

**8th Meeting of the Sessional Committee of the
CMS Scientific Council (ScC-SC8)**

Bonn, Germany, 15-18 December 2025

UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC8/Report

REPORT OF THE MEETING

I. OPENING OF THE MEETING AND ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

ITEM 1. OPENING OF THE MEETING

1. Ms Narelle Montgomery, Chair of the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) Scientific Council and of its Sessional Committee (ScC-SC), opened the meeting, the last before the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS COP15). Ms Montgomery noted the shortened intersessional period, with roughly 12 months to meet document deadlines and preparations. She acknowledged the efforts of all Committee members and observers during this intersessional period. In reviewing more than 65 papers over the past few weeks, she highlighted the opportunity to harmonize language, particularly regarding draft Decisions.
2. Ms Amy Fraenkel, CMS Executive Secretary, noted the last six months had been intense in terms of meetings of relevance to the CMS, including the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, the IUCN World Conservation Congress (WCC), CITES COP20, and the 7th meeting of the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA-7). Her aim was to bring the CMS perspective to all meetings. She mentioned an event at UNEA on ecological connectivity, one of the most important concepts recently that had been mainstreamed thanks to CMS. She highlighted that two-thirds of documents that go to the COP have some scientific element, underscoring the importance of the ScC's work. She noted that 42 species were being proposed to add to the appendices, one proposal for deletion of a species from Appendix II, and the need to bring those that would benefit from listing into the Convention. Ms Fraenkel warned that 97% of migratory fish species listed under the Convention were in decline. She thanked all the members of the ScC-SC and intersessional working groups members, and Ms Dagmar Zikova from the CMS Secretariat for her efforts in preparing for the meeting.

ITEM 2. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND MEETING SCHEDULE

Item 2.1 Provisional Agenda and Documents and 2.2 Provisional Annotated Agenda and Meeting Schedule

4. The Chair invited the ScC-SC to review and provide comments on [UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC8/Doc.2.1 Provisional Agenda and Documents](#) and [UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC8/Doc.2.2 Provisional Annotated Agenda and Meeting Schedule](#).

5. Mr James Williams (Alternate ScC-SC member for Europe) said some papers included amendments to Resolutions without sufficient explanation of the changes and requested that more information be provided to the in-session Working Groups (WGs).
6. It was proposed that given the extensive agenda of ScC-SC meetings, extension to five days instead of four might be justified for the meetings before the COP, while the ScC-SC meetings following the COP could be shortened to three days. This would then be neutral for the meeting budget. However, this arrangement was not supported as it would require some participants to travel far distances for only a three-day meeting.
7. The agenda and meeting schedule were adopted without amendment.

II. STRATEGIC AND INSTITUTIONAL MATTERS

ITEM 3. SAMARKAND STRATEGIC PLAN FOR MIGRATORY SPECIES 2024-2032

8. The Secretariat introduced document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.15](#) *Samarkand Strategic Plan for Migratory Species (SPMS) 2024-2032*.
9. Mr James Williams (Alternate ScC-SC member for Europe) said the new National Report format should be available at least a year in advance of COP16 and reporting that would come out of the new Plan should be as streamlined as possible.
10. Mr Zeb Hogan (COP-appointed Councillor for Fish), looking from a freshwater fish perspective and at achieving SPMS Target 1.1. by 2029, mentioned that some legacy species either did not occur in areas where Range States and Parties coincided, or action had not been seen in some time. He said while achieving SPMS Target 1.1 was desirable, it was aspirational, particularly with respect to the species he was familiar with. Ms Vanesa Tossenberger (COP-appointed Councillor for Aquatic Mammals) agreed.
11. Ms Rima Jabado (COP-appointed Councillor for Fish) said, for sharks and rays, it was impossible to see recovery in the next 10 years, even if all fishing were to stop today.
12. The proposal to include a specific timeframe for implementing Draft Decision 15.BB b) was reflected in an addendum in [UNEP/CMS/SC-SC8/CRP 3](#), which was adopted by the ScC-SC8.

ITEM 4. SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL

Item 4.1 Sessional Committee Members

13. On 15 December, the Secretariat introduced document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.16.1](#) *Sessional Committee Members*. The ScC-SC8 was invited to make recommendations to the COP regarding candidates for the vacant position of the COP-appointed Councillor for Wildlife Health and on the composition of the SC, and to revise the document, if necessary.
14. The Chair noted this would be the last meeting for Ms Ruth Cromie as the COP-appointed Councillor for Wildlife Health, noting Ms Cromie enthusiastically progressed this workstream and would leave with big shoes to fill. Five nominations for a new COP-appointed Councillor for Wildlife Health were submitted and were made available in an addendum to the document. Ms Cromie said the One Health approach provided an opportunity to advance the relationship between health and the environment, and was a double win for conservation and health. She said the position required good organizational skills to lead the WG's activities.

15. The Secretariat recalled the ScC-SC7 discussion and conclusions that all subject areas of the COP-appointed Councillors were well justified and should be maintained, with a suggestion to change the title of one subject area. Given the high volume of work on Terrestrial Mammals, the Secretariat invited ScC-SC8 to consider whether the work should be shared by two Councillors.
16. Returning to this issue on 17 December, the ScC-SC8 agreed that all five nominees for the COP-appointed Councillor on Wildlife Health were well qualified, with two of them, Mr Craig Stephen and Mr. Chris Walzer, being exceptionally qualified and understanding of the holistic issues related to health.
17. There was support for requesting the COP to look into the possibility of sharing the Terrestrial Councillor position between two experts. A request was made that the Secretariat issue a call for possible candidates so options would be available at COP15. ScC-SC8 agreed to consider the candidates for the second position for Terrestrial Mammals in advance of the COP by email exchange and invited the Secretariat to facilitate this exchange and make their comments available to Parties.
18. On 18 December, changes to the document were recorded in [UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC8/CRP 4.1.](#), which was adopted by the ScC-SC8.

Item 4.2 Overview of the Working Groups and Task Forces Established under the Scientific Council and its Sessional Committee

19. The Secretariat introduced document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.16.2 Overview of the Working Groups and Task Forces established under the ScC and its SC](#), noting Annex 1 provided an overview of WGs and Task Forces with open-ended durations, while Annex 2 included overviews of those with time-bound durations.
20. The Chair suggested changing the statutes of some WGs from time-bound to open-ended may be needed, explaining that a WG with a set duration could not begin work until the first ScC-SC meeting post-COP, while noting that ScC-SC7 had favored setting a duration where appropriate.
21. Mr James Williams (Alternate ScC-SC member for Europe) said all WGs should be time-bound but the duration could always be extended, decisions should be made in advance rather than leaving gaps between COP and post-COP meetings, and appropriate TOR would be needed for the WGs to continue.
22. The CMS Executive Secretary asked whether, if some work had not been completed, the WGs could continue their work without having to wait until the first ScC-SC meeting post-COP. She asked whether the TOR could be revised now or noted in the meeting report and said adding such a phrase would ensure ongoing work could continue prior to the post-COP ScC-SC meeting.
23. Mr Mark Simmonds (COP-appointed Councillor for Marine Pollution) mentioned a proposal to establish a new WG on Marine Pollution and hoped it could be agreed on and that the WG could begin work prior to ScC-SC9.
24. Comments were reflected in an addendum contained in [UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC8/CRP 4.2.](#), which was adopted by the ScC-SC8. The ScC-SC8 agreed to amend the provision on duration in the TOR of the working groups on Climate Change, Taxonomic and Nomenclatural Issues and Potential Taxa for Listing, Maintaining Lists of Species Listed in CMS Appendices, Ecological Connectivity, and Pastoralism, to read "Sessional Committee determines that their work is complete, or until an alternative arrangement is

made". Amended TOR of these working groups are available as Annex to this meeting report, except the ToR of the Working Group on Pastoralism, which is dealt with separately in document UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.28.6.

Item 4.3 Implementation of the Programme of Work for the Sessional Committee of the Scientific Council for the Intersessional Period between COP14 and COP15

25. The Secretariat introduced document [UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC8/Doc.4.3](#) *Implementation of the Programme of Work for the Sessional Committee of the Scientific Council for the Intersessional Period between COP14 and COP15*. The document was adopted by the ScC-SC8 without further comment.

ITEM 5. COLLABORATION WITH OTHER ENTITIES

Item 5.1 Cooperation with the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES)

26. The Secretariat introduced document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.18.2](#) *Cooperation with Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES)*. The draft Decisions mandated the ScC to stay involved in IPBES scoping and review processes, to ensure CMS priorities were reflected in IPBES assessments.
27. The Chair noted that the next intersessional period was important for CMS to closely cooperate with IPBES on their assessments, particularly with respect to that on spatial planning and ecological connectivity, which CMS has worked hard over many years to get into the IPBES programme. Mr Alfred Oteng-Yeboah (COP-appointed Councillor for Terrestrial Mammals) was pleased that CMS had reached this stage, as many attempts had been made to engage with IPBES.
28. The document was endorsed by the ScC-SC8.

III. SCIENTIFIC ASSESSMENTS AND REPORTS

ITEM 6. CONSERVATION STATUS OF MIGRATORY SPECIES

Item 6.1 Development of the next Report on the State of the World's Migratory Species

29. Ms Vanesa Tossenberger (COP-appointed Councillor for Aquatic Mammals) introduced document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.20.1](#) *Development of the next Report on State of the World's Migratory Species*, which highlighted recommendations for the development of the second report.
30. Mr James Williams (Alternate ScC-SC member for Europe) suggested, for Annex 2 line 2 on Monitoring of species and habitats (baselines), to link with the conclusions of the IPBES monitoring assessment.
31. Australia proposed minor amendments regarding collaboration with the CITES Secretariat in preparing information material (15.BB d) given that the CMS Standing Committee (StC) should review information prepared for CITES Management Authorities prior to distribution. Ms Tossenberger, while agreeing that interactions between conventions can save time and money, cautioned that their different mandates must be considered.
32. Changes to the document were recorded in [UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC8/CRP 6.1](#), which was adopted by the ScC-SC8.

Item 6.2 State of the World's Migratory Species – Interim Report (2026)

33. The Secretariat introduced [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.20.2](#) *State of the World's Migratory Species: Interim Report (2026)* along with UNEP-WCMC, which developed the report. UNEP-WCMC explained that one out of four CMS-listed species were now globally threatened and mentioned an update on key biodiversity areas of importance for CMS-listed species.
34. The Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) highlighted a modeling study undertaken on marine turtles, noting turtles were not on a good path in the Pacific, which was home to several turtle species. He requested its inclusion in the report.
35. Mr James Williams (Alternate ScC-SC member for Europe) expressed concern that some of the graphics might be difficult to read and said accessibility issues should be addressed.
36. Comments to the document were recorded in addendum contained in [UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC8/CRP 6.2](#), which was adopted by the ScC-SC8.

ITEM 7. ATLAS ON ANIMAL MIGRATION

37. The Secretariat introduced document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.21](#) *Atlas on Animal Migration*. The document proposed strengthening cooperation with holders of animal movement data, such as [Move BON](#), and suggested a strategic discussion on the future concept of the Atlas to further improve its usability for conservation policies.
38. Australia highlighted other potentially useful tools to progress development of the Atlas, such as the [Blue Corridors](#) platform and the [MegaMove](#) project, run by the Australian National University.
39. Cooperation was recommended between the Secretariat and the IUCN SSC Shark Specialist Group workstream on identifying Important Shark and Ray Areas, as well as with the IUCN SSC Cetacean Specialist Group on Important Marine Mammal Areas (IMMAs), to support differentiation between migratory corridors and movements associated with residency or core habitat areas.
40. Comments to the document were recorded in addendum [UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC8/CRP 7](#), which was adopted by the ScC-SC8.

IV. INTERPRETATION OF TAXA-SPECIFIC AND CROSS-CUTTING MANDATES

ITEM 8. AQUATIC SPECIES CONSERVATION ISSUES

Item 8.1 Fisheries-induced Threats and Direct Take

Item 8.1.1 Bycatch and other Fisheries-Induced Mortality

41. The Aquatic WG considered document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.25.1.1](#) multiple times over two days. The draft Resolution attracted many comments. A contact group was formed to help clarify views, especially on the proposed definition of bycatch. There were diverging views on the need for and the content of the definition for bycatch. Eventually, an interim definition was agreed and recommended to COP15 for further consideration, along with other changes to the draft Resolution and to the draft Decisions.

42. Comments to the document were recorded in addendum [UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC8/CRP 8.1.1](#), which was adopted by ScC-SC8.

Item 8.1.2 Bycatch of Chondrichthyan Species

43. The Aquatic WG discussed document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.25.1.2 *Bycatch of Chondrichthyan Species*](#) and felt the Decisions proposed for deletion should be renewed. The WG agreed there should be a call for a more thorough analysis of national legislation. It was noted that key examples were missing from the analysis, such as the requirement in all Mediterranean countries to prohibit skinning and beheading before first sale in order to support species identification.
44. The proposal to renew the Decisions was included in addendum [UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC8/CRP 8.1.2](#) to the document, and adopted by the ScC-SC8.

Item 8.1.3 Fish Aggregating Devices

45. The Aquatic WG, discussing document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.25.1.3 *Fish Aggregating Devices \(FADs\)*](#), noted the report and welcomed its associated recommendations. Mr Mark Simmonds (COP-appointed Councillor for Marine Pollution) pointed out that FADs should be considered in the context of marine pollution rather than fisheries, although the topic was included under the ScC-SC8 agenda item on *Fisheries-induced Threats and Direct Take*. The WG proposed changes to one of the draft Decisions, which was recorded in an addendum contained in [UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC8/CRP 8.1.3](#).
46. The addendum to the document was adopted by the ScC-SC8.

Item 8.1.4 Aquatic Wild Meat

47. The Aquatic WG, on document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.25.1.4 *Aquatic Wild Meat*](#), welcomed the *Global Review of Direct Take of Seabirds* and its associated recommendations. The WG made minor amendments to the proposed TOR for the ScC Aquatic Wild Meat WG. The Aquatic WG discussed whether, in view of the broader work stream under the CMS WG on Illegal and Unsustainable Taking, a separate working group on aquatic wild meat was still required. Several participants stressed the important gap that this workstream covered, given the complexity of the issue, and the synergies with species-focused work such as that under the Single Species Action Plan (SSAP) for the Atlantic humpback dolphin. The WG agreed that close alignment and coordination between these two workstreams was important. Proposed changes were recorded in a CRP.
48. Changes to the document were recorded in [UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC8/CRP 8.1.4](#), which was adopted by the ScC-SC8.

Item 8.2 Marine Pollution and Other Threats

Item 8.2.1 Marine Pollution

49. The Aquatic WG, discussing document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.25.2.1 *Marine Pollution*](#), welcomed the [Report of the CMS Pollution Workshop](#) and its recommendations, noting this was a broad topic that remained very relevant. The WG introduced several edits to the draft Resolution and draft Decisions, which were recorded in a CRP of the meeting document.

