27 March, in the COW, New Zealand presented the document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/CRP31.3.10](#), which it had prepared with Australia.
881. ACAP supported the proposal.
882. The COW recommended the proposal to the COP for adoption.
883. On 29 March, the final COP Plenary adopted the proposal.

**Item 31.3.11 Proposal for a Concerted Action for the Peruvian or Humboldt Pelican (*Pelecanus thagus*) already listed on Appendix I and II of the Convention**

884. On 27 March, in the COW, Peru presented the Concerted Action in document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/CRP31.3.11](#), arguing it would help reduce the species' decline. Peru highlighted the species' high mortality due to outbreaks of avian influenza, alongside other threats including incidental capture in fishing nets.
885. The co-proponents, Chile and Ecuador, reiterated their support for the proposal, with Chile noting that it aligned with a One Health approach. Ecuador, which marks the northern limit of its breeding range, stressed the importance of protection.

886. The COW recommended the proposal to the COP for adoption.

887. On 29 March, the final COP Plenary adopted the proposal.

**Item 31.3.12 Proposal for a Concerted Action for the Magellanic plover (*Pluvianellus socialis*) already listed on Appendix I of the Convention**

888. On 27 March, in the COW, Chile presented the Concerted Action in document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/CRP31.3.12](#), explaining that Chile and Ecuador had carried out a species census and prepared national plans, including increased monitoring efforts and strengthened cooperation.

889. The COW recommended the proposal to the COP for adoption.

890. On 29 March, the final COP Plenary adopted the proposal.

**Item 31.3.13 Proposal for a Concerted Action for the Sand tiger shark (*Carcharias taurus*) already listed on Appendix I and II of the Convention**

891. On 27 March, in the COW, Brazil presented document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/CRP31.3.13](#), explaining that the proposed Concerted Action aimed to strengthen regional conservation of this critically endangered species in the Southwest Atlantic, encompassing Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay. Brazil recognized that the species was already listed on Appendices I and II of CMS but continued to face severe declines due to bycatch, illegal recreational fishing and degradation of coastal habitats. Brazil explained that the proposal included updating the Regional Conservation Action Plan and enhancing scientific and policy cooperation among Range States. Brazil had provided additional information in response to ScC comments, which were reflected in [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Inf.31.3.13](#).

892. Panama supported the proposal. Uruguay, as a Range State, supported the proposal and committed to work in a coordinated manner in support of the Concerted Action.

893. WCS, on behalf of IBRACON, Instituto Baleia Jubarte, Projecto Tibarões de la Baía de la Ilha Grande, and Divers for Sharks, supported the proposal, noting the sand tiger shark population had declined by more than 80 per cent in the last 75 years. They viewed the Concerted Action as a step towards mitigating the threats the species faced from both commercial and sport fishing.

894. The COW recommended the proposal to the COP for adoption.

895. On 29 March, the final COP Plenary adopted the proposal.

**Item 31.3.14 Proposal for a Concerted Action for the Basking Shark (*Cetorhinus maximus*) already listed on Appendix I and II of the Convention**

896. On 27 March, in the COW, MARECO presented the Concerted Action in document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.31.3.14/Rev.1](#), underscoring the need to further understand basking shark ecology. Deletion of a reference to the UK and the Cayman Islands in the Concerted Action was requested, to correct a factual error.

897. The COW recommended the proposal to the COP for adoption.

898. On 29 March, the final COP Plenary adopted the proposal.

**Item 31.3.15 Proposal for a Concerted Action for the Blue Shark (*Prionace glauca*) already listed on Appendix II of the Convention**

899. On 27 March, in the COW, MARECO presented the Concerted Action in document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.31.15/Rev.1](#), stressing significant exploitation of the species and underscoring the benefits that conservation of the blue shark would provide for similar species facing comparable threats.
900. The COW recommended the proposal to the COP for adoption.
901. On 29 March, the final COP Plenary adopted the proposal.

**Item 31.3.16. Proposal for a Concerted Action for all species of Devil and Manta rays (*Mobulidae*) already listed on Appendix I and II of the Convention**

902. On 27 March, in the COW, Manta Trust introduced the proposed Concerted Action contained in [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.31.3.16/Rev.1](#), which was put forward by Manta Trust, WCS and Ecuador. Manta Trust noted that 10 species were threatened by domestic consumption of their meat and trade in gill plates. They cited declines of more than 80 per cent across oceans, and stressed the need to mobilize technical and financial support.
903. Ecuador said that the country hosted the biggest population of ocean rays worldwide, and that isolated actions would not be sufficient. They noted cooperation between CITES and CMS and said technical support would help with policymaking.
904. Brazil supported the Concerted Action and wished to be added as a co-sponsor of the proposal.
905. The COW recommended the proposal to the COP for adoption.
906. On 29 March, the final COP Plenary adopted the proposal.

**CLOSING OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE**

907. The COW Chair, Mr Khalid Cherki, thanked everyone for their commitment, and the spirit of solidarity and consensus that prevailed. He expressed thanks to Brazil, the staff, volunteers, technical teams, interpreters, translators and the entire Secretariat team, especially Ms Melanie Virtue who had supported his work.
908. Brazil thanked the COW Chair for taking on the role and commended his ability to achieve consensus.
909. Ms Amy Fraenkel, CMS Executive Secretary, thanked Mr Khalid Cherki for his willingness to serve as COW Chair and presented him with a handmade artisanal belt from the Pantanal as a present from the region.
910. The COW Chair said it was a pleasure to have chaired the COW, and declaring the COW closed at 10:05 a.m. on 29 March 2026.

## IX. FORMAL AND CONCLUDING BUSINESS

### ITEM 32. REPORTS OF IN-SESSION COMMITTEES

911. The Chair of the COP resumed the final COP Plenary on 29 March 2026.

#### Item 32.1 Report of the Credentials Committee

912. The COP Chair, HE João Paulo Ribeiro Capobianco, invited the Chair of the Credentials Committee to present the Committee's final report.

913. Australia reported that the Committee had held daily meetings to assess submitted credentials and had validated the credentials of 60 Parties (of the 77 who had attended).

914. The COP approved the report of the Credentials Committee.

#### Item 32.2 Report of the Committee of the Whole and Working Groups

915. The COP Chair reported that all the WGs, including the Budget WG, had successfully concluded their work. He thanked the WG Chairs for their extraordinary work in shepherding the Parties through the agenda, especially the COW Chair, Mr Khalid Cherki.

916. The COW Chair, Mr Cherki, reported that the COW had completed its work in a congenial atmosphere with very good outcomes. The COW approved the listing of 40 species on the Appendices, recommended the adoption or updating of 39 Resolutions, agreed on 16 new Concerted Actions, and approved 9 action plans for migratory species. He said these had all been recommended for adoption by the COP.

### ITEM 33. ADOPTION OF RESOLUTIONS, DECISIONS AND AMENDMENTS TO THE APPENDICES

917. During the final plenary, the COP adopted the Resolutions, Decisions, amendments to the Appendices and Concerted Actions that had been recommended by the COW. These are detailed under the relevant agenda items in this report. The list of amendments to the Appendices can be found in Annex 1 to this report.

### ITEM 34. DATE AND VENUE OF COP16

918. After consulting with the Bureau, [UNEP/CMS/COP15/CRP34](#) was posted on 27 March 2026, announcing the Government of Germany's offer to host COP16.

919. Germany said it was delighted to host COP16 in 2029 and welcomed everyone to Bonn, where the Convention was signed, to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of CMS.

920. Ms Amy Fraenkel, expressed gratitude to the Government of Germany for this offer. Ms Fraenkel stressed the importance of Bonn as the birthplace of CMS, noting that it was a fitting place to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Convention.

921. The COP adopted CRP34, accepting the offer of Germany to host COP16 in 2029 and instructing the Secretariat and StC to begin planning the meeting.

**ITEM 35. ANY OTHER MATTERS**

922. There were no other matters of business.

**ITEM 35. CLOSING STATEMENTS**

923. Uruguay, on behalf of Central and South America and the Caribbean, thanked Brazil for its exemplary Presidency and leadership in facilitating an inclusive space that encouraged the participation of young people and indigenous peoples and local communities. Uruguay highlighted the adoption of key Decisions regarding the mobilization of resources and celebrated the inclusion of new species in the Appendices, as well as the adoption and strengthening of Concerted Actions. It reiterated that important challenges persist, especially in regards to the availability of financial, technical and human resources, and called for the continued strengthening of international support to ensure the effective implementation of COP15 Decisions.
924. Zimbabwe, on behalf of Africa, voiced its appreciation for Brazil for hosting COP15, praising the youth volunteers in particular. It noted that the COP15 commitments and Resolutions were only as good as their implementation. Zimbabwe called on Parties to help change the downward trajectory of species and increase the number of species eligible for downlisting at future COPs. It highlighted the catalytic potential of the Concerted Actions, which contained “brilliant ideas and ambitious commitments” that could help deliver positive progress under the SPMS. Parties were encouraged to establish more TFCAs to promote collaboration across borders, improve flyways, remove barriers in wildlife corridors, and innovate beyond current imaginations to create a better environment for nature and people.
925. The EU was pleased with the COP15 outcomes, noting the adoption of a range of important Decisions that would bring tangible benefits to migratory species and their habitats. The EU appreciated the dedication and flexibility of Parties, which enabled COP15 to achieve so many positive outcomes. It expressed particular appreciation for the adoption of actions on the European eel, the tope shark and the bustard, and the listing of the giant otter. The EU welcomed all additions to the Appendices, noting that they would enhance protection, foster international conservation and raise awareness.
926. Monaco, on behalf of the non-EU European countries present at the COP, thanked Brazil and the Secretariat, highlighting the commitment and professionalism of the Secretariat, which made for a constructive and inclusive COP. Monaco explained that the Decisions adopted demonstrated a collective commitment to addressing international challenges and strengthening international cooperation, confirming that this COP was indeed “a happy COP”. The non-EU European countries urged everyone to continue in the spirit of dialogue and compromise that guided COP15, thanked Ms Fraenkel for her vision and her unwavering commitment to COP15, and looked forward to COP16 in Germany.
927. New Zealand, on behalf of Oceania, thanked Brazil for hosting the meeting and praised the Secretariat and the Chairs for their hard work. In particular, the region wished to thank Ms Amy Fraenkel for her tireless work and careful navigation, which had had a profound effect on the Convention’s effectiveness. Oceania welcomed the outcome of the seabird listing proposals, highlighting seabirds as among the most threatened bird groups. It noted their extraordinary migrations spanning entire ocean basins, making them powerful indicators of ocean health and connectivity. Oceania urged Parties to help elevate these species in national, regional and international initiatives, and cooperate to prevent them from sliding into extinction. They also welcomed the Resolution on seabirds and marine flyways as well as the recognition of multiple

- systems of knowledge. Oceania underscored the importance of addressing key pressures on migratory species, including bycatch, habitat degradation and emerging health risks, and called for recognizing the special circumstances and needs of Pacific SIDS, including effective financial resources, resource mobilization, strengthened capacity, and streamlined and harmonized reporting.
928. India thanked the CMS Secretariat for supporting the Central Asian Flyway (CAF) Initiative and explained it was establishing a Coordination Unit to implement the CAF. It commended progress made on SSAPs, including on the steppe eagle, saker falcon and seabirds. India announced it will be hosting a meeting of the International Big Cat Alliance in June and looked forward to collaborating with partner countries.
929. Argentina thanked Brazil for hosting COP15, highlighted Argentina's role as a co-sponsor of several proposals, and noted its intent to cooperate with Brazil and Uruguay to advance conservation of the angelshark. Argentina underscored the importance of strengthening synergies between CMS and other agreements, stressing the need to respect mandates to ensure a coherent multilateral system. The BBNJ Agreement was emphasized as the appropriate forum for conserving areas and species outside national jurisdictions and the ISA as the appropriate forum for discussing deep-sea mining.
930. IUCN thanked Brazil and welcomed the adoption of the Samarkand SPMS and its monitoring framework, and new listings and Concerted Actions for the protection of species. IUCN expressed its willingness to help support implementation and scientific understanding.
931. BirdLife International spoke on behalf of AWI, BEES, BirdLife International, Born Free Foundation, Charles Darwin Foundation, CCF, Deep Sea Conservation Coalition, Fondation Franz Weber, Fundación Cethus, Humane World for Animals, IFAW, Irish Basking Shark Group and Marine Research and Conservation Foundation, Law of the Wild, Manta Trust, OceanCare, Pan African Sanctuary Alliance, Panthera, Pro Wildlife, Save Our Seas Foundation, and WWF. They commended efforts to mitigate bycatch and not engage in seabed mineral exploration, applauded the America Flyways Initiative and the new initiative on illegal and sustainable take, and welcomed measures to protect seamounts from destructive fishing practices and the inclusion of the snowy owl on Appendix II.
932. Instituto Baleia Jubarte, also on behalf of Divers for Sharks, welcomed the courage shown in conserving migratory species at CMS, underscoring biodiversity as a shared heritage and calling for continued courage to address threats to migratory species.
933. Born Free Foundation underscored the challenge of financing for implementation, encouraging participants to discuss the importance of natural capital with their finance ministers. They called for the adoption the 'Payment for the Ecosystem Services of Animals' (PESA) to measure the value of individual animals to ecosystem function over the course of their lives. They proposed that the PESA concept could help solve the biodiversity funding gap.
934. A representative of indigenous peoples of Brazil expressed appreciation for the contribution of traditional knowledge and practices to COP15. The representative reaffirmed that indigenous peoples and local communities of Brazil understood habitats to mean traditional territories, and called for the inclusion of this term in CMS and a permanent space for indigenous peoples in future COPs. Parties were also called on to include such groups in their conversations on migratory species conservation.

**ITEM 36. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT**

935. The Chair invited the COP to adopt the Report of the Meeting. Comments on the daily reports published on the website could be sent to the Secretariat and delegates would have one month from the date of the posting of the final report on the CMS website to submit written comments, corrections or other proposed amendments to the Secretariat.

**ITEM 37. CLOSURE OF THE MEETING**

936. In his closing remarks, the COP Chair praised COP15 for showing that multilateralism still mattered and that nature did not recognize borders. He highlighted the profound sense of shared responsibility that was at the core of the Convention, noting the unique way in which migratory species connected the world. He highlighted connectivity as the difference between survival and collapse, and between ecosystems that functioned and those that failed. Mr Capobianco said the closure of COP15 represented the opening of a mandate and that Brazil would work over the next two years to expand CMS membership, increase the Convention's visibility, and build strong bridges with other MEAs. Mr Capobianco thanked the team from Brazil's Ministry of Environment and Climate Change and the CMS Secretariat. He gave special thanks to Ms Amy Fraenkel for her passion, which had left a legacy for the Convention.
937. In her closing statement, Ms Amy Fraenkel said that despite the shorter-than-usual intersessional period, an enormous amount of work had been accomplished, building on the foundation set by COP14, the State of the World's Migratory Species report, and advancing implementation of the Samarkand SPMS. Ms Fraenkel highlighted the addition of 40 new species to the CMS Appendices to advance work over the next three years.
938. Ms Fraenkel said CMS was one of the most important international agreements dealing with the environment, addressing the same pressures as the three Rio Conventions, CITES, the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, the chemical conventions, and others. CMS operated through the lens of living creatures found all over the world that depend on migration for survival, connecting countries, continents and communities.
939. Ms Fraenkel said one of her main goals as Executive Secretary had been to elevate CMS to its proper place in the mosaic of MEAs. She believed that CMS was stronger than when she first took up her post. Ms Fraenkel reflected that CMS had also affected her deeply and in positive ways, citing several accomplishments during her tenure, including: elevating the concept of ecological connectivity; the launch of initiatives on ecological connectivity and on illegal and unsustainable taking of migratory species; and the integration of CMS into the GBF, GEF programming and a new IPBES assessment on ecological connectivity.
940. Ms Fraenkel described the increased awareness of the importance of migratory species and of CMS among media around the world, citing significant press coverage of COP15, including 4,213 articles, in 26 languages, on 1,153 different news sites, across 78 countries, with potentially over 6 billion online impressions. Ms Fraenkel stated that several non-Party governments had joined CMS under her watch, and that COPs were attracting a greater representation of Parties and observers from around the world.

941. Looking to the future, Ms Fraenkel underscored five key priorities for CMS:
- implementing the recommendations of the *State of the World's Migratory Species* report;
  - continuing to mainstream ecological connectivity;
  - a stronger, more holistic approach to wildlife management;
  - more meaningful engagement with indigenous peoples and local communities; and
  - increasing the number of Parties to CMS.
942. Ms Fraenkel thanked everyone, including the Government of Brazil, indigenous peoples and local communities, the StC and ScC Chairs, scientific Councillors and SC members, COP-appointed Councillors, the local Brazilian staff and volunteers, technicians, interpreters, report writers, and the CMS Secretariat Staff. Ms Fraenkel thanked the Government of Germany for hosting the CMS Secretariat and for its offer to host COP16.
943. The Secretariat thanked Ms Fraenkel for her contributions to multilateralism, after almost 20 years in the UN, including roles at UNEP and the CBD, and for guiding CMS through three COPs.
944. The COP Chair gavelled COP15 to a close, declaring the end of the meeting at 15:16 on Sunday 29 March 2026.