

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

*Bonn, Germany, 17 – 20 September 2024*

UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC7/Outcome 2

**TERMS OF REFERENCE OF WORKING GROUPS AND TASK FORCES ESTABLISHED  
UNDER THE CMS SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL AND ITS SESSIONAL COMMITTEE  
REQUIRING REVIEW OR APPROVAL**

**A. TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE CMS FAO CO-CONVENED SCIENTIFIC  
TASK FORCE ON AVIAN INFLUENZA AND WILDLIFE**

**Background**

The Task Force was established by the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) in close cooperation with the Agreement on the Conservation of African Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (AEWA) in August 2005 following concerns about mortality of wild birds and the role of migratory birds as potential vectors of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) virus subtype H5N.

FAO, originally an observer of the Task Force, became a full member in March 2007. In June 2007, FAO was acknowledged for its commitment and dedication to understanding the role of wild birds in the spread of H5N1 HPAI and was invited to co-convene the Task Force with the CMS.

[Resolution 14.18 Avian Influenza](#) further outlines the importance of the Task Force in encouraging cross-sectoral, multi-stakeholder planning and preparedness, and the development and implementation of national wildlife contingency plans for HPAI to enable effective prevention, responses, and minimization of detrimental impacts to wildlife. The extensive mortality seen in wild mammals from the early 2020s and the wide host range of H5N1 HPAI has increased the focus of the Task Force from birds to include other wildlife.

**Purpose**

To improve understanding of the role of wild birds and other wildlife in the epidemiology of highly pathogenic avian influenza and the level of integration between relevant sectors, to encourage One Health approaches to preparedness and responses to HPAI and to work to minimise detrimental impacts to wildlife.

**Remit**

- Promote objective information on the role of wild birds and other wildlife in the epidemiology of HPAI aiming to avoid inappropriate responses that could be detrimental to the conservation of wildlife and their habitats;
- Promote integrated and One Health approaches, at both national and international levels, to address HPAI, in particular via prevention, preparedness and responses and bringing together the sectors traditionally responsible for public health and agriculture with those traditionally responsible for wildlife and the environment;

- Encourage governments to support coordinated, well-structured and long-term monitoring and surveillance programmes for wild birds and other wildlife to assess current and new disease risks, making best use of, and building on, existing schemes;
- Maintain an active overview of the developing situation especially as regards wildlife;
- Provide technical advice and guidance about HPAI and related topics to governments and relevant non-governmental organisations on request or as necessary;
- Identify priorities for the following areas and promote as appropriate:
  - Strategies to prevent the risks of spillover of HPAI viruses from poultry and other farmed animals to wildlife (and vice versa) such as enhanced biosecurity measures and other key mitigation measure enforcement
  - Preparedness, contingency planning, risk assessment and response strategies
  - Surveillance and monitoring systems
  - Epidemiological investigations
  - Communication, education and public awareness
  - Research and data needs

## **Membership**

Membership is open to organisations working internationally in areas either directly or indirectly involved in issues related to the Task Force objectives. CMS has been represented most recently by the COP-appointed councillor for wildlife health and related matters, but other members of the Scientific Council with expertise on these issues could also participate, as well as the CMS Secretariat.

Each member organisation must appoint at least one representative that must have the following:

- i) demonstrated capacity for networking with avian influenza experts at local, national and international scales and/or experience working with such experts at local, regional and national levels, including *inter alia* MEA National Focal Points;
- ii) commitment to undertake the work of the Task Force with the support, where relevant, of the member's organisation or institution.

As of July 2024, the Task Force membership comprises members and observers from the following international organisations, including UN bodies and specialist non-governmental organisations:

- The African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement (AEWA)
- Birdlife International
- The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)
- CIC, the International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation
- The Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) I
- EAAFP, the East Asian Australasian Flyway Partnership
- EcoHealth Alliance
- FACE, the European Federation for Hunting and Conservation
- FAO, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

- Ramsar Convention on Wetlands
- Wetlands International
- WCS, the Wildlife Conservation Society
- WWT, Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust
- Independent experts can be co-opted on an ad hoc basis as necessary and appropriate

Task Force observers from the Quadripartite:

- WOAHA, the World Organisation for Animal Health
- UNEP, the United Nations Environment Programme
- WHO, the World Health Organisation
- FAO-Quadripartite Secretariat

### **Governance**

The Task Force is jointly co-convened by CMS and FAO. Co-ordination with member organisations is through regular e-mail correspondence and online meetings.

The Task Force elects a co-ordinator from amongst its members and takes decisions by consensus among its members. The Task Force reports to the Scientific Council [and *add the relevant FAO body here*] on its actions, membership and other related issues.

### **Organization of Work**

The Task Force convenes in an ad hoc manner, often in relation to HPAI events in wildlife. The Task Force may additionally convene if there is a change in circumstance or a new need for guidance or Task Force communications.

The Task Force also aims to undertake regular reviews of relevant research and relevant activity worldwide, collate guidance and identify gaps and make suggestions for strengthening responses.

The outputs of the Task Force, including statements, are posted on the [Task Force area of the CMS website](#). Member organisations additionally publicise outputs through their networks. Other means of disseminating information include webinars and meetings.

Subject to availability of resources, the Task Force also organises special international seminars and workshops (e.g. Nairobi, Kenya 2005; Aviemore, Scotland 2006; Rome, Italy 2010) to review the latest scientific studies concerning the spread and impact of HPAI, preparedness and appropriate responses. The Task Force also furthers its aims by providing inputs to other HPAI and related initiatives.

## **B. TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE CMS SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL WORKING GROUP ON MIGRATORY SPECIES AND HEALTH**

The Fifth Meeting of the Sessional Committee of the Scientific Council (ScC-SC5) held from 28 June to 9 July, decided to establish a Working Group on migratory species and health under the Scientific Council, with the aim of providing a focus for CMS work and involvement in issues related to migratory species and health.

### **1. Background and purpose**

The CMS COP first adopted a resolution on the issue of wildlife diseases and migratory species in 2005. [Resolution 12.6 \(Rev.COP14\) Wildlife Health and Migratory Species](#) consolidates and updates this and subsequent resolutions. It provides a preamble of the importance of wildlife disease as a conservation threat for migratory species which for example include risks from highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) in waterbirds and pinnipeds, white nose syndrome of bats and high mortality events of saiga antelope and Mongolian gazelle. Moreover, it highlights that wildlife health, livestock health, human health, and ecosystem health are interdependent and influenced by multiple factors, *inter alia*, socio-economics, sustainability of agriculture, demographics, climate and landscape changes.

[UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC5/Doc.6.4.1](#) on Wildlife Diseases and Migratory Species outlines some of the history of CMS involvement in wildlife diseases including the value and work of the Scientific Task Force on Avian Influenza and Wild Birds which was established in 2005 in response to emergence of HPAI in waterbirds. In addition to providing recommendations and guidance to Contracting Parties, the Task Force plays a role in outreach to address misinformation. Two other mechanisms established by CMS to address wildlife disease, a Scientific Task Force on Wildlife and Ecosystem Health established in 2011, and a Working Group on Migratory Species as Vectors of Diseases established in 2007 under the Scientific Council were not operational by 2021.

Recognising the drivers of environmental degradation, incursion into wild places, wildlife exploitation and trade, pollution and climate change on health, and with global attention on the COVID-19 pandemic and the role of wildlife in pathogen spillover, there was a need to reactivate the Working Group under the Scientific Council. The Group will provide a mechanism to increase attention to these health issues, define a key role for CMS, and advise Parties on the risk of pathogen spillover, future outbreaks and pandemics, and preparing for and responding to wildlife disease and diseases with zoonotic potential, drawing on the findings of the [‘Migratory Species and Health Review, A Review of Migration and Wildlife Disease Dynamics, and the Health of Migratory Species, within the Context of One Health’](#).

### **2. Role and Scope**

The role of the Working Group is to provide a focus for CMS work and involvement in issues related to migratory species and health. It is recognised that there are other expert groups and bodies working on a variety of related issues, including One Health, and the Working Group would not seek to replicate their work, but instead define the niche and role for CMS and help advise Parties in matters related to migratory species, health and disease, including:

- Supporting Parties in tackling drivers of ill health;
- pathogen spillover and zoonotic disease;
- other issues related to health of migratory species populations and ecosystem health;
- engaging in One Health and other initiatives.

### 3. Remit

The Working Group will:

- Set and implement priorities for its work, which may include:
  - Reviewing relevant literature and identifying research needs;
  - Analysis of obligations under CMS and its instruments related to wildlife and health issues;
  - Analysis of priorities for CMS Parties in addressing wildlife health;
  - Developing products/workstreams to support CMS Parties;
  - Analyse opportunities for further engagement of the CMS family with ongoing issues around wildlife utilization, particularly for human consumption, and the impact on pathogen spillover and toxins.
- Provide the migratory species focus for wildlife and health issues;
- Provide inputs to other internal and external initiatives such as One Health initiatives;
- Support and provide input to the review of migration and wildlife disease dynamics based on the TOR developed by the Sessional Committee at its 5<sup>th</sup> meeting;
- Liaise and coordinate with other CMS groups working on health such as the Scientific Task Force on Avian Influenza and Wild Birds and the Preventing Poisoning Working Group;
- Liaise and coordinate with other specialist groups and entities working on related issues such as the IUCN Wildlife Health Specialist Group, WOA Working Group on Wildlife, and Wildlife Disease Association;
- Collate sources of information and guidance for Parties on promoting health of migratory species and responding to emerging issues;
- Keep abreast of outputs and developments in relation to wildlife health, and the potential cross-linkages for action to promote One Health and ecosystem approaches to health;
- Consider how best CMS can help to implement some of the recommendations coming from other specialist health bodies such as the One Health High-Level Expert Group Panel (involving UNEP, WHO, FAO and WOA);
- Provide a mechanism for communications and outreach on issues related to health;
- coordinate with other multilateral processes and negotiations on the issues relevant to One Health, incl. pandemic prevention, to ensure input from the perspective of CMS and migratory species.

### 4. Membership

The membership of the Working Group will comprise members of the Scientific Council, representatives of other relevant MEAs, as well as academic institutions, non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders, as appropriate.

The following will be invited to contribute to the Working Group:

- Members of the CMS Scientific Council;
- Representatives of the Scientific Task Force on Avian Influenza and Wild Birds;
- Representatives of the Preventing Poisoning Working Group;
- Representatives of the Aquatic Wild Meat Working Group;

- Representatives from CMS instruments, including, but not limited to, EUROBATS and AEWA<sup>1</sup>;
- Representatives of UNEP, WHO, WOAHA, and FAO;
- Representatives of other relevant MEAs;
- Representatives from other international wildlife health expert groups including IUCN Wildlife Health Specialist Group, WOAHA Working Group on Wildlife and Wildlife Disease Association;
- Independent experts which can be co-opted on an ad hoc basis as necessary and appropriate;
- Representatives from NGOs with specialism relevant to migratory species and ecosystem health.

## **5. Governance**

The Working Group will elect a Chair and a Vice-Chair from amongst its members and will operate by seeking consensus among the Group. The Working Group will report to the Scientific Council on its actions, membership and other related issues.

## **6. Operation**

Meetings of the Working Group will be convened at appropriate intervals, as considered necessary, face to face, funding permitting, or virtually. Between meetings, business will be conducted electronically, which will provide the primary mode of communication.

For effective working on emerging issues, the Working Group will co-opt members with specific expertise and establish task groups as appropriate.

The CMS Secretariat will assist with organisation of meetings and administration of the Group.

The Chair will coordinate the work with the Secretariat on issues such as resource mobilization, outreach and communication.

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<sup>1</sup> Noting particularly bats and waterbirds in their role as vectors of some zoonotic infections and the negative responses this can entail.

## **C. TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE CMS SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL WORKING GROUP ON CLIMATE CHANGE AND MIGRATORY SPECIES**

The 14<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Conference of the Parties requested the Scientific Council to re-establish 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.

### **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 14<sup>th</sup> 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 Change<sup>2</sup>.

### **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.
- 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.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.cms.int/en/workinggroup/working-group-climate-change>

#### **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 stand until the 15<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Conference of the Parties, at which point, Parties will decide whether the group should continue for the following intersessional period based on a mandate agreed at COP15.

## D. 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 from 17 to 20 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.

### 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 75<sup>th</sup> 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<sup>3</sup>) 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 is established for the intersessional period until COP15.

## **E. TERMS OF REFERENCE AND MEMBERSHIP OF THE WORKING GROUP ON ILLEGAL AND UNSUSTAINABLE TAKING OF WILDLIFE**

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

### **1. Terms of Reference**

The Working Group, consisting of experts identified in cooperation with the Secretariat, is to

- a) advise the Scientific Council on the taking of migratory species for various uses, taking into account past and ongoing work under the Convention,
- b) review the analysis commissioned by the Secretariat under Decision 14.185(b) at the 8<sup>th</sup> meeting of its Sessional Committee and provide recommendations on further measures to be taken by Parties and other stakeholders to address the illegal and unsustainable taking of migratory species for consideration by the 15<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Conference of the Parties regarding:
  - i. the main drivers and scale of illegal and unsustainable take of species listed in CMS Appendices I and II, based on comparable and collatable data;
  - ii. the impacts of illegal and unsustainable take on the conservation status of such species, including cumulative impacts on species at the migration range and population level; and the consequences of these impacts on affected ecosystems and the services they provide;
  - iii. measures used by Parties, non-Parties and relevant international and regional organizations such as CITES and RFMOs aimed at ensuring that taking of wildlife is legal and sustainable, with a view to identifying case studies of effective practices; and
  - iv. priorities for increasing capacity of Parties for monitoring and enforcement of national legislation and regulations and other measures pertaining to the taking of migratory species; and
- c) working closely with the Chairs of existing Working Groups and Task Forces of CMS related to this matter, identify overlaps or possibilities for fostering synergies with these Working Groups and Task Forces and propose measures to streamline the work.

### **2. Membership**

Members of the Working Group should be experts from the following categories, taking into account geographical and gender balance:

- Scientific Council members;
- Environmental Ministries and Wildlife Authorities;
- Scientific community involved in migratory species and illegal hunting/taking;
- Relevant Multilateral Environmental Agreements and intergovernmental organizations, such as CBD, UNEP, FAO, CITES;
- International and national NGOs;

- Representatives of relevant CMS Family Working Groups and Task Forces; and
- Other relevant experts.

### **3. Governance**

The Working Group will select a Chair from among its members. The Working Group will operate by seeking consensus among the Group members. The Working Group will report to the 8<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Sessional Committee of the Scientific Council.

### **4. Operation**

The Working Group will generally work through electronic means. Subject to the availability of funding, in-person meetings may be organized.

The CMS Secretariat will assist with organizing meetings and the administration of the Group.

The Chair will coordinate the work with the Secretariat on issues such as outreach and communication.

### **5. Duration**

The Working group is established for the intersessional period until COP15.