50. In plenary, it was agreed that the standard wording for WG duration be added. The changes to the document were recorded in [UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC8/CRP 8.2.1](#), which was adopted by the ScC-SC8.

Item 8.2.2 Underwater Noise

51. On document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.25.2.2 Underwater Noise](#), the Aquatic WG commended the report on [Anthropogenic Underwater Noise Impacts and Mitigation Strategies for CMS-listed Freshwater Mammals and their Prey Species](#). There were no comments on the proposed Decisions. Hence, no CRP was issued.
52. In plenary, the ScC-SC8 endorsed the document.

Item 8.2.3 Deep-sea Mining

53. On document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.25.2.3 Deep-Sea Mining](#), the Aquatic WG found the report *Impacts of Deep-sea Mining on Migratory Species: Review and Knowledge Gaps* useful. They agreed this was an emerging threat to migratory species and that new science was coming out all the time, making this a rapidly evolving issue.
54. Mr Mark Simmonds (COP-appointed Councillor for Marine Pollution) emphasized the importance of the precautionary approach, reiterated on page 1 of the report. Several observers viewed the report's recommendations regarding mitigation actions as premature and not aligned with Resolution 14.6. The Aquatic WG proposed replacing the recommendations with ones drafted by the WG. These and other comments were recorded in an addendum contained in [UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC8/CRP 8.2.3](#).
55. In plenary, the addendum to the document was adopted by the ScC-SC8.

Item 8.3 Marine Area-based Conservation Management

Item 8.3.1 Priorities for Area-based Conservation of Marine Migratory Species

56. The Aquatic WG considered [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.25.3.1 Priorities for Area-based Conservation of Marine Migratory Species](#), welcoming the initiative to streamline CMS work on area-based conservation of marine migratory species. There were no comments on the proposed Resolution on *Important Marine Turtle Areas*. Comments on the draft Resolution on *Priorities for Area-based Conservation of Marine Migratory Species* and the associated Decisions were recorded in an addendum contained in [UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC8/CRP 8.3.1](#).
57. In plenary, the addendum to the document was adopted by the ScC-SC8.

Item 8.3.2 Vessel Strikes

58. The Aquatic WG noted document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.25.3.2 Vessel Strikes](#). Amendments to the draft Decisions were recorded in an addendum contained in [UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC8/CRP 8.3.2](#).
59. In plenary, the addendum to the document was adopted by the ScC-SC8.

Item 8.3.3 Conserving Seamount Ecosystems

60. On document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.25.3.3 Conserving Seamount Ecosystems](#), the Aquatic WG thanked the Governments of Monaco and Panama for drawing attention to

this important subject, and the Deep Sea Conservation Coalition for a very informative scientific background presentation. The draft Resolution and draft Decisions were recommended for adoption with minor amendments as outlined in the addendum contained in [UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC8/CRP 8.3.3](#).

61. In plenary, the ScC-SC8 adopted the addendum to the document.

Item 8.4 Marine Mammals

Item 8.4.1 Conservation Priorities for Cetaceans

62. The Aquatic WG, regarding document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.25.4.1 Conservation Priorities for Cetaceans](#), praised the expansive body of work undertaken in the short intersessional period. This included reports on: (1) [Contemporary Whaling and Aquatic Wild Meat Take of CMS Appendix-I-listed Cetaceans](#); (2) [Impacts of Climate Change on Cetacean Welfare and Conservation](#); and (3) [Out of Habitat Cetaceans](#). Some minor changes to the TOR and the draft Decisions were recorded in a CRP.
63. In plenary, Ms Vanesa Tossenberger (COP-appointed Councillor for Aquatic Mammals) recommended adding a decision requesting the Secretariat to discuss, with the International Whaling Commission (IWC) Secretariat, the development of a joint work programme, building on the existing MOU between CMS and IWC. This was to avoid duplication and further increase collaboration, especially given limited funding.
64. Mr Mark Simmonds (COP-appointed Councillor for Marine Pollution) said the work undertaken by both bodies should be strengthened. He suggested specifying the joint work programme would be “on the conservation of cetaceans”.
65. The IUCN Cetacean Specialist Group said an existing MOU that supported collaboration and could be included as well. Mentioning the [Marine Mammals Protected Areas Task Force](#), she said IUCN could also be involved in such a collaboration. Ms Tossenberger welcomed the involvement of IUCN.
66. The Secretariat noted they would need to discuss this with IWC, which would, in turn, need to discuss the issue with its members. The IWC agreed with the proposed wording with respect to the joint work programme.
67. Changes to the document were recorded in [UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC8/CRP 8.4.1/Rev.1](#), which was adopted by the ScC-Sc8.

Item 8.4.2 Cetacean Action Plans

68. On document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.25.4.2 Cetacean Action Plans](#), the Aquatic WG welcomed the draft joint CMS/IWC Conservation Management Plan (CMP) for Arabian Sea Humpback Whales, with a process foreseeing adoption by the StC following its adoption by IWC Member States in November 2026. There were no comments on the draft CMP or the proposed Decisions. Hence, no CRP was issued.
69. In plenary, the addendum to the document was adopted by the ScC-SC8.

Item 8.5 Marine Turtles

70. Regarding document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.25.5 Marine Turtles](#), the Aquatic WG welcomed the proposed Decisions without suggested amendments. Some comments regarding the implementation reports of the SSAP for the Hawksbill Turtle in South-East

Asia and the Western Pacific Ocean Region were recorded in an addendum contained in [UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC8/CRP 8.5](#).

71. In plenary, the addendum to the document was adopted by the ScC-SC8.

Item 8.6 Fish

Item 8.6.1 Freshwater Fish

72. On document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.25.6.1 Freshwater Fish](#), the Aquatic WG noted that the *Global Assessment of Migratory Freshwater Fishes* was excellent, looking at the species in river basins and on the regional level. The WG made minor changes to the summary and recommendations, the draft Resolution, and the draft Decisions as recorded in a CRP of the meeting document contained in [UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC8/CRP 8.6.1](#).

73. In plenary, the Chair applauded Zeb Hogan (COP-appointed Councillor for Fish) for an excellent paper. With minor editorial modifications, the CRP to the document was adopted by the ScC-SC8.

Item 8.6.2 European Eel

74. The Aquatic WG recommended very minor amendments to the draft Resolution and draft Decisions contained in document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.25.6.2 European Eel](#). These were recorded in an addendum contained in [UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC8/CRP 8.6.2](#).

75. In plenary, the addendum to the document was adopted by the ScC-SC8.

Item 8.6.3 Sharks and Rays

76. With respect to document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.25.6.3 Sharks and Rays](#), the Aquatic WG welcomed progress on implementation of the SSAP for the Angelshark in the Mediterranean Sea and expressed concern over the continued utilization of the oceanic whitetip shark despite its Appendix I listing. Suggested amendments to the draft Decisions were recorded in an addendum contained in [UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC8/CRP 8.6.3](#).

77. In plenary, the addendum to the document was adopted by the ScC-SC8.

Item 8.6.4 Single Species Action Plan for the Northeast Atlantic and Mediterranean Sub-Population of Tope Shark (*Galeorhinus galeus*)

78. The Aquatic WG recommended for adoption the draft Resolution and Decisions contained in document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.25.6.4 SSAP for the Northeast Atlantic and Mediterranean Sub-Population of Tope Shark](#) for adoption. There were no specific comments, hence no CRP was issued.

79. In plenary, the ScC-SC8 endorsed the document.

Item 8.6.5 Multi-Species Action Plan for Amazonian Migratory Catfish

80. The Aquatic WG recommended for adoption the proposal contained in document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.25.6.5 Multi-species Action Plan for Amazonian Migratory Catfish](#). WG members congratulated Brazil for developing an excellent Multi-species Action Plan (MSAP). Comments were recorded in an addendum contained in

[UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC8/CRP 8.6.5.](#)

81. In plenary, the addendum to the document was adopted by the ScC-SC8.

ITEM 9 AVIAN SPECIES CONSERVATION ISSUES

Item 9.1 The Prevention of Illegal Killing, Taking and Trade of Migratory Birds

82. The Avian WG considered document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.26.1](#) *Prevention of Illegal Killing, Taking and Trade of Migratory Birds*. Mr Fernando Spina (COP-appointed Councillor for Connectivity/Network) asked if the discussion on the open-ended nature and duration of WGs also applied to the task forces, and said, in the decision related to the task force, nothing was directed to the Secretariat for supporting it. Reference was requested, in the preamble, to BirdLife's International's report on killing and their paper on causes of mortality. Comments and suggested amendments were recorded in an addendum contained in [UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC8/CRP 9.1](#).

83. In plenary, the addendum to the document was adopted by the ScC-SC8.

Item 9.2 Preventing Poisoning of Migratory Birds

84. The Avian WG discussed document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.26.2](#) *Preventing Poisoning of Migratory Birds*. Ms Ruth Cromie (COP-appointed Councillor for Wildlife Health) expressed concern that the document could suggest the issue had been resolved, noting the problem had more to do with getting a coordinator for the Preventing Poisoning WG. She said poisoning experts in the Health WG could focus on that specifically. Ms Cromie, BirdLife, Mr Fernando Spina (COP-appointed Councillor for Connectivity/Network) and others agreed it was premature to drop the WG pending proper analysis.

85. The Secretariat said an internal review aimed to determine why the WG was not working, noting lack of resources, an inability to find a chair/coordinator, and too broad of a scope. They mentioned possibly focusing on lead or on finding hotspots.

86. BirdLife International and Ms Cromie did not agree with deleting the reference to the Subregional Implementation Plan to Prevent Poisoning of Migratory Birds in Southern African Countries 2017-2020. Ms Cromie also requested reference to the regional workshop held in Cape Town. BirdLife requested inserting a placeholder for reference to an upcoming joint fact sheet on non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) being produced by CMS and the World Organization for Animal Health (WOAH) that was expected to be published before COP15.

87. The European Federation for Hunting and Conservation (FACE) cited legislation in the UK (except Northern Ireland) on bullet composition, noting most but not all bullets would be covered.

88. The WG discussed reinstating text on "continuing the WG" that had been marked for deletion and proposed to insert the agreed upon standard duration text for WGs, namely that the "WG remains in place until the Sessional Committee decides its work is complete or alternative arrangement is made". The Chair said the Preventing Poisoning WG would not be eliminated at this stage. Comments and proposed changes were included in an addendum contained in [UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC8/CRP 9.2](#).

89. In plenary, the addendum to the document was adopted by the ScC-SC8.

Item 9.3 Flyways

Item 9.3.1 Flyways

90. The Avian WG discussed document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.26.3.1 Flyways](#), with the WG proposing to update the reference to the Arctic Migratory Birds Initiative (AMBI) Programme of Work (POW) until 2027. Comments and recommended changes were recorded in an addendum contained in [UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC8/CRP 9.3.1](#). In plenary, ScC-SC8 endorsed the document and the draft Resolution and draft Decisions contained in the document were recommended for adoption by the COP.

Item 9.3.2 Terms of Reference for the CMS Scientific Council Working Group on Flyways

91. The Avian WG considered document [UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC8/Doc.9.3.2 TOR for the CMS Scientific Council Working Group on Flyways](#). It was acknowledged that addressing the issue was long overdue amid the realization that no TOR for the Flyways WG existed. The agreed standard language with respect to duration of WGs was added, namely that the Flyways WG would remain in place until the ScC-SC decided its work was complete or alternative arrangements were made. In plenary, the revised document [UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC8/CRP 9.3.2](#) was adopted by the ScC-SC8.

Item 9.3.3 Draft Flyways Working Programme of Work for 2026-2029

92. The Avian WG considered document [UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC8/Doc.9.3.3 Draft Flyways Working Group Programme of Work for 2026-2029](#), and a minor amendment was made by BirdLife International, which was reflected in CRP [UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC8/CRP 9.3.3](#).
93. In plenary the Flyways WG was congratulated on its work to review, refine, and revise its POW, and the CRP was adopted by the ScC-SC8 without any further changes.

Item 9.3.4 Seabirds and Marine Flyways

94. The Avian WG reviewed [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.26.3.2 Seabirds and Marine Flyways](#) and its related information document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Inf.26.3.2 Policy Gap Analysis on Marine Flyways](#). Noting the need to effectively tackle the multiple challenges seabirds face, efforts would not only benefit sea birds, but megafauna, like whales and sharks, as well. The WG agreed to recognize AEWA Resolution 9.4 on *Refined Priorities for Seabird Conservation Measures under AEWA*.
95. A proposal to add more action-oriented language on protecting marine flyways and reducing risks from activities, such as fishing, infrastructure development, and mining, was considered to exceed the ScC's scientific mandate and to introduce prescriptive wording and unbalanced emphasis on selected threats. The proponent withdrew the suggestion, with the understanding that the matter could be revisited at COP15. Relevant changes were captured in CRP [UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC8/CRP 9.3.4](#).
96. In plenary, the CRP was adopted by the ScC-SC8.

Item 9.4 Action Plans for Birds

Item 9.4.1 Action Plans for Birds

97. The Avian WG considered document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.26.4.1 Action Plans for Birds](#). BirdLife International noted that, in relation to the spoon-billed sandpiper,

Bangladesh had sent an action plan that was adopted by the 12th Meeting of Partners of the East Asian–Australasian Flyway Partnership (EEAFP) in November 2025.

98. The Secretariat confirmed receipt of a letter from Ecuador, saying they would support elaboration of a MSAP for Vultures in the Americas and naming an NGO that could lead this process. The Secretariat noted interest in convening a side event on the issue at COP15 and assumed the MSAP would be ready by COP16.
99. BirdLife International said the Americas Flyways Task Force should oversee the MSAP to ensure broad coverage, and that the proposal for a national NGO to lead it could limit its scope. Comments and recommendations were recorded in an addendum contained in [UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC8/CRP 9.4.1](#).
100. In plenary, the addendum to the document was adopted by the ScC-SC8.

Item 9.4.2 Multi-species Action Plan to Conserve African, Eurasian and Australian Bustards

101. The Avian WG had no comments on document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.26.4.2](#) *MSAP to Conserve African, Eurasian and Australian Bustards*. Hence, no CRP was issued and, in plenary, the ScC-SC8 endorsed the document and the MSAP was recommended for adoption by the COP.

Item 9.4.3 Global Action Plan for the Conservation of the Steppe Eagle (*Aquila nipalensis*)

102. The Avian WG had no comments on document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.26.4.3](#) *Global Action Plan for the Conservation of the Steppe Eagle* and, in plenary, the ScC-SC8 endorsed the document.

Item 9.5 Action Plan for Migratory Land Birds in the African-Eurasian Region

103. The Avian WG considered document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.26.5](#) *Action Plan for Migratory Land Birds in the African-Eurasian Region*. Text detailing the activities undertaken by the Swiss Ornithological Institute, which hosted the African-Eurasian Migratory Landbirds Action Plan (AEMLAP) Coordination Unit, was added. FACE called attention to a relevant side event that took place at the AEWA MOP. Comments were reflected in an addendum contained in [UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC8/CRP 9.5](#).
104. In plenary, the addendum to the document was adopted by the ScC-SC8.

Item 9.6 Conservation of African-Eurasian Vultures

105. The Avian WG considered document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.26.6](#) *Conservation of African-Eurasian Vultures*. BirdLife International said this agenda item was pertinent to the location of COP15 and requested adding a decision calling for the development of an Americas Vultures MSAP. While Brazil, COP15 host, said they would consider it, a suggestion was made that the Action Plan for Birds might be the best place for such a decision. Hence, no changes were made.
106. In plenary, the ScC-SC8 endorsed the document and the draft Decisions contained in it were recommended for adoption by the COP.

Item 9.7 Saker Falcon (*Falco cherrug*) Global Action Plan

107. The Avian WG considered document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.26.7](#) Saker Falcon (*Falco cherrug*) Global Action Plan. Two minor amendments were recorded in an addendum contained in [UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC8/CRP 9.7](#).
108. In plenary, the addendum to the document was adopted by the ScC-SC8.

Item 9.8 Internationally Important Raptor Areas

109. The Avian WG considered document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.26.8](#) *Internationally Important Raptor Areas*. Australia, noting the restriction to the African Eurasian region, mentioned interested Parties in Southeast Asia, and hoped migratory raptors in this region and in the Americas, could also be captured by the proposal. BirdLife International supported this suggestion.
110. The WG reviewed revised text to reflect an expanded scope and consideration of more regions and identify specific areas globally. Proposals included that the CMS Flyways WG could consider areas not covered by the Raptors MOU.
111. The Secretariat clarified that Parties were not being asked to commit to more work and set up the structures. Comments were reflected in an addendum contained in [UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC8/CRP 9.8](#).
112. In plenary, the addendum to the document was adopted by the ScC-SC8.

ITEM 10 TERRESTRIAL SPECIES CONSERVATION ISSUES

Item 10.1 Joint CITES-CMS African Carnivores Initiative

113. The Terrestrial WG considered document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.27.1](#) *Joint CITES-CMS African Carnivores Initiative*. IUCN described its support for the African Carnivores Initiative (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. They expressed readiness to channel funding directly to ACI POW priorities, noting a private philanthropy donor had contributed, but that funding had to be matched before the contribution could be unlocked. IUCN also mentioned funding from the European Union and efforts of the SOS mechanism for Africa related to cheetahs and African wild dogs.
114. Born Free Foundation expressed openness to a bilateral with IUCN to explore an offer to match funding. They asked what would happen to those that were Parties to CITES Parties but not to CMS and how to get them to join CMS. It was noted that as ACI was a joint initiative, those that were not Parties to CMS (but were to CITES) were still involved, and conversations had taken place with countries about joining CMS.
115. Zimbabwe mentioned its offer to host the next ACI Range State meeting and said it was waiting for the green light from the government.
116. In plenary, the ScC-SC8 endorsed the document as originally presented.

Item 10.2 Sahelo Saharan Megafauna

117. The Terrestrial WG had no comments on or changes to document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.27.2](#) *Sahelo Saharan Megafauna*. In plenary, the ScC-SC8 endorsed the document.

Item 10.3 Central Asian Mammals Initiative

118. The Terrestrial WG considered document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.27.3](#) *Central Asian Mammals Initiative*. WCS noted that in operational paragraph 3, the Resolution would need to be amended to include the striped hyena if listed by COP15. Noting the convening of UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) COP17 in Mongolia following CMS COP15, they encouraged discussions with the UNCCD in the lead up to that COP, stressing the importance of looking at other conventions that may not be species specific but that were highly relevant, especially for CAMI. Comments were recorded in an addendum [UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC8/CRP 10.3](#).
119. In plenary, in considering the addendum, Mr Askar Davletbakov (Party-Appointed ScC-SC member for Asia) requested to explicitly state that the ScC was recommending that the COP adopt the document since Range States had already endorsed the CAMI Work Programme. WCS suggested adding “and their habitats” to CAMI species as this explicitly references issues the UNCCD COP would address. She said as the striped hyena was proposed for listing and included in CAMI, it should be cross referenced.
120. The addendum to the document was adopted by the ScC-SC8.

Item 10.4 Jaguar

121. The Terrestrial WG considered document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.27.4](#) *Jaguar* and minor changes were recorded in an addendum contained in [UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC8/CRP 10.4](#). In plenary, addendum to the document was adopted by the ScC-SC8.

Item 11 Crosscutting Conservation Issues

Item 11.1 Illegal and Unsustainable Taking of Wildlife

122. Sue Lieberman, Co-Chair of the WG on Illegal and Unsustainable Taking of Species, introduced document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.28.1](#) *Illegal and Unsustainable Taking of Migratory Species*, and highlighted the potential for more engagement on the issue. She suggested amending the title of the document to refer to “Illegal and/or Unsustainable Taking”.
123. Mr James Williams (Alternate ScC-SC member for Europe) noted significant developments in the last year, and that the Review of Cross-Cutting Aspects in Annex I would need to be updated after the COP. He also questioned whether all the introductory paragraphs in draft Resolution 11.31 were needed. Regarding operational paragraph 4, he asked whether “science-based” contradicted the addition of indigenous and local knowledge and suggested removing “science-based”. WCS, supported by WWF, did not support removing “science-based” in operational paragraph 4, arguing that science-based management plans were informed by local knowledge.
124. On operational paragraph 7, Mr Williams suggested deleting “legislative” with respect to reviews. WWF supported maintaining the idea of legislative reviews.
125. With reference to prosecution and pursuit in operational paragraph 12, Mr Williams suggested this spoke more to policy than science, and was telling countries how to run their judicial systems. He said this should be left to the COP to decide.
126. BirdLife International underscored the need to address this issue at the national level with support through international collaboration. They said the document had a “terrestrial bias” that should be addressed. They explained hunting communities and

organizations were key stakeholders and there should be compliance. WCS supported inclusion of compliance, both legal compliance and compliance with sustainability. FACE said compliance with the law and sustainability should be kept separate.

127. The CMS Executive Secretary noted ongoing work on this topic that could be used, including through the Collaborative Partnership on Sustainable Wildlife Management (CPW). She also noted advanced work on illegal killing of birds, with a well-grounded programme already in place. She hoped the CITES Secretariat would join in this work, said the CBD Secretariat was keen to join, and underscored the need to address pressures on wildlife more holistically.
128. Comments and proposed changes were reflected in an addendum contained in [UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC8/CRP 11.1](#). In plenary on 18 December, Born Free Foundation recalled the intervention by WCS to change the title to “Illegal and/or Unsustainable Taking” to better reflect what the document was trying to achieve. The CMS Executive Secretary said this intent was explicit in the document. The ScC-SC8 adopted the addendum to the document.

Item 11.2 Ecological Connectivity

129. Mr Fernando Spina (COP-appointed Councillor for Connectivity/Network) introduced [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.28.2 Ecological Connectivity](#) and two relevant information documents: [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Inf.28.2a Analysis of the CMS Survey on Ecological Connectivity](#) and [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Inf.28.2b Global Partnership on Ecological Connectivity \(GPEC\) Concept Note](#). He mentioned an Expert Workshop on devising a Meta Migration Atlas, planned for October 2026 in Abruzzo, Italy.
130. BirdLife International said their organization was in the process of developing a global common roadmap of key flyway sites that were especially valuable as an ecological network and in need of protection from a connectivity perspective. They noted this would complement work on the Atlas and hoped to have the roadmap ready ahead of the workshop in October. Mr Spina said existing models of the Atlas would be used as much as possible, mentioning the Eurasian-African Bird Migration Atlas in particular, which would complement the analysis BirdLife International was developing to provide information on the catchment areas in protected areas that would be mapped.
131. The UK proposed retaining a paragraph, in a preambular paragraph in the Resolution, that recognized the links between the Climate Change and Ecological Connectivity WGs and the need for them to work together and clarified this would be in the Resolution as a preambular paragraph.
132. WWF noted one issue raised in the Ecological Connectivity WG was the recommendation that Parties consider legislation to give recognition to Ecological Connectivity and there was some concern that would clash with the provisions of the National Legislation Programme. He noted a distinction between the Programme, which would relate to the fundamental requirements of CMS, and other legislation that resolutions could invite or encourage Parties to undertake that would be in addition to the minimum requirements. He suggested Parties be “invited” instead of “required” to consider legislation on ecological connectivity.
133. Changes to the document were recorded in [UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC8/CRP 11.2](#) and included text inviting Parties to review their national legislation relating to the conservation of biodiversity to determine whether it adequately reflected the need to ensure ecological connectivity, and, where necessary, to amend such legislation accordingly. The document was further modified to reflect that the ScC had prepared it.

A cross reference with Resolution 12.21 *Climate Change on Migratory Species* on page 11 was also added. With these changes, the document was adopted by the ScC-SC8.

Item 11.3 Transfrontier Conservation Areas

134. The Secretariat introduced document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.28.3](#) *Transfrontier Conservation Areas*, mentioning that the number of responses received was low, the need to determine whether further work was required, and the need for a review of other existing tools to avoid duplication, building on the experience of Southern African Development Community (SADC) member states.
135. WCS suggested inviting the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) Transboundary Conservation Specialist Group to collaborate. Mr James Williams (Alternate ScC-SC member for Europe), expressing concern over the lack of responses to the survey, wondered whether WCPA should undertake this work given the capacity constraints with the Secretariat.
136. The Secretariat noted positive feedback had been received from the Southern and Eastern African region. She explained that Southern Africa was more advanced in establishing protected areas, while the tool was more useful for Eastern Africa, which was still outlining potential transboundary areas.
137. Born Free Foundation said reference to the Greater Virunga Transboundary Collaboration under the [Agreement on the Conservation of Gorillas and Their Habitats](#) could provide another example of a fully functional treaty.
138. Edson Gandiwa (Party-Appointed ScC-SC member for Africa) mentioned the 25-year anniversary of the Transfrontier Conservation Area (TFCA), growing momentum for cross-border collaboration, and opportunities for broadening its scope.
139. Comments and proposed changes were reflected in an addendum contained in [UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC8/CRP 11.3](#), which was adopted by the ScC-SC8.

Item 11.4 Communities and Livelihoods

140. The Secretariat introduced document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.28.4](#) *Communities and Livelihoods*, which proposed follow up activities to implement the ten Guiding Principles and the recommendations from the study [Potential for Community-based Wildlife Management in Central Asia](#).
141. IUCN suggested establishing a dedicated working group on this issue, citing the increased interaction between humans and migratory species. They said such a group would align across initiatives and with the human wildlife conflict and coexistence specialist group. Fostering dialogue among stakeholders, protecting migratory species, and addressing the socioeconomic realities of affected communities were highlighted. The Secretariat said it would consider reactions and the appetite for such a group.
142. Mr Barry Baker (COP-appointed Councillor for Bycatch) said much ongoing work already related to this cross-cutting issue, including with respect to bycatch, and was not yet convinced of the need for such a group. Born Free Foundation said having it as a task or some other action to get information out there could suffice. The Chair noted multiple WGs already touched on this issue and that establishing a WG might be premature.
143. Ms Amy Fraenkel, CMS Executive Secretary, said in the eighth replenishment of the Global Environment Facility (GEF-8), we were successful in having CMS included in the

GEF's Wildlife Conservation for Development Integrated Programme and that issues related to community engagement were included, as well as human-wildlife conflict and ecological connectivity. She said a stocktaking would be helpful and the ScC could then consider whether a WG was needed.

144. Mr Askar Davletbakov (Party-Appointed ScC-SC member for Asia) supported the creation of a WG, noted significant conflict between local communities and animals, and mentioned the lynx and snow leopard, in particular. He said a recommendation to address this problem would be useful. Zimbabwe supported the proposal to establish a WG, noting most of the species that interact with communities were listed.
145. The IUCN Cetacean Specialist Group said a WG could have useful outcomes and advice for many cetacean populations and local communities at the coast, and that the Cetacean Specialist Group could provide support to the process. Born Free Foundation highlighted, for example, a toolbox for human-elephant coexistence and said the WG could draw from this manual and other proven solutions so as not to start from scratch.
146. Mr. Kabsay Gebretensae Asgedom (Party-Appointed ScC-SC member for Africa) explained that the interaction between communities and wild animals must be considered and advocated for community engagement with the Guiding Principles. He said the Samarkand SPMS should be aligned with other MEAs, including National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans and the Global Biodiversity Framework.
147. Comments and a proposed draft Decision 15.BB requesting the ScC to establish a dedicated WG that deals with the strategic issues related to interactions between communities and CMS-listed species were recorded in an addendum contained in [UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC8/CRP 11.4](#).
148. The ScC-SC8 adopted the addendum to the document.

Item 11.5 Wildlife Health

149. Ms Ruth Cromie (COP-appointed Councillor for Wildlife Health) introduced document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.28.5](#) *Wildlife Health*. There were two information documents: [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Inf.28.5a](#) *CMS One Health Case Studies: A resource for Parties to the Convention on Migratory Species*; and [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Inf.28.5b](#), which contained the report 'Examining Resolutions and Articles from the CMS to find strategic opportunities for the Working Group on Migratory Species and Health'. Both reports were produced by the WG on Migratory Species and Health, which only began its work in April 2025. Activities carried out by the [CMS-FAO Scientific Task Force on Avian Influenza and Wildlife](#) were also detailed.
150. The UK suggested adding a preambular paragraph to reference the CBD [Global Action Plan on Biodiversity and Health](#), a voluntary framework aimed at increasing awareness and improving synergies.
151. Changes to the document were recorded in [UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC8/CRP 11.5](#), which was adopted by the ScC-SC8.

Item 11.6 Pastoralism

152. The Secretariat introduced document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.28.6](#) *Pastoralism*, which was prepared by the intersessional WG on Pastoralism and the CMS Secretariat. Due to the short intersessional period and delayed start, the WG was unable to fully implement its mandate and, thus, establishing an open-ended WG was proposed. It was

suggested that the Secretariat conduct an in-person expert meeting and liaise with external stakeholders to explore possibilities for cooperation, including through joint activities highlighting pastoralism and its relevance to the conservation of CMS-listed species.

153. Instead of an open-ended WG, the Chair recommended extending the mandate of the WG on Pastoralism and CMS-listed Species until such time as the ScC-SC decided its work was complete or an alternative arrangement was made. It was agreed that this text on extending the mandate of the WG be added to the Decision directed to the ScC in 15.BB and included in the CRP.
154. All changes to the document were recorded in [UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC8/CRP 11.6](#), which was adopted by the ScC-SC8.

Item 11.7 Light Pollution

155. Australia introduced document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.28.7 Light Pollution](#), saying that experts did not identify an urgent need for specific additional guidance or amending existing guidelines, and no follow-up action was proposed for the next triennium. He reaffirmed Australia's strong and enduring commitment to actively participate in all collaborative efforts to promote, implement, and further refine the [International Light Pollution Guidelines for Migratory Species](#), if needed in the future.
156. Mr Des Thompson (COP-appointed Councillor for Climate Change) commented that communication and the material available on the CMS website were excellent.
157. OceanCare said some of the Decisions proposed for deletion could have been carried forward to ensure that Parties got support to implement the Guidelines. They said the report the expert consultation on light pollution contained useful suggestions for disseminating the Guidelines and should be highlighted to Parties. They noted light pollution should be further considered by the ScC and recognized that some of this work would be carried out under the Energy Task Force (ETF).
158. Mr Mark Simmonds (COP-appointed Councillor for Marine Pollution) said more could be done to call attention to the Guidelines. He said many were keen to continue the work and wondered whether light experts, including in Australia, could provide some focus as part of the ScC's work on this issue. The Chair noted ongoing contact among experts and was open to textual suggestions for a new decision to further enhance dissemination of and raising awareness about the Guidelines.
159. Mr Graeme Taylor (Party-Appointed ScC-SC member for Oceania) underscored that light fallout of petrels was a real issue, and the need for a programme to find and retrieve the petrels. He mentioned fall out of petrel fledglings coming into cities in Auckland and the active engagement from an NGO that was putting tracking tabs on black petrels to see how they responded to light. He mentioned cases of fledglings crashing from the light known from tracking data and wondered how many others without tracking crash. He said urbanization and coastal development exacerbated the issue.
160. The Secretariat explained that as the Guidelines were already in place and would continue to be promoted by the Secretariat, the workstream could be concluded and recommended not renewing any Decisions. The issue could always be revisited if a Party raised it again. They said similar provisions related to the Guidelines were already contained in the Resolution, which remained in force, but that perhaps text could be added to the Resolution.

161. Ms Amy Fraenkel, CMS Executive Secretary, acknowledged the excellent work to develop the Guidelines, which were now being implemented, and said more work may be required in the future. She said the issue was more about how to better disseminate the guidelines and the ScC could always revisit and undertake further work on this issue. Mr Simmonds suggested additional text to Resolution 13.15.
162. Amendments to Resolution 13.15 were recorded in [UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC8/CRP 11.7](#). The CRP was adopted by the ScC-SC8.

Item 11.8 Insect Decline

163. Mr Timm Reinhardt (Party-appointed Councillor, Germany), introduced [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.28.8](#) *Insect Decline*. BirdLife International said the Preventing Poisoning WG could be repurposed across CMS taxa beyond birds and that findings showed that a workstream on pesticides would be desirable.
164. Mr James Williams (Alternate ScC-SC member for Europe) said decline was not just about food for migratory species, but also about the benefits of insects, particularly the ecosystem services they provide. Mr Reinhardt said all ecosystem services were affected by insects. The Secretariat reminded the ScC-SC8 that the Resolution was focused on the impacts of insects as a food source for migratory species.
165. Changes to the document were recorded in [UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC8/CRP 11.8](#), which was adopted by the ScC-SC8.

Item 11.9 Cumulative Effects Assessments

166. The Secretariat introduced document [UNEP/CMS/ COP15/Doc.28.9](#) *Cumulative Effects Assessments*, which had an associated information document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Inf.28.9](#) *Cumulative Effects Assessment for Migratory Species*. The Secretariat highlighted harmonization of guidelines, relevance to other topics such as the BBNJ Agreement, and links to the infrastructure discussion.
167. Mr James Williams (Alternate ScC-SC member for Europe) noted existing guidance on cumulative effects assessments and wondered whether this was a question for CMS to resolve. The Chair responded that it was within the remit of the Convention to address this issue.
168. While agreeing that existing guidelines and methodologies could be useful, the Secretariat said explicit inclusion of migratory species was missing and noted their exposure to cumulative effects assessments along their migratory routes.
169. Mr Williams, regarding a draft Decision on what should happen under the BBNJ Agreement, wondered whether such direction was appropriate. Combining the two decisions directed to Parties was suggested. It was mentioned that the corresponding Decision in [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.28.13](#) *Animal Culture and Social Complexity* was worth investigating, although an evaluation had not yet been undertaken.
170. Comments were recorded in an addendum contained in [UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC8/CRP 11.9](#), which was adopted by the ScC-SC8.

Item 11.10 Infrastructure Development and Migratory Species

171. The Secretariat introduced document [UNEP/CMS/COP15.Doc.28.10](#) *Infrastructure and Migratory Species*, which was prepared by the WG on Infrastructure, which Mr Barry

Baker (COP-appointed Councillor for Bycatch) chaired.

172. Mr James Williams (Alternate ScC-SC member for Europe) noted the complexity of some of the text and that some of the paragraphs were outdated. He asked what “authoritative” referred to with respect to movement data in 1*bis*. He added that operational paragraph 10 was asking the Secretariat to do an enormous amount of work. On draft Decision 15.BB, he explained that input was needed from the Secretariat to ensure Decisions were cross referenced.
173. Mr Baker (COP-appointed Councillor for Bycatch) said it would be helpful to find a way forward to further develop the text on this issue before the COP. BirdLife International echoed some of Mr Williams’ points, including that the amount of work being requested of the Secretariat was ambitious.
174. A small group further discussed this issue and proposed mainly editorial changes. Listing different types of infrastructure was believed by many to be heavy. Thus, the group decided to include a chapeau paragraph to provide an explanation of what infrastructure in this context could cover, and to remove references to specific types of infrastructure from the operational paragraphs. In addition, the group proposed moving the list of partners and initiatives the Secretariat should be working on (in operational paragraph 10) to a footnote.
175. A proposal for the ScC to support the Secretariat in the delivery of Decision 15.BB was suggested as 15.AA d). Screening was proposed for deletion, but the Secretariat felt it was necessary to keep it, and reference to the ETF was added.
176. Mr Zeb Hogan (COP-appointed Councillor for Fish) said they had requested language on dams and infrastructure in rivers, but that it had been removed.
177. A CRP [UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC8/CRP 11.10](#) was adopted without further comment.

Item 11.11 Renewable Energy

178. The Secretariat introduced document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.28.11](#) *Renewable Energy*, which was prepared by the Secretariat with support from the ETF Coordinator.
179. BirdLife International requested adding specificity to two paragraphs in the Resolution. On operational paragraph 2, mentioning strategic environmental assessments (SEAs) and environmental impacts assessments (EIAs), they requested adding language on applying appropriate nature-safe design and sensitivity mapping. On operational paragraph 3, they requested adding development and “deployment” of renewable energy and “transmission” technologies.
180. Mr Simmonds (COP-appointed Councillor for Marine Pollution) hoped that the designations would have some effect on IMMAs. Agreeing, Ms Vanesa Tossenberger (COP-appointed Councillor for Aquatic Mammals) noted it would take different amounts of time to compile data for different species.
181. Comments and recommendations were recorded in an addendum contained in [UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC8/CRP 11.11](#), which was adopted by the ScC-SC8.

Item 11.12 Climate Change and Migratory Species

182. Mr Des Thompson (COP-appointed Councillor for Climate Change) introduced [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.28.12](#) *Climate Change and Migratory Species*, which he had

prepared. He said horizon scanning was needed to identify future threats and opportunities, as well as the species and habitats most vulnerable to climate change. He welcomed views on the horizon scanning exercises, which could look beyond climate horizons to, for example, issues regarding disease, technological advances, and barriers. He also welcomed views on strengthening links between the ecological connectivity Decision 15.BB b) and the climate change Decision 15.CC d) (ii). Mr Thompson said the horizon scanning mentioned in Decision 15.CC could be extended to other areas and, with respect to how to take it forward practically, suggested this could be a new focus area for the State of the World's Migratory Species report. He suggested adding text extending horizon scanning to all migratory species, noting it was a "spotlight topic". The UK supported closer coordination of the Climate Change and Ecological Connectivity WGs. There was a request to add text, as Decision 15.AA b), on the contribution of ecosystem services provided by migratory species to address climate change and sharing examples with the Secretariat.

183. Mr Mark Simmonds (COP-appointed Councillor for Marine Pollution) said this tied in with work being done under the auspices of the IWC and that CMS and IWC work should be integrated. He said climate change was altering underwater currents, and legacy mercury was being brought back to the wider environment. The IWC supported the recommended actions, including draft Decision 15.BB b), and highlighted the impact on cetacean welfare.
184. Changes to the document were recorded in [UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC8/CRP 11.12](#) which was adopted by the ScC-SC8.

Item 11.13 Conservation Implications of Animal Culture and Social Complexity

185. The Secretariat introduced document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.28.13](#) *Conservation Implications of Animal Culture and Social Complexity*, on behalf of the expert WG on Conservation Implications of Animal Culture and Social Complexity.
186. Mr Fernando Spina (COP-appointed Councillor for Connectivity/Network) said the CMS was considered a leader in animal culture, mentioning the efforts of Ms Philippa Brakes (Exeter University/Whale and Dolphin Conservation) in this work.
187. Born Free Foundation noted the planning of a side event at the COP on longevity conservation, which was the subject of a motion adopted at the recent IUCN WCC.
188. The Agreement on the Conservation of Small Cetaceans of the Baltic, North East Atlantic, Irish and North Seas (ASCOBANS) said animal culture was on the agenda of their Advisory Committee, a WG had been established, and the WG would join forces with the CMS WG on Conservation Implications of Animal Culture and Social Complexity.
189. Changes to the document were recorded in [UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC8/CRP 11.13](#), which was adopted by the ScC-SC8.

Item 11.14 Multiple Systems of Knowledge

190. Martin Hitziger, SPREP, introduced document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.28.4](#) *Multiple Systems of Knowledge*. Text was proposed to reflect that engagement of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities in CMS processes was non-binding and subject to national circumstances in each Party.
191. Changes to the document were recorded in [UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC8/CRP 11.14](#), which was adopted by the ScC-SC8.

V. APPENDICES AND CONCERTED ACTIONS

ITEM 12 CMS APPENDICES

Item 12.1 Treatment of Species included within Aggregated Families listed on Appendix II

192. The Secretariat introduced document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.29.1](#) *Treatment of Species included within Aggregated Families listed on Appendix II*. There were no comments or changes, and the document was endorsed by the ScC-SC8.

Item 12.2 Maintaining Lists of Species included in CMS Appendices

193. The Secretariat introduced document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.29.2](#) *Maintaining Lists of Species included in CMS Appendices*. Some formatting suggestions were made to improve readability. Australia supported reestablishing the WG on Maintaining Lists of Species Listed in CMS Appendices.
194. Mr Mark Simmonds (COP-appointed Councillor for Marine Pollution) said the COP would have to agree on a procedure for updating. He noted that if a Range State had not declared itself a Range State, the ScC would look at changes in the environment, and that some states, which were not initially Range States, had become Range States. The Secretariat expected all information would be supported by scientific reference, and if there were any discrepancies or uncertainty, it would come to the ScC.
195. Mr Graeme Taylor (Party-Appointed ScC-SC member for Oceania) said sometimes Parties did not expect certain species to be in their territory. The Secretariat said work on a species database was labour intensive and resources and capacity were needed. Therefore, long-term funding for maintaining the list of species and Range States was being proposed under the budget proposal by the Secretariat.
196. The CMS Executive Secretary said the Convention text detailed the explicit role of keeping the list of Range States and species up to date and proposed that the core budget cover some of these activities.
197. Comments were recorded in an addendum contained in [UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC8/CRP 12.2](#). The ScC-SC8 adopted the addendum to the document.

Item 12.3 Taxonomy and Nomenclature Updates

198. The Secretariat introduced document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.29.3](#) *Taxonomy and Nomenclature Updates*. The IUCN Cetacean Specialist Group welcomed the use of the taxonomic reference for marine mammals, noting it aligned with the standard already used by the Group.
199. Mr. Kahsay Gebretensae Asgedom (Party-Appointed ScC-SC member for Africa) expressed a concern with respect to the proposed taxonomic changes for Felidae for the two subspecies of African lion. The Secretariat explained that the change in the standard reference for Felidae would not impact the subspecies, as the listing in the Appendices is at species level.
200. Responding to a question about online databases and reflecting changes in taxonomy and nomenclature, the Secretariat clarified that document was about changes in taxonomic and nomenclature sources, and the COP would decide whether to reflect these changes in the CMS Appendices. They said the intention was to have this as a

regular exercise for each COP, and if adopted by the COP, changes would be reflected in online databases and in the Appendices.

201. The document was endorsed by the ScC-SC8.

Item 12.4 Species that Meet the Criteria for Listing on CMS Appendices

202. The Secretariat introduced document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.29.4](#) *Species that meet the Criteria for Listing on CMS Appendices* and reminded participant that a list of 'Potential Freshwater Fish Species for Listing' was also under development. The Secretariat thanked Zeb Hogan (COP-appointed Councillor for Fish) for his efforts, noting the list would be considered by the Aquatic WG. A list of shark and ray species that would meet the criteria for listing was also under development, but further work was needed; thus, it could not be attached to the document for consideration by the COP. The Secretariat said it intended to work with the COP-appointed Councillors and other experts in the next triennium to develop similar lists for the remaining species groups, including insects, if possible, as a key step to implementing Target 1.1 of the SPMS. The Secretariat noted difficulties with getting Parties and observers involved in the work on insects.

203. Born Free Foundation asked whether invertebrates that may benefit from listing were being considered. The Secretariat clarified that they were included in "other species groups" in the draft Decision. Mr James Williams (Alternate ScC-SC member for Europe) requested adding a review of invertebrates into the draft Decision for review during the next triennium and offered possible in-kind support. Ms Rima Jabado (COP-appointed Councillor for Fish) said IUCN had an invertebrate list and should be engaged in this. WCS supported the work on freshwater fish and appending the list to the document.

204. Mr Héctor Samuel Vera Alcaraz (Party-Appointed ScC-SC member for South and Central America and the Caribbean) noted three more freshwater fish had been proposed for the [IUCN Red List of Threatened Species](#). He mentioned he had forwarded email from a monarch butterfly expert to the WG on Ecological Connectivity. He noted lack of an active lobby on this issue within the Secretariat.

205. Changes to the document were recorded in [UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC8/CRP 12.4](#) With respect to Decision 15.AA c) on developing equivalent lists for other taxonomic groups, Mr Williams suggested inclusion of crocodylians and freshwater chelonians.

