

56th Meeting of the Standing Committee

Bonn, Germany, 25 – 27 March 2025

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MAINTAINING ONLINE DATABASES OF SPECIES

(Prepared by the Secretariat)

Summary:

Article VI paragraph 1 of the Convention requests the Secretariat to keep an up-to-date list of the Range States of migratory species listed in Appendices I and II using the information it has received from the Parties.

This document informs on the current status of the online databases containing the list of the Range States of migratory species under Appendices I and II and proposes a way forward to update and improve the online databases.

MAINTAINING ONLINE DATABASES OF SPECIES

Background

1. Article VI paragraph 1 of the Convention requests the Secretariat to keep an up-to-date list of the Range States of migratory species listed in [Appendices I and II](#) using the information it has received from the Parties.
2. CMS COP1 had already agreed that “information on the Range States be stored in a computer” (Document CMS/Conf.1.4/Rev.1, contained in the [COP1 Proceedings](#)). Over time, the Secretariat developed a [Species List](#) database which provides data on Range States and species listed in CMS Appendix I and II. The Species List shows all species listed in Appendix I, all species listed in Appendix II by their scientific name, and some Appendix II species listed at family or genus level (mostly those for which an Agreement or a Memorandum of Understanding is in place under the CMS).
3. UNEP-WCMS developed its own database known as [Species+](#), which shows a more extensive list of migratory species listed in CMS Appendices with additional scientific information about these species.
4. Neither the CMS Species List nor the Species+ databases have been regularly updated in the past ten years and a substantive update is needed to bring the data contained in the databases up to date, followed by continuous management of the data.
5. The Secretariat brought this matter to the 7th meeting of the Sessional Committee of the Scientific Council (ScC-SC7), held from 17-20 September 2024 in Germany. ScC-SC7 agreed to further discuss and refine the approach to maintaining these lists, including the potential to move entirely to use of Species+, and highlighted the need for a single authoritative source and the importance of regular updates. It was agreed that a working group would assist the Secretariat in improving the online databases and provide a platform to discuss and exchange information, as per the Terms of Reference contained in document UNEP/CMS/StC.56/Inf.23.
6. The first meeting of the working group took place on 6 February 2025 (online).
7. The working group agreed that the species names and Range State data as displayed in the online databases need a substantive initial review and update, followed by regular updates.
8. The working group recommended, pending availability of financial resources, to assemble the Range State data for all CMS-listed species, compare these data with other available resources, identify inconsistencies, and present this analysis to Parties for consideration. This analysis should use the data reported by Parties through their National Reports, the data used by the CMS family instruments, the Range State data from the taxonomic sources as adopted by the COP (where they contain such information), and other data as agreed by the Working Group.
9. With respect to Appendix II avian species listed at genus or family levels, the analysis should focus only on those listed in their own right on the Appendices and those that are contained in the advisory list of Resolution 14.19 and in CMS instruments, until COP provides further guidance on the usefulness of displaying additional avian species listed at family or genus levels in the databases.

10. The working group agreed that a mechanism is needed to ensure the quality of the data displayed in the databases, while ensuring verification of the data by Parties. The working group will continue discussing these matters assigned to it by ScC-SC7 and will make its recommendation to ScC-SC8.

Way forward

11. The Secretariat proposes, subject to the availability of resources, to carry out an initial update of the data available on CMS-listed species and their Range States, in consultation with the Working Group on Maintaining Lists of Species Listed in CMS Appendices, in order to:
 - a. Add the new listings adopted by COP14 in the online databases, including distribution information, common names and synonyms;
 - b. Make the necessary taxonomic and nomenclatural changes arising from COP decisions (including update of Range State information for species that split or merged) in the online databases;
 - c. Analyse the information on distribution of CMS listed species provided by Parties through National Reports presented after COP12 and COP13 and make it available to ScC-SC8;
 - d. Analyse information on species listed under CMS and its instruments (Agreements and Memoranda of Understanding), including information on Range States, and make it available to ScC-SC8;
 - e. Collect (through National Reports) and analyse Range State information for the species listed in the advisory list of species, which belong to aggregated families and genera included in Appendix II, and which have a significant proportion of individuals that cyclically and predictably cross one or more national jurisdictional boundaries and that have an unfavourable conservation status (Annex to Resolution 14.19), and make it available to ScC-SC8;
 - f. Display annotations in the online databases indicating whether the species included in Appendix I are also on the CITES Appendices and, if so, specify which CITES Appendix they are listed under, in line with Decision 14.30;
 - g. Cross check and fill any gaps in synonyms and common names (in the three languages of the Convention) for listed species based on the standard taxonomic and nomenclatural references and listing proposals;
 - h. Improve the search and display functionality of the online databases.
12. A proposed budget is provided in the Annex to this document.
13. The Secretariat has identified some savings from the core budget Trust Fund that could be used to cover the proposed activities. It seeks the approval of the Standing Committee for the use of such savings, in line with Resolution 14.2.
14. The aforementioned activities require prior collection of data. It is therefore proposed to release the required funding now, with the understanding that its use will be in phases, and for activities agreed by the Working Group on Maintaining Lists of Species Listed in CMS Appendices, the Scientific Council, the Standing Committee or the COP, as appropriate.

Recommended actions

15. The Standing Committee is invited to:
 - a. provide guidance on the way forward proposed by the Secretariