

**7th Meeting of the Sessional Committee of the
CMS Scientific Council (ScC-SC7)**

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**ALIGNING THE NOMENCLATURE AND TAXONOMIC REFERENCES FOR SPECIES LISTED IN
THE CMS APPENDICES WITH GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY INITIATIVES**

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Summary:

Decision 14.231 requests the Scientific Council to review the utility of the Catalogue of Life as a potential source for all taxonomic and nomenclatural information for CMS.

This document outlines the approach proposed as a means of meeting the request.

ALIGNING THE NOMENCLATURE AND TAXONOMIC REFERENCES FOR SPECIES LISTED IN THE CMS APPENDICES WITH GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY INITIATIVES

Background

1. There is an ongoing effort to harmonise taxonomy and nomenclature between CMS and CITES, as also reflected in the [CMS-CITES Joint Work Programme](#), which was endorsed by the 52nd meeting of the CMS Standing Committee and the 73rd meeting of the CITES Standing Committee. Harmonisation of the nomenclature used would allow databases with species-specific information to be aligned, in support of implementation of these Conventions by Parties.
2. At its 14th meeting (COP14, Samarkand, Uzbekistan, February 2024), the Conference of the Parties discussed the need to ensure that Parties have access to the most up-to-date and reliable nomenclature and taxonomy based on an approved source.
3. The list of species listed in Appendices I and II of the Convention is compiled based on CMS standard taxonomic references approved by the Parties.
4. The standard taxonomic references for some species listed by CMS differ from those approved for the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)
5. The standard taxonomic references may also differ from those commonly used by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) as the basis of its Red List of Threatened Species, making it harder to assess the favourability of conservation status by the various multilateral environment agreements (MEAs).
6. One potential means of for harmonizing and linking databases is to draw on the Catalogue of Life as a single source for taxonomy and nomenclature.
7. The Catalogue of Life is currently the agreed source of the Backbone Taxonomy for the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF: <https://www.gbif.org/>), a network and data infrastructure supported by many of the world's governments that aims to provide open access to data about all types of life.
8. Both GBIF and the Catalogue of Life have key roles in the management of global biodiversity knowledge, being recognised as Global Core Biodata Resources by the Global Biodata Coalition (<https://globalbiodata.org/>). The CITES specialists on botanical and zoological nomenclature noted at a joint meeting of the CITES plants and animals committees (PC26 Doc. 42.3 / AC32 Doc. 45.3) that the initiative with the Catalogue of Life “represent valuable progress towards the compilation of broadly recognised and broadly supported checklists of species of plants, animals, and other organisms. Such checklists will potentially represent standardised checklists for adoption by CITES and its Parties.”

9. At its 14th meeting (COP14, Samarkand, Uzbekistan, February 2024), the Conference of the Parties adopted Decision 14.231 *Taxonomy and Nomenclature* as follows:

Decision 14.231 Directed to the Scientific Council

The Scientific Council is requested, subject to the availability of external resources, to:

- a) *review the utility of the Catalogue of Life as a potential source for all taxonomic and nomenclatural information for CMS, including evaluating the processes of updating nomenclature within the Catalogue of Life; and*
- b) *liaise with taxonomic and/or nomenclatural advisors to other Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) on the practical challenges of extracting species lists for MEAs by a particular date for use as standard references by these MEAs.*

Next Steps in the implementation of Decision 14.231

10. It is recommended that a report is prepared by the Sessional Committee on the governance, financing and operational processes used by the Catalogue of Life to provide contemporary standardized taxonomy and nomenclature for faunal groups of interest to CMS, and the quality of the lists generated.
11. Establishing an intersessional working group of the Sessional Committee is recommended as the most efficient way to develop such a report and to provide recommendations to the eighth Sessional Committee meeting on the suitability of the Catalogue of Life as a single source of taxonomic information for CMS.
12. The working group should also invite the CITES specialists on botanical and zoological nomenclature to participate as experts in the relationship between taxonomy and MEAs to enhance the opportunities for harmonization between CMS and CITES taxonomies.

Recommended Actions

13. The Scientific Council is recommended to:
 - a) Provide its opinion on the process proposed to review the relevance of the Catalogue of Life as a potential source for all taxonomic and nomenclatural information for CMS.
 - b) Create an Intersessional Working Group with Terms of Reference as per the Annex to this document to facilitate the development of a report and recommendations to the Scientific Council.

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE CMS SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL WORKING GROUP ON THE SUITABILITY OF THE CATALOGUE OF LIFE AS SINGLE SOURCE OF TAXONOMIC INFORMATION FOR CMS

The Seventh Meeting of the Sessional Committee of the Scientific Council (ScC-SC7) held from 17 to 20 September 2024, decided to establish a Working Group on the above subject.

1. Purpose

The Working Group shall have the mandate to:

- a) Support the Scientific Council in implementation of Decision 14.231,
- b) 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.
- c) 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.
- d) Investigate the taxonomic checklists used by other Conventions, with special attention to those used at CITES and IUCN, and to provide recommendations on synergies.
- e) 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 is established for the intersessional period until COP15.