206. The CRP document was adopted by the ScC-SC8.

Item 12.5 Towards Harmonization of Taxonomy and Nomenclature

207. The Secretariat introduced document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.29.5](#) *Towards Harmonization of Taxonomy and Nomenclature*, noting that Mr Stephen Garnett (COP-appointed Councillor for Birds) led the development of the document in an ScC-SC working group. The Secretariat noted ongoing efforts to harmonize taxonomy and nomenclature across biodiversity conventions, including between CMS and CITES and the potential role of the [Catalogue of Life](#) in this effort. The WG recommended the review be carried out in the next triennium and expanded to address the taxonomic needs of both CITES and CMS.

208. Mr James Williams (Alternate ScC-SC member for Europe) said this decision could have wide-ranging implications, with respect to trade in species. He said those working on species must have the stability required to undertake their work.

209. The Secretariat said the conventions would continue to decide whether to accept changes in taxonomy and nomenclature.
210. Héctor Samuel Vera Alcaraz (Party-Appointed Councillor, Paraguay) noted conflict between taxonomists and ecologists. He said taxonomic changes implied progress and should be viewed positively, noting online databases could be relied on.
211. There were no changes and the document was endorsed by the ScC-SC8.

ITEM 13 AMENDMENT OF APPENDICES I AND II OF THE CONVENTION

Item 13.1 Guidelines for Preparing and Assessing Proposals for the Amendment of CMS Appendices

212. The Secretariat introduced document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.30.1](#) *Guidelines for Preparing and Assessing Proposals for the Amendment of CMS Appendices*.
213. Ms Vanesa Tossenberger (COP-appointed Councillor for Aquatic Mammals) pointed to the sensitivity of this matter for some countries and proposed wording that would reflect the different situations of indigenous peoples in different countries.
214. Changes to the document were recorded in [UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC8/CRP 13.1](#), which was adopted by the ScC-SC8.

Item 13.2 Proposals to COP 15 for Amendment of Appendices I and II of the Convention

215. The Secretariat introduced the overarching cover paper [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.30.2](#) *Proposals to COP15 for Amendment of Appendices I and II of the Convention*, explaining that in paragraph 8, which states that among the 22 species of gadfly petrels, two subspecies were proposed for listing. However, the latest version of the taxonomy referred to them as one species, without distinguishing subspecies. They suggested this change could also be made in the document on taxonomy and nomenclature, so the Appendices would be aligned with the current version of the taxonomy.
216. On the gadfly petrel species, Mr Graeme Taylor (Party-Appointed ScC-SC member for Oceania) said this was discussed in the WG. It was concluded that there was evidence that the two subspecies were valid and recognized and maintaining them in the Appendices was recommended.
217. The ScC-SC8 endorsed the document.

Item 13.2.1 Proposal for the inclusion of the populations of cheetah (*Acinonyx jubatus*) in Zimbabwe, Botswana and Namibia on Appendix I and II of the Convention

218. Zimbabwe introduced document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.30.2.1](#) in the Terrestrial WG, noting a 90% decline in cheetahs in Zimbabwe. They said cheetah populations in Botswana and Namibia had not declined as drastically but still qualified as endangered. They amended the proposal to focus exclusively on Zimbabwe, and remove Botswana and Namibia, as they were not Parties to CMS and their cheetah population declines were not as drastic. They technical and financial support was needed to reverse declines of cheetahs in Zimbabwe.
219. The UK suggested restricting the proposal to Appendix II and questioned whether trophy hunting, as mentioned in the proposal to potentially be continued after the listing of the species on Appendix I, was possible.

220. Zimbabwe said they had put a moratorium on the hunting of cheetahs, and that the proposal was also for monitoring, justifying the listing in Appendix I. The IUCN Cat Specialist Group said Botswana had not hunted cheetahs in a long time, while in Namibia, given human wildlife conflict, hunting was still ongoing and could have a conservation benefit.
221. Born Free Foundation supported the proposal and hoped Botswana and Namibia would join CMS, which made sense in the context of the ACI.
222. In Plenary, the Chair noted a reduction in scope of the proposal with the removal of Botswana and Namibia, at the request of the proponent. Comments were included in an addendum in [UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC8/CRP 13.2.1](#). The addendum was adopted by the ScC-SC8 and the proposal was recommended for adoption by the COP.

Item 13.2.2 Proposal for the inclusion of the striped hyena (*Hyaena hyaena*) on Appendix I and II of the Convention

223. The Terrestrial WG supported the proposal in document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.30.2.2](#). WCS, saying while the striped hyena was wide ranging across many regions, it was critically endangered across its range and qualified for Appendix I. They also noted it was also protected by legislation across its range, and the species would benefit from a CMS listing.
224. The Nature And Biodiversity Conservation Union (NABU) explained the striped hyena was recently listed to CITES Appendix 2, which should be noted in the addendum and that the actions of the two conventions should be complementary.
225. In plenary, NABU, supported by WCS, said an explicit recommendation for the COP must be included in the addendum so there is no ambiguity. Terrestrial WG Chair Mr Edson Gandiwa said some CRPs had a specific recommendation section and that a reference of support for the proposal should be included for consistency.
226. Comments were reflected in an addendum contained in [UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC8/CRP 13.2.2](#), which was adopted by ScC-SC8.

Item 13.2.3. Proposal for the inclusion of the giant otter (*Pteronura brasiliensis*) on Appendix I and II of the Convention

227. The Aquatic WG recommended adopting document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.30.2.3](#), while suggesting that the proponent submit additional information regarding the migratory status of the species. Comments were recorded in an addendum contained in [UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC8/CRP 13.2.3.](#), which was adopted by the ScC-SC8 and the proposal was recommended for adoption by the COP.

Item 13.2.4 Proposal for the removal of the Bukhara deer (*Cervus elaphus yarkandensis*) from Appendix I of the Convention

228. This proposal garnered much debate in the Terrestrial WG and then in plenary. NABU introduced document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.30.2.4](#) in the Terrestrial WG, in the absence of the proponent. Noting good progress in population recovery, they said the Bukhara deer no longer met the criteria for Appendix I. This would enable a more flexible application of management approaches while keeping it listed in Appendix II would enable the continuation of conservation activities.

229. Born Free Foundation expressed caution and said reducing the level of protection prematurely might lead to having to relist the species on Appendix I. Since the species only recently recovered, they believed removal was premature. WCS asked that the proponent provide more information on why it should be removed.
230. Mr Askar Davletbakov (Party-Appointed ScC-SC member for Asia), noting growth of the population had led to conflict with farmers, supported sustainable use of the species, and ensuring benefits to local communities and harmonious co-existence. The Terrestrial WG Chair said they would recommend proceeding with the proposal pending more evidence.
231. In plenary on 17 December, NABU conveyed that the WG felt additional evidence was needed to ensure that if removed from Appendix I, the species would not need to be relisted in the future.
232. Mr Davletbakov said permitting take would stimulate local communities to support conservation and benefits for local communities should be a precondition for sustainable use if this was the intention of the proposal. The ScC Chair explained that community benefits were not factors to be considered when determining whether a species was endangered. Born Free Foundation said taking a decision based on that reasoning was not the role of the ScC. WCS noted the proposal did not make the case for removal from Appendix I and there were other ways to address conflict with herders.
233. Mr Fernando Spina (COP-appointed Councillor for Connectivity/Network) asked whether additional information, including demographic data to understand the structure of the population, would be provided before the COP and what the process would be. The Secretariat reaffirmed that the listing proposal could be amended, additional information would need to be submitted a month before the beginning of the COP, and if the information came later, it would be included in an information document. The Secretariat said the Terrestrial WG would further discuss the issue at the COP based on any new information. The Chair said a CRP was the ScC's opportunity to indicate what needed to be addressed. Mr James Williams (Alternate ScC-SC member for Europe) suggested the provision of a list that explicitly described the kind of information being requested. Mr Spina expressed concern that not all ScC members would be at the COP, and there might not be enough time for the ScC to evaluate new information prior to it.
234. Germany asked about the taxonomic guidance by the proponents, noting the taxonomic reference was inconsistent. NABU noted changes in the taxonomy of the species in recent years, and that taxonomy concerns were based on a misunderstanding. He said communities and conflict were mentioned in the proposal, but how delisting the deer could address the situation could be better clarified. He said the Bukhara deer was covered in the CMS report on the [Potential for Community-based Wildlife Management in Central Asia](#). Mr Williams said more clarity about the taxonomy of the species was needed in the proposal, and experts should be in the room at the COP for this discussion. Mr Sathyakumar Sambandam (Party-Appointed ScC-SC member for Asia) mentioned there were three subspecies, with one of them assessed as least concern and another found in India was critically endangered.
235. Explaining that the conflict was not with the herders but with land use, Mr. Davletbakov said illegal and legal deer hunting was already taking place and that the conflict was with the conversion of habitat to agricultural land use and deer being shot on agricultural land.
236. Mr Mark Simmonds (COP-appointed Councillor for Marine Pollution) asked what data was being used given there were three different dates (2015, 2019, 2023) and populations. He said the proposal contained insufficient scientific information, such as demographic data. Mr Davletbakov supported this comment on scientific inconsistencies

in population numbers and suggested including data in the proposal that was discussed at the meeting of signatories of the Bukhara Deer MOU in 2024.

237. In plenary on 18 December, the suggestion to add text on listing the information needed was reiterated, as well as a clear explanation on why the species was no longer in danger and why it was not likely to be in danger again due to its removal from Appendix I. WCS added that the ScC should recommend rejection of the proposal unless satisfactory scientific information was provided. The Chair asked if the WG could support language stating that the ScC recommended that COP15 not adopt the proposal unless additional information was provided as specified by ScC members. Mr Des Thompson (COP-appointed Councillor for Climate Change) supported the proposed language, expressing concern that the credibility of the ScC's advice could be questioned. Ms Daliborka Stanković (Party-Appointed ScC-SC member for Europe) supported the proposed request for additional information, expressing concern about the possibility of removing the wrong species.
238. The ScC-SC8 agreed not to recommend the removal of the species from Appendix I, unless satisfactory responses to the list of questions were provided by the proponent. Comments were included in an addendum contained in [UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC8/CRP 13.2.4/Rev.1](#), which was adopted by the ScC-SC8.

Item 13.2.5 Proposal for the inclusion of gadfly petrels (*Pterodroma* sp.) on Appendix I and II of the Convention

239. In the Avian WG, Graeme Taylor (Party-Appointed ScC-SC member for Oceania) introduced document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.30.2.5/Rev.1](#), citing nine taxa for Appendix I and 17 for Appendix II. Mentioning BirdLife International had produced an early draft after COP14, they decided not to include the Jamaica petrel as it had not been seen in a long time and could be extinct. He said the mottled petrel was a modern conservation success story, with 30 breeding sites, its status should be least concern, and, thus, it did not need to be included. He mentioned lack of funding as very little was known about their existence, despite the fact they were one of the most widespread migratory species in the world, reaching almost every Ocean. Based on tracking, they were known to fly 100,000 to 200,000 km per year and were adaptable across seas and in very cold water.
240. Mr Mark Simmonds (COP-appointed Councillor for Marine Pollution) said petrels faced mounting threats from invasive species, habitat degradation, and climate change, and that collective action represented the power of CMS.
241. Fiji, as one of the proposal's sponsors, noted inclusion of the Fiji petrel.
242. Comments were recorded in an addendum in [UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC8/CRP 13.2.5](#), which was adopted by the ScC-SC8 and the proposal was recommended for adoption by the COP.

Item 13.2.6 Proposal for the inclusion of the flesh-footed shearwater (*Ardenna carneipes*) on Appendix II of the Convention

243. In the Avian WG, Mr Graeme Taylor (Party-Appointed ScC-SC member for Oceania) introduced document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.30.2.6](#), highlighted work to determine which flesh-footed shearwater (*Ardenna carneipes*) migrated where, noting some were in decline and some were stable. He said fisheries bycatch was a problem, and some of the birds either had a "suicidal tendency" or natural food was scarce. He explained they were still getting caught, as seen on electronic monitoring, plastic pollution was passed

on to their chicks, and juveniles did not follow the adults as far up north and stayed near Vanuatu, where there were many tuna fisheries.

244. Comments were recorded in an addendum in [UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC8/CRP 13.2.6](#), which was adopted by the ScC-SC8. The ScC-SC8 recommended the proposal for adoption by the COP.

Item 13.2.7 Proposal for the inclusion of the Hudsonian whimbrel (*Numenius phaeopus hudsonicus*) on Appendix I of the Convention

245. The Avian WG considered document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.30.2.7](#). BirdLife International requested including reference to the [Pacific Shorebird Conservation Initiative](#) where the initiatives were listed. This change was reflected in an addendum in [UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC8/CRP 13.2.7](#), which was adopted by the ScC-SC8 and, in plenary, the proposal was recommended for adoption by the COP.

Item 13.2.8 Proposal for the inclusion of the Hudsonian godwit (*Limosa haemastica*) on Appendix I of the Convention

246. In the Avian WG, with respect to [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.30.2.8](#), BirdLife International requested including reference to the [Pacific Shorebird Conservation Initiative](#). It was noted that the species was present in a few places in Patagonia where placement of wind farms could be a significant factor.
247. Mr Des Thompson (COP-appointed Councillor for Climate Change) said he had grave concerns about the prospect of this species, which was especially vulnerable to climate change, particularly gale force events.
248. Comments were included in an addendum. [UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC8/CRP 13.2.8/Rev.1](#) further included a reference to the Pacific Shorebird Conservation Initiative. The ScC-SC8 adopted the CRP and recommended the proposal for adoption by the COP.

Item 13.2.9 Proposal for the inclusion of the lesser yellowlegs (*Tringa flavipes*) on Appendix I of the Convention

249. The Avian WG discussed document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.30.2.9](#). It was noted that the lesser yellowlegs (*Tringa flavipes*) was the most targeted species for shorebird hunters in the Caribbean and that tracking data helped to elucidate the location of existing threats. The species was still in decline in more western areas where there was not as much hunting, which could be attributed to pesticide use and/or agricultural conversion of habitats.
250. Mr Des Thompson (COP-appointed Councillor for Climate Change) said all three shorebird cases were exemplary and an excellent model of good science brought to bear.
251. Comments were recorded in an addendum in [UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC8/CRP 13.2.9/Rev.1](#), which also included a reference to the Pacific Shorebird Conservation Initiative, and adopted by the ScC-SC8, which recommended the proposal for adoption by the COP.

Item 13.2.10 Proposal for the inclusion of the snowy owl (*Bubo scandiacus*) on Appendix II of the Convention

252. The Avian WG considered document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.30.2.10](#). The proposal to include the snowy owl on Appendix II was submitted by Norway. The CMS Raptors MOU

had been consulted with respect to and supported the proposal. This comment was reflected in an addendum contained in [UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC8/CRP 13.2.10](#), which was adopted by the ScC-SC8. In plenary, ScC-SC8 recommended the proposal for adoption by the COP.

Item 13.2.11 Proposal for the inclusion of the Ibera seedeater (*Sporophila iberensis*) on Appendix II of the Convention

253. Comments by the Avian WG on document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.30.2.11](#) were reflected in an addendum contained in [UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC8/CRP 13.2.11](#), which was adopted by the ScC-SC8. In plenary, the proposal was recommended to the COP for adoption.

Item 13.2.12 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

254. The Aquatic WG welcomed the comprehensive review of all listing proposals for sharks and rays undertaken by the Sharks MOU Advisory Committee. The Aquatic WG recommended for adoption the proposal contained in document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.30.2.12](#). Several comments were recorded in an addendum in [UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC8/CRP 13.2.12](#), which was adopted by the ScC-SC8. In plenary, the proposal was recommended for adoption by the COP.

Item 13.2.13 Proposal for the inclusion of the Patagonian narrownose smoothhound (*Mustelus schmitti*) on Appendix II of the Convention

255. The Aquatic WG recommended for adoption the proposal contained in document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.30.2.13](#), which promoted collaboration amongst Range States for the conservation of this species. Comments were recorded in an addendum contained in [UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC8/CRP 13.2.13](#), which was adopted by the ScC-SC8. In plenary, the proposal was recommended for adoption by the COP.

Item 13.2.14 Proposal for the inclusion of the scalloped hammerhead shark (*Sphyrna lewini*) on Appendix I of the Convention

256. The Aquatic WG recommended the proposal contained in document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.30.2.14](#) for adoption, noting the difficulty of determining the health of the species on a global scale. Comments were recorded in an addendum contained in [UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC8/CRP 13.2.14](#), which was adopted by the ScC-SC8. In plenary, the ScC-SC8 recommended the proposal for adoption by the COP.

Item 13.2.15 Proposal for the inclusion of the great hammerhead shark (*Sphyrna mokarran*) on Appendix I of the Convention

257. The Aquatic WG recommended the proposal contained in document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.30.2.15](#) for adoption, noting that regional listing approaches may be appropriate where global assessments were limited by data. These comments were recorded in an addendum contained in [UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC8/CRP 13.2.15](#), which was adopted by the ScC-SC8 and the proposal was recommended for adoption by the COP.

Item 13.2.16 Proposal for the inclusion of the angular angelshark (*Squatina guggenheim*) on Appendix II of the Convention

258. The Aquatic WG recommended for adoption the proposal contained in document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.30.2.16](#), while requesting additional information on migratory movements and missing elements. Comments were recorded in an addendum contained in [UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC8/CRP 13.2.16](#), which was adopted by the ScC-SC8 and the proposal was recommended for adoption by the COP.

Item 13.2.17 Proposal for the inclusion of the spotted sorubim (*Pseudoplatystoma corruscans*) on Appendix II of the Convention

259. The Aquatic WG recommended for adoption the proposal contained in document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.30.2.17](#), while requesting additional information on spawning location and movement of the eggs and larvae of the species. Comments were recorded in an addendum contained in [UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC8/CRP 13.2.17](#), which was adopted by the ScC-SC8 and the proposal was recommended for adoption by the COP.

ITEM 14 CONCERTED ACTIONS

Item 14.1 Concerted Actions

260. The Secretariat introduced document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.31.1](#) *Concerted Actions*. A proposal was accepted to include Indigenous and/or local knowledge known about the species when preparing Concerted Actions, noting this was encouraged to inform the development of appropriate actions to improve the conservation status of the target species. Changes to the document were recorded in [UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC8/CRP 14.1](#), which was adopted by the ScC-SC8.

Item 14.2 Progress in the Implementation of Concerted Actions

Item 14.2.1 Report on the implementation of the Concerted Action for chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes*) behavioural diversity and cultures

261. The Terrestrial WG had no comments on document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.31.2.1](#) and recommended that the Concerted Action be renewed. The document was endorsed by the ScC-SC8.

Item 14.2.2 Report on the implementation of the Concerted Action for the straw-colored fruit bat (*Eidolon helvum*)

262. The Terrestrial WG had no comments on document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.31.2.2](#) and it was recommended that the Concerted Action be continued as activities were not yet completed. The document was endorsed by the ScC-SC8.

Item 14.2.3 Report on the implementation of the Concerted Action for the Pallas's Cat (*Felis manul*)

263. In the Terrestrial WG, the IUCN SSC Cat Specialist Group introduced document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.31.2.3](#) and said an important milestone of the Pallas's cat had been reached and the Concerted Action had been completed .

264. Born Free Foundation asked if data showed whether the Concerted Action was having the desired impact on the Pallas's cat and its habitat. In response, the IUCN SSC Cat

Specialist Group said, while collecting and assessing data had begun, it would take a while to measure the impact of the Concerted Action.

265. India said the snow leopard was being monitored in all 12 Range States and, as it was cohabitating with the Pallas's cat, having solid data in the next few years should be possible.
266. No changes were made to the document, and it was agreed that a proposal for continuing or renewing the Concerted Action for the Pallas's cat would be considered ahead of CMS COP16. The document was endorsed by the ScC-SC8.

Item 14.2.4 Report on the implementation of the Concerted Action for the Eurasian lynx (*Lynx lynx*)

267. In the Terrestrial WG, the implementation report contained in document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.31.2.4](#) was introduced by the IUCN SSC Cat Specialist Group, accepted by the WG with no comment, and endorsed by the ScC-SC8.

Item 14.2.5 Report on the implementation of the Concerted Action for the giraffe (*Giraffa camelopardalis*)

268. The Terrestrial WG had no comments on the implementation report contained in document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.31.2.5](#). It was accepted by the WG and endorsed by the ScC-SC8.

Item 14.2.6 Report on the implementation of the Concerted Action for humpback whales (*Megaptera novaeangliae*) of the Arabian Sea

269. The Aquatic WG welcomed the implementation report contained in [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.31.2.6](#) and praised the collaborative work undertaken for this Concerted Action by CMS, IWC, and others involved. It noted that the draft joint IWC/CMS CMP for humpback whales in the Arabian Sea was recommended for endorsement by the plenary (see Agenda Item 8.4.2), after which there would no longer be a need for this Concerted Action. There were no specific comments on the report. Hence, no CRP was issued and the document was endorsed by the ScC-SC8.

Item 14.2.7 Report on the implementation of the Concerted Action for the sperm whales (*Physeter macrocephalus*) of the Eastern Tropical Pacific

270. The Aquatic WG welcomed the implementation report contained in document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.31.2.7](#) without any further comments. Hence, no CRP was issued and the Concerted Action was endorsed by the ScC-SC8.

Item 14.2.8 Report on the implementation of the Concerted Action for the Franciscana dolphin (*Pontoporia blainvillei*)

271. The Aquatic WG welcomed the implementation report contained in document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.31.2.8](#) without any further comments. Hence, no CRP was issued and the Concerted Action was endorsed by the ScC-SC8.

Item 14.2.9 Report on the implementation of the Concerted Action for the Antipodean albatross (*Diomedea antipodensis*)

272. The Avian WG welcomed the implementation report contained in document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.31.2.9](#). It was noted that this was the third update of this

Concerted Action. New Zealand explained that the species bred in New Zealand but foraged widely including in New Zealand and Chile. Citing very little progress despite efforts of regional fisheries organizations, a continuation of the Concerted Action was proposed and endorsed by the ScC-SC8.

Item 14.2.10 Report on the implementation of the Concerted Action for the blue shark (*Prionace glauca*)

273. The Aquatic WG welcomed the implementation report contained in [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.31.2.10](#) without any further comments; hence no CRP was issued. In plenary, the proposal was endorsed by the ScC-SC8 for continuing the Concerted Action for the subsequent intersessional period to ensure delivery of remaining activities and implementation of new conservation outcomes.

Item 14.2.11 Report on the implementation of the Concerted Action for the common guitarfish (*Rhinobatos rhinobatos*) and the bottlenose wedgefish (*Rhynchobatus australiae*)

274. The Aquatic WG welcomed the implementation report contained in [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.31.2.11](#), which recommended closure of the Concerted Action, without any further comments. Hence, no CRP was issued, and the document was endorsed by the ScC-SC8. In plenary, ScC-SC8 invited the COP to take note of progress achieved under this Concerted Action.

Item 14.3 Proposals for Concerted Actions for the Triennium 2026-2029

275. There were no comments on the umbrella document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.31.3](#) *Proposals for Concerted Actions for the Triennium 2026-2029*, which was endorsed by the ScC-SC8 without comments.

Item 14.3.1 Proposal for a Concerted Action for chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes*) behavioural diversity and cultures already listed on Appendix I and II of the Convention

276. The Terrestrial WG considered the proposal contained in document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.31.3.1](#). Born Free Foundation explained that survival was not just about habitat and food, but that the integrity of social systems would also determine if the chimpanzee could survive human-induced and climate change threats. They said birds flying north to Europe were also linked to chimpanzees.

277. Comments on this proposal were recorded in an addendum contained in [UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC8/CRP 14.3.1](#), which was adopted by the ScC-SC8. In plenary, the proposal was recommended for adoption by the COP.

Item 14.3.2 Proposal for a Concerted Action for the straw-colored fruit bat (*Eidolon helvum*)

278. The Terrestrial WG considered document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.31.3.2](#), which was introduced by Mr Stephen Okiror (Party-Appointed ScC-SC member for Africa) who mentioned a general decline in the population of the fruit bat by 25-30% in past years leading to a threatened status. A significant keystone species that transported seed and pollen across long distances, the fruit bat helped in the regeneration of dying forests. However, Mr Okiror added that bats were also associated with pandemics, such as ebola, which made drumming up support for its conservation challenging. Given differences in legal regimes across migratory ranges, he explained that efforts in proponent states could be replicated across Range States and noted resubmission for

the period up to 2029. Ethiopia said reflecting the need to change the negative perception of the species in this Concerted Action was important.

279. In response to a question, Mr Okiror said the fruit bat did not feed on crops on a significant scale and it was rare to hear of human-bat conflicts.
280. Born Free Foundation said the species depended on both roosting and feeding sites, which may be many miles apart and that monitoring was critical. He noted success would be measured on the ability to reach people with information, and that when roosting and feeding sites were reduced, the risk of pathogen spillover increased. He highlighted an information video on the Ecoflix app about bats.
281. The document was endorsed by the ScC-SC8 and recommended it for adoption by the COP.

Item 14.3.3 Proposal for a Concerted Action for the Eurasian lynx (*Lynx lynx*)

282. The Terrestrial WG had no comments on document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.31.3.3](#), and the proposal was endorsed by the ScC-SC8 and recommended for adoption by the COP.

Item 14.3.4 Proposal for a Concerted Action for the striped hyena (*Hyaena hyaena*) proposed for listing on Appendix I and II of the Convention

283. The Terrestrial WG considered the proposal contained in document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.31.3.4](#). NABU said the striped hyena should be incorporated into CAMI to ensure monitoring and risk assessment, noting this was supported by many Range States, and that inclusion in the ACI should also be considered.
284. WCS concurred that the striped hyena's inclusion in CAMI would be mutually beneficial. They agreed that down the line it could be considered for inclusion in the ACI, although they were not proposing that at this point, especially since the striped hyena was now listed on CITES.
285. Comments were recorded in an addendum, contained in [UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC8/CRP14.3.4](#), which was adopted by the ScC-SC8. In plenary, the proposal for the Concerted Action was recommended for adoption by the COP.

Item 14.3.5 Proposal for a Concerted Action for the Masai giraffe (*Giraffa tippelskirchi*), northern giraffe (*Giraffa camelopardalis*), reticulated giraffe (*Giraffa reticulata*) and southern giraffe (*Giraffa giraffa*)

286. In the Terrestrial WG, Ethiopia introduced document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.31.3.5](#), noting the proposed Concerted Action aimed to align with the updated giraffe taxa. Born Free Foundation said increasing our understanding of giraffe taxa was important for conservation efforts and the revised Concerted Action took into account a better understanding of giraffe taxonomy.
287. The proposal for the Concerted Action was endorsed by the ScC-SC8 and recommended for adoption by the COP.

Item 14.3.6 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

288. The Aquatic WG recommended adopting the proposal contained in document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.31.3.6](#). Comments were recorded in an addendum contained in document [UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC8/CRP 14.3.6](#), which was adopted by the ScC-SC8. In plenary, the proposal was recommended for adoption by the COP.

Item 14.3.7 Proposal for a Concerted Action for the Franciscana dolphin (*Pontoporia blainvillei*)

289. The Aquatic WG recommended adopting the proposal contained in document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.31.3.7](#). Comments were recorded in an addendum in document [UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC8/CRP 14.3.7](#), which was adopted by the ScC-SC8. In plenary, the proposal was recommended for adoption by the COP.

Item 14.3.8 Proposal for a Concerted Action for the Lahille bottlenose dolphin (*Tursiops truncatus gephyreus*) already listed on Appendix I and II of the Convention

290. The Aquatic WG recommended adopting the proposal contained in document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.31.3.8](#). Comments were recorded in an addendum in document [UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC8/CRP 14.3.8](#). The proposal was endorsed by the ScC-SC8 and recommended for adoption by the COP.

Item 14.3.9 Proposal for a Concerted Action for the Antipodean albatross (*Diomedea antipodensis*) already listed on Appendix I of the Convention

291. In the Avian WG, Australia introduced the proposal contained in document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.31.3.9](#), noting fisheries bycatch in the high seas was the main problem. He mentioned efforts to manage breeding sites on islands in the South Atlantic; and data sharing, particularly with non-CMS countries. He said the Antipodean albatross was a “flagship species”.

292. Comments were recorded in an addendum contained in [UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC8/CRP 14.3.9](#), which was adopted by the ScC-SC8. In plenary, the proposal was recommended for adoption by the COP.

Item 14.3.10 Proposal for a Concerted Action for the flesh-footed shearwater (*Ardenna carneipes*) proposed for listing on Appendix II of the Convention

293. In the Avian WG, Australia, introducing the proposal contained in document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.31.3.10](#), noted a high bycatch rate, and said a Concerted Action would enable the gathering of more data on breeding populations, as well as work on movement and return rates of juveniles. A comment stating that the ScC recommended adoption of the Concerted Action by the COP was reflected in an addendum contained in [UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC8/CRP 14.3.10](#), which was adopted by the ScC-SC8. In plenary, the proposal was recommended for adoption by the COP.

Item 14.3.11 Proposal for a Concerted Action for the Peruvian or Humboldt pelican (*Pelecanus thagus*) already listed on Appendix I and II of the Convention

294. The Avian WG considered the proposal contained in document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.31.3.11](#). A comment stating that the ScC recommended adoption of the Concerted Action by the COP was reflected in an addendum contained

in [UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC8/CRP 14.3.11](#), which was adopted by the ScC-SC8. In plenary, the proposal was recommended for adoption by the COP.

Item 14.3.12 Proposal for a Concerted Action for the Magellanic plover (*Pluvianellus socialis*) already listed on Appendix I of the Convention

295. The Avian WG considered the proposal contained in document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.31.3.12](#). A comment stating that the ScC recommended adoption of the Concerted Action by the COP was reflected in an addendum contained in [UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC8/CRP 14.3.12](#), which was adopted by the ScC-SC8. In plenary, the proposal was recommended for adoption by the COP.

Item 14.3.13 Proposal for a Concerted Action for the sand tiger shark (*Carcharias taurus*) already listed on Appendix I and II of the Convention

296. The Aquatic WG recommended adopting the proposal contained in document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.31.3.13](#), refining the scope to ensure feasibility, and concentrating on the highest-impact management needs and scientific priorities. Comments were recorded in an addendum contained in [UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC8/CRP 14.3.13](#), which was adopted by the ScC-SC8. In plenary, the proposal was recommended for adoption by the COP.

Item 14.3.14 Proposal for a Concerted Action for the basking shark (*Cetorhinus maximus*) already listed on Appendix I and II of the Convention

297. The Aquatic WG recommended adopting the proposal contained in document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.31.3.14](#), but noted that the Concerted Action was quite broad and prioritization of certain actions might be necessary. Comments were recorded in an addendum contained in [UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC8/CRP 14.3.14](#), which was adopted by the ScC-SC8 and, in plenary, the proposal was recommended for adoption by the COP.

Item 14.3.15 Proposal for a Concerted Action for the blue shark (*Prionace glauca*) already listed on Appendix II of the Convention

298. The Aquatic WG recommended adopting the proposal contained in document [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.31.3.15](#). Comments were recorded in an addendum contained in [UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC8/CRP 14.3.15](#), which was adopted by the ScC-SC8. In plenary, the proposal was recommended for adoption by the COP.

Item 14.3.16 Proposal for a Concerted Action for all species of devil and manta rays (*Mobulidae*) already listed on Appendix I and II of the Convention

299. The Aquatic WG recommended adopting the proposal contained in [UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.31.3.16](#) and provided some comments on the scope and proposed activities. The comments were recorded in an addendum contained in [UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC8/CRP 14.3.16](#), which was adopted by the ScC-SC8. In plenary, the proposal was recommended for adoption by the COP.

VI. FORMAL AND CONCLUDING BUSINESS

ITEM 15. DATE AND VENUE OF THE 9TH MEETING OF THE SESSIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL (ScC-SC9)

300. Although not yet confirmed, it was noted that ScC-SC9 would likely take place in October or November of 2026. A new Chair would need to be elected, requiring a round of comments and consultations. Mr James Williams (Alternate ScC-SC member for Europe) reiterated his suggestion that ScC-SC9 should meet for three days and that ScC-SC10 should meet for five days.
301. Mr Barry Baker (COP-appointed Councillor for Bycatch) supported an extra day for ScC-SC10 and suggested allocating more time for the WGs to meet. Ms Vanesa Tossenberger (COP-appointed Councillor for Aquatic Mammals) agreed.
302. The Chair said the Secretariat would consider the financial and logistical arrangements for adding an extra day to the pre-COP ScC-SC meeting.
303. Ms Amy Fraenkel, CMS Executive Secretary, said the current budget took into account the cost of meetings, based on duration and timing. She said they were trying to build flexibility into the budget proposed for consideration at COP15, to allow money to be moved from one year to another if needed and to avoid going back to the StC.
304. Mr Graeme Taylor (Party-Appointed ScC-SC member for Oceania), supported by Mr Mark Simmonds (COP-appointed Councillor for Marine Pollution), said longer meetings would provide more time to review the CRPs and that having a break before reviewing the documents would be useful.
305. Ms Narelle Montgomery noted she would remain in her position as Chair until the end of COP15 and then the process to pick a new Chair would begin. She noted regular meetings with Ms Dagmar Zikova from the Secretariat and that her department had been quite supportive.
306. The Secretariat said the procedure was burdensome and could not take place at the COP. The Secretariat would reach out to elected ScC-SC members and ask for potential candidates and comments, which would be followed by consultations within regions, and then elections for Chair and Vice Chair. The procedure would be set up as soon as possible after the COP, and hopefully an agreement would be reached by the end of the summer of 2026. A new Chair must be in place by the next ScC-SC meeting.

ITEM 16. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

307. There was no other business.

ITEM 17. CLOSURE OF THE MEETING

308. In closing remarks, Ms Amy Fraenkel, CMS Executive Secretary, said it was a pleasure to work with Ms Ruth Cromie (COP-appointed Councillor for Wildlife Health) who would be stepping down. She also acknowledged the bittersweet moment as this was the last meeting that Ms Narelle Montgomery would serve as ScC Chair. Thanks to her, things ran smoothly, she had participated in IPBES meetings to present the work of CMS, and Australia had supported funding the work of CMS. Ms. Fraenkel expressed a heartfelt thanks to the ScC Chair on behalf of the Secretariat for bringing great results for the ScC and the CMS.

309. Ms Narelle Montgomery, ScC Chair, said she was impressed by what the ScC had achieved, highlighting efficiency, focus, good humor, and a spirit of collaboration. This spoke volumes about expertise, solid advice, and influence, noting the ScC would play an important role at COP15. She encouraged everyone to keep championing the ScC's recommendations. Noting it had been a real honor and a privilege to serve as ScC Chair, she said she had learned from everyone, with expert advice making the experience really rewarding. She extended a heartfelt thanks to Ms Amy Fraenkel, Ms Dagmar Zikova, and the entire Secretariat staff, as well as the interpreters and the Government of Germany. She wished safe travels to all and hoped to see everyone at COP15, where the important work could continue.
310. The Chair declared the meeting adjourned.

Annexes:

Annex 1: List of Participants

Annex 2: Reports by In-session Working Groups (Aquatic, Avian, Terrestrial) to plenary

Annex 3: Terms of Reference of Working Groups amended by ScC-SC8

ANNEX 1**LIST OF PARTICIPANTS****SESSIONAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS****COP-APPOINTED COUNCILLORS**

Barry Baker	Tasmania, Australia
Robert Clay	Western Hemisphere, Shorebird Reserve Network, Manomet Center for Conservation Sciences, Asunción, Paraguay
Ruth Cromie	WWT Research Fellow, Chair of AEWA Technical Committee, Gloucestershire, United Kingdom
Zeb Hogan	United States of America
Rima Jabado	Elasmo Project, Dubai, United Arab Emirates
Alfred Oteng-Yeboah	Council for Scientific and Industrial Research CSIR, Forestry Commission of Ghana, Accra, Ghana
Mark Peter Simmonds	OceanCare, Wädenswil, Switzerland
Fernando Spina	Bird Migration Research Branch, Istituto Superiore per la Protezione e la Ricerca Ambientale (ISPRA), Bologna, Italy
Des Thompson	University of the Highlands and Islands, North, West and Hebrides Environmental Research Institute, Thurso, United Kingdom
Vanesa Tossenberger	Fundación Cethus, Buenos Aires, Argentina

PARTY-APPOINTED REGIONAL COUNCILLORS

AFRICA	
Edson Gandiwa	Zimbabwe, Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority
Stephen Fred Okiror	Uganda, Ministry of Tourism Wildlife and Antiquities
Asgedom Kahsay Gebretensae	Ethiopia, Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority (alternate member, acting on behalf of the vacant member position)
ASIA	
Askar Davletbakov	Kyrgyzstan, Institute of Biology of the NAS KR
Daniel Fernando	Sri Lanka, Director Blue Resources Trust
Sathyakumar Sambandam	India, Wildlife Institute of India
EUROPE	
Rubén Moreno-Opo	Spain, Ministry for the Ecological Transition

Daliborka Stanković	Serbia, Research associate University in Belgrade - Institute for Multidisciplinary Research - National Institute of the Republic of Serbia, Department of Biodiversity and Environmental Research
James Williams	United Kingdom, Joint Nature Conservation Committee (alternate member, acting on behalf of Joao José Loureiro)
OCEANIA	
Narelle Montgomery	Australia, Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water; Chair of the ScC-SC8
Krishneel Nand	Fiji, Ministry of Environment and Climate Change
Graeme Taylor	New Zealand, Department of Conservation
SOUTH & CENTRAL AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN	
Andrei Langeloh Roos	Brazil, ICMBIO/CEMAVE
Héctor Vera Alcaraz	Paraguay, Ministerio del Ambiente y Desarrollo Sostenibles - MADES Py

SESSIONAL COMMITTEE OBSERVERS

SCIENTIFIC COUNCILLORS

Rob J.J. Hendriks	Netherlands, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Food security and Nature
Boris Nikolov	Bulgaria, Institute of Biodiversity and Ecosystem Research, BAS
Timm Reinhardt	Germany, German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation

PARTY OBSERVERS

Mohammed Alshamlan	Saudi Arabia, National Center for Wildlife
Verônica Barros	Brazil, Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change
Mark Carey	Australia, Australian Government
Isuf Fetai	North Macedonia, Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning
Frenze Geiger	Germany, Federal Ministry for the Environment and Nature Conservation
Berit Gewert	Germany, BMUKN
Rhiannon Hudson-Jones	United Kingdom, Defra
Esko Hyvärinen	Finland, Ministry of the Environment
Nada Mlinar	Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ministry of Foreign Trade and Ec. Rel. BiH
Camila Neves Soares Oliveira	Brazil, Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change
Nobesuthu Ngwenya	Zimbabwe, Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority

Aishwarya Raj	India, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change
Sarah Scott	United Kingdom, Joint Nature Conservation Committee (UK Government)
Ines Verleye	Cyprus, Ministry of Environment
Clement Ben Vishwanathan	India, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change

NON-PARTY OBSERVERS

Adel Archakova	Russia, Delegation Member, Federal Service for Supervision of Natural Resources
Regina Baumgertner	Russia, Delegation Member, Federal Service for Supervision of Natural Resources
Alena Grinina	Russia, Delegation Member, Federal Service for Supervision of Natural Resources
Tatiana Kuznetsova	Russia, Federal Service for Natural Recourses Supervision
Svetlana Radionova	Russia, Delegation Member, Federal Service for Supervision of Natural Resources
Inna Romanchenko	Russia, General Consulate of the Russian Federation in Bonn
Alexandra Sazonova	Russia, General Consulate of the Russian Federation in Bonn

INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS AND UN SPECIALISED AGENCIES

Rebecca Austin	International Whaling Commission
El Mehdi Brahmi	International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas
Paula Grabietz	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)
Martin Hitzinger	SPREP
Ann-Kristin Konzak	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)
Dao Nguyen	IUCN
Crickette Sanz	IUCN
Andrew Szopa-Comley	UNEP-WCMC
Sebastian Winkler	CIC - International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation

NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS AND OTHER AGENCIES AND BODIES

Catherine Bell	International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW)
Philippa Brakes	Whale and Dolphin Conservation/ University of Exeter
Matthew Collis	International Fund for Animal Welfare
Nicola Jane Crockford	BirdLife International
Maximin Djondo	Benin Environment and Education Society
Viola Duemmler	Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS)

Sarah Fowler	Save Our Seas Foundation
Gianna Fruhauf Minton	IUCN SSC Cetacean Specialist Group
Matthew Gianni	Deep Sea Conservation Coalition
Alexander Griffin	FACE (European Federation for Hunting and Conservation)
Mouhamadou Bamba Ka	Action pour le Respect et la Protection de l'Environnement
Santosh Karki	NDalit Welfare Association
Lydia Koehler	Deep Sea Conservation Coalition
Susan Lieberman	Wildlife Conservation Society
Gabriel Marcacci	Swiss Ornithological Institute
Nina Mikander	BirdLife International
Diabel Niang	Action pour le Respect et la Protection de l'Environnement
Laetitia Nunny	OceanCare
Colman O'Criodain	WWF
Victoria Peavoy	BirdLife International
Alejandro Puerta Sánchez	University of Bonn
Ian Redmond	Born Free Foundation
Christiane Roettger	German Wildlife Foundation
Pelayo Salinas de León	Charles Darwin Foundation
Joshua Schlueter	NABU
Mona Schweizer	Pro Wildlife e.V.
Barbara Slee	IFAW
Reto Spaar	AEMLAP Coordination Unit
Lisette Victorero	Deep Sea Conservation Coalition

CMS FAMILY

Olivier Biber	UNEP/CMS/AEMLAP
Sergey Dereliev	UNEP/AEWA Secretariat
Suren Gazaryan	UNEP/EUROBATS
Melissa Lewis	UNEP/AEWA Secretariat
Simone Panigada	ACCOBAMS
Jenny Renell	ASCOBANS Secretariat
Matthias Schaber	CMS Sharks MOU Advisory Committee

CMS SECRETARIAT

Amy Fraenkel	CMS Secretariat, Executive Secretary
Dagmar Zíková	CMS Secretariat
Fariza Adilbekova	CMS Secretariat

Aydin Bahramlouian	CMS Secretariat
Catherine Brueckner	CMS Secretariat
Ximena Cancino Ordenes	CMS Secretariat
Laura Cerasi	CMS Secretariat
Heidrun Frisch-Nwakanma	CMS Secretariat
Amira Grotendiek	CMS Secretariat
Maria Jose Ortiz Noguera	CMS Secretariat
Tine Lindberg-Roncari	CMS Secretariat
Nathan Mesnildrey	CMS Secretariat
Clara Nobbe	CMS Secretariat
Polina Orlinskiy	CMS Secretariat
Andrea Pauly	CMS Secretariat
Tatiana Pomelnikova	CMS Secretariat
Paola Quesada Sanchez	CMS Secretariat
Iván Ramirez	CMS Secretariat
Tilman Schneider	CMS Secretariat
Barbara Schoenberg	CMS Secretariat
Melanie Virtue	CMS Secretariat
Louisa Breimann	CMS Secretariat, Consultant
Jennifer de Leur	CMS Secretariat, Consultant
Fuad Ismayilov	CMS Secretariat, Consultant
Yong-June Kim	CMS Secretariat, Consultant
Anouska Kinahan	CMS Secretariat, Consultant
Anna Rose	CMS Secretariat, Consultant
Tatjana Rosen	CMS Secretariat, Consultant
Klara Luzie Gruenewald	CMS Secretariat, Intern
Emily Martens-Oberwelland	CMS Secretariat, Intern
Zaynab Sadozai	CMS Secretariat, Intern
Claire Williamson	CMS Secretariat, Intern
Leila Mead	Report writer

CHAIR'S REPORT ON THE OUTCOMES OF THE AQUATIC WORKING GROUP

The Aquatic Working Group discussed a total of 37 documents over the past two days. There were many lively and informative discussions on a variety of important issues.

Eight agenda items did not require a CRP of the meeting document or Addendum. The WG recommended adoption or noting of the contents.

No changes were made to the following documents:

- Document 25.2.2 *Underwater Noise*,
- Document 25.4.2 *Cetacean Action Plans*,
- Document 25.6.4 *Single Species Action Plan for the Northeast Atlantic and Mediterranean Sub-Population of the Tope Shark (*Galeorhinus galeus*)*,
- Document 31.2.6 *Report on the implementation of the Concerted Action for humpback whales (*Megaptera novaeangliae*) of the Arabian Sea*,
- Document 31.2.7 *Report on the implementation of the Concerted Action for the sperm whales (*Physeter macrocephalus*) of the Eastern Tropical Pacific*,
- Document 31.2.8 *Report on the implementation of the Concerted Action for the Franciscana dolphin (*Pontoporia blainvillei*)*,
- Document 31.2.10 *Report on the implementation of the Concerted Action for the blue shark (*Prionace glauca*)*,
- Document 31.2.11 *Report on the implementation of the Concerted Action for the common guitarfish (*Rhinobatos rhinobatos*) and the bottlenose wedgefish (*Rhynchobatus australiae*)*.

The two documents requiring the most discussion were Bycatch and Deep-sea Mining and more detail was provided on these.

On Bycatch

The Aquatic WG discussed this item multiple times over two days and formed a subgroup to help with deliberations. The draft Resolution in this document attracted many comments. A contact group was formed to help clarify views, especially on the proposed definition of bycatch. There were diverging views on the need for, and the content of the definition. Eventually, an interim definition was agreed and recommended to COP15 for further consideration, along with other changes to the Resolution and to the Decisions. The comments were recorded in an addendum.

On Deep-sea Mining

The Aquatic WG found the report *Impacts of Deep-sea Mining on Migratory Species: Review and Knowledge Gaps* to be useful. They agreed that this is an emerging threat to migratory species and that new science is coming out all the time, making this a rapidly evolving issue. The COP-appointed Councillor for Marine Pollution emphasized the importance of the precautionary approach, reiterated on page one of the report.

Several observers viewed the report's recommendations regarding mitigation actions as premature and not aligned with Resolution 14.6. The Aquatic WG proposed replacing the recommendations with ones drafted by the WG, which are available in an addendum.

In conclusion, all documents were recommended for adoption, some subject to modifications. A more comprehensive report from the Aquatic WG will be submitted for inclusion in the meeting report. I thank all members of the WG and members of the Secretariat team, who did a cracking job of producing all the CRPs and keeping them in line given the breadth of work the Aquatic WG had on its agenda.

CHAIR'S REPORT ON THE OUTCOMES OF THE AVIAN WORKING GROUP

The Avian Species WG met over two days with wonderful participation and good discussions. All the documents were examined, and 21 in-session documents were produced. Some documents did not require much discussion given the good quality of the documents. He said three documents, proposed by the ScC, were revised:

- UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC8/CRP 9.3.2 *Terms of Reference Flyways Working Group*
- UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC8/CRP 9.3.3 *Draft Flyways Working Group Programme of Work for 2026 - 2029*
- UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC8/CRP 9.3.4 *Seabirds and Marine Flyways*

Other documents received comments that were recorded as addendums. All listing proposals were supported by the group.

Document UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC8/CRP 9.2 *Preventing Poisoning of Migratory Birds* garnered much discussion and proposed amendments were recorded in an addendum.

CHAIR'S REPORT ON THE OUTCOMES OF THE TERRESTRIAL WORKING GROUP

Edson Gandiwa, Terrestrial WG Chair, said The Group considered 17 agenda items and thanked all participants. With respect to UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.30.2.1 *Proposal for the inclusion of the Populations of cheetah (*Acinonyx jubatus*) of Zimbabwe, Botswana and Namibia on Appendix I and II of the Convention*, Botswana and Namibia were withdrawn from the proposal as they were not CMS parties and were not seeing a steep decline. He moratorium on cheetah hunting but said an Appendix I listing was not incompatible with trophy hunting.

He also mentioned support for: revising CAMI and engaging with the UNCCD and following discussions at the UNCCD COP in Mongolia, which hosts many CAMI species; renewing the Concerted Action for chimpanzees; and listing the striped hyena and a Concerted Action on the species and subsequently including it in the CAMI and ACI POW. He said four new giraffe taxa had been recognized. He noted a lively debate on the proposal to delist the Bukhara deer from Appendix I and that the WG had forwarded a request for further information and an outline of what would be required in this regard. He thanked the members of the WG and the Secretariat.

ANNEX 3**TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE CMS SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL WORKING GROUP ON CLIMATE CHANGE AND MIGRATORY SPECIES**

The 14th meeting of the Conference of the Parties requested the Scientific Council to reestablish a Working Group on Climate Change and Migratory Species under the Scientific Council. The aim is to enhance the scientific understanding of climate change issues in relation to migratory species, provide advice to Parties on actions they can take to mitigate the impacts of climate change on migratory species, and promote the benefits of migratory species conservation for enhancing action to combat climate change. The ScC-SC7 (September 2024) reestablished the WG, and the ScC-SC8 (December 2025) amended paragraph 4. *Duration.*

1. Background

Climate change is a key pressure affecting migratory species. Increasing attention and importance are being given to the role that climate change plays in nature conservation in the face of the biodiversity crisis. The 14th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the CMS (COP14) adopted a revised Resolution and several Decisions on climate change and migratory species.

2. Purpose

- A. The Working Group will support the implementation of relevant Resolutions and Decisions directed to the Scientific Council, as contained in the Programme of Work of the Sessional Committee.
- B. The Working Group will support implementation of climate change-related goals and targets within the Samarkand Strategic Plan for Migratory Species 2024-2032, including their contribution to climate-related goals and targets of the [Kunming Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework](#) and the further development of its [monitoring framework](#), and, where relevant, the Paris Agreement adopted under the UNFCCC.
- C. The Working Group will provide a platform to discuss and exchange CMS-related information and scientific findings on climate change-related matters.
- D. The Working Group will advise on an update of the CMS webpage on Climate Change¹.

3. Membership

- A. Membership of the Working Group can include both members of the Scientific Council and observers; in line with the Rules of Procedure of the Scientific Council.
- B. The Working Group will strive to maintain a balance of gender, regional representation and taxonomic categories of expertise.
- C. The involvement of Working Group members is entirely on a voluntarily basis.

¹ <https://www.cms.int/en/workinggroup/working-group-climate-change>

- D. If needed, experts external to the Working Group and interested in contributing to the objectives of the Working Group may occasionally be invited to join meetings or to support specific tasks.

4. Organization of work

- A. The Working Group will be chaired by the COP-appointed Councillor for Climate Change. If the Chair has to leave her/his position, a new Chair will be appointed from among the remaining Sessional Committee / Scientific Council members of the Working Group until a new COP-appointed Councillor is appointed.
- B. The Working Group will mainly operate electronically by communicating via email and, if appropriate/available, by making use of a dedicated workspace. Meetings (in-person or virtual) may be held in the margins of Sessional Committee meetings, or, if resources are available, may be held in the intersessional period between the Conferences of the Parties.
- C. The Chair of the Working Group will report on progress to the Sessional Committee.
- D. The CMS Secretariat will support and facilitate the coordination of the activities and the organization of meetings of the Working Group.

5. Duration

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

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE CMS SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL WORKING GROUP ON TAXONOMIC AND NOMENCLATURAL ISSUES AND ON POTENTIAL TAXA FOR LISTING

The Seventh Meeting of the Sessional Committee of the Scientific Council (ScC-SC7) held in September 2024, decided to establish a Working Group on the above subject. The ScC-SC8 (December 2025) amended paragraph 4. *Duration*.

1. Purpose

The Working Group shall have the mandate to:

- a) Support the Scientific Council in implementation of Decisions 14.233 and 14.236.
- b) Support the Scientific Council in implementation of Decision 14.231,
- c) The Working Group will provide a platform to discuss and exchange information and scientific findings on
 - the suitability of the Catalogue of Life as a source of species lists for CMS.
 - expanding the list of potential taxa for listing from birds to other groups and to develop a strategic approach to listing.
- d) Investigate the governance, financial and operational processes used by the Catalogue of Life created under the Global Biodiversity Information Facility, to provide standardized taxonomy and nomenclature for faunal groups of interest to CMS, and on the quality of the list generated by it.
- e) Investigate the taxonomic checklists used by other Conventions, with special attention to those used at CITES and IUCN, and to provide recommendations on synergies.
- f) Develop recommendations in collaboration with experts and on the best ways to ensure a standardised approach to animal taxonomic and nomenclatural information in CMS.

2. Membership

- A. The Working Group should consist of the following members:
 - a) Sessional Committee members;
 - b) Experts from Parties and other Observers;
 - c) Representatives of other MEAs, such as CITES, as appropriate.
- B. The Working Group strives to maintain a balance of gender, regional representation and taxonomic categories of expertise.
- C. If and when needed, experts external to the Working Group and interested in contributing to the objectives of the Working Group may be invited to join meetings or to support specific tasks.

3. Organization of work

- A. The Working Group will be chaired by the COP-Appointed Councillor for Birds. If the Chair leaves her/his position, a new Chair will be appointed from among the remaining Sessional Committee / Scientific Council members of the Working Group.

- B. The Working Group will mainly operate electronically by communicating via email and possibly making use of a dedicated workspace or virtual meetings. In-person meetings may be held in the margins of Sessional Committee meetings.
- C. The Chair of the Working Group will report on progress to the Sessional Committee.
- D. The CMS Secretariat will identify the members of the Working Group, keep the membership list, and will support and facilitate the coordination of the activities and the organization of meetings of the Working Group.

4. Duration

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

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE CMS SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL WORKING GROUP ON MAINTAINING LISTS OF SPECIES LISTED IN CMS APPENDICES

The Seventh Meeting of the Sessional Committee of the Scientific Council (ScC-SC7) held in September 2024, decided to establish a Working Group on the above subject. The ScC-SC8 (December 2025) amended paragraph 4. Duration.

1. Purpose

The Working Group shall have the mandate to:

- a) Support the Secretariat in implementation of Article VI, paragraph 1 of the Convention and Decision 14.234 and 14.30,
- b) Provide a platform to discuss and exchange information and scientific findings on:
 - Mapping the different uses of the online databases and define the information needed for different purposes and by relevant users;
 - Species to be displayed in the databases Species List and Species+ with specific focus on Appendix II species listed at family and genus level;
 - Information to be displayed for each species (e.g. an annotation informing about migratory behaviour of the species, Range State data, taxonomic and range state references, etc.);
 - Search options and other recommended functionalities of the databases; – Possible integration of the lists requested under Resolution 14.19 paragraph 1 and Decision 14.30 into the online databases;
 - Practical issues in implementing any options considered.
- c) Formulate its findings and recommendations for consideration by ScC-SC8.

2. Membership

- A. The Working Group should consist of the following members:
 - a) Sessional Committee members and Scientific Councillors;
 - b) Sessional Committee Observers;
- B. The Working Group strives to maintain a balance of gender, regional representation and taxonomic categories of expertise.
- C. If and when needed, experts external to the Working Group and interested in contributing to the objectives of the Working Group may be invited to join meetings or to support specific tasks.

3. Organization of work

- A. The Working Group will appoint its chair from among the Sessional Committee / Scientific Council members.
- B. The Working Group will mainly operate electronically by communicating via email and possibly making use of a dedicated workspace or virtual meetings. In-person meetings may be held in the margins of Sessional Committee meetings.
- C. The Chair of the Working Group will report on progress to the Sessional Committee.

- D. The CMS Secretariat will keep the membership list and will support and facilitate the coordination of the activities and the organization of meetings of the Working Group.

4. Duration

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

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE CMS SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL WORKING GROUP ON ECOLOGICAL CONNECTIVITY

The Seventh Meeting of the Sessional Committee of the Scientific Council (ScC-SC7) held in September 2024, decided to re-establish a Working Group on Ecological Connectivity under the Scientific Council, with the aim of enhancing the scientific understanding of connectivity issues, providing advice on these in relation to migratory species. The ScC-SC8 (December 2025) amended paragraph 5. Duration.

1. Background

Connectivity is a key word of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), the only global legal instrument devoted to the conservation of migratory animals.

Recently, increasing attention and importance are being given to the role that connectivity plays in nature conservation, and in the face of both the ongoing biodiversity crisis and escalating climate-driven ecological catastrophes, the role it plays in the protection and retention of ecological integrity. The need to maintain and enhance ecological connectivity has been recognized by many international processes, such as the 75th session of the UN General Assembly, which adopted [Resolution 75/271 Nature knows no borders: transboundary cooperation – a key factor for biodiversity conservation, restoration and sustainable use](#), and the [Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework](#).

The Fourteenth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the CMS (COP14) adopted Resolution 14.16 *Ecological Connectivity* and Decisions 14.194 -14.196 on ecological connectivity.

2. Purpose

- A. The primary objective of the Working Group is to support the delivery of relevant tasks contained in the Programme of Work of the Sessional Committee (POW).
- B. In addition, the Working Group will support the implementation of relevant Resolutions and Decisions directed to the Scientific Council.
- C. The Working Group will support the implementation of connectivity-related goals and targets of the Samarkand Strategic Plan for Migratory Species 2024-2032, including their contribution to connectivity-related goals and targets to the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and the further development of its [monitoring framework](#).
- D. The Working Group will provide a platform to discuss and exchange information and scientific findings on ecological connectivity-related matters also with a view to further developing the [CMS Thematic Webpage on Connectivity](#).

A workplan detailing specific activities will be developed for each intersessional period.

3. Membership

- A. Membership of the Working Group can include both members of the Scientific Council and observers.
- B. The Working Group strives to maintain a balance of gender, regional representation and taxonomic categories of expertise.

- C. If and when needed, experts external to the Working Group and interested in contributing to the objectives of the Working Group may occasionally be invited to join meetings or to support specific tasks.

4. Organization of work

- A. The Working Group will be chaired by the COP-Appointed Councilor for Connectivity. If the Chair has to leave her/his position, a new Chair will be appointed from among the remaining Sessional Committee / Scientific Council members of the Working Group.
- B. The Working Group will mainly operate electronically by communicating via email and possibly making use of a dedicated workspace or virtual meetings. In-person meetings may be held in the margins of Sessional Committee meetings.
- C. The Chair of the Working Group will report on progress to the Sessional Committee.
- D. The CMS Secretariat will support and facilitate the coordination of the activities and the organization of meetings of the Working Group.

5. Duration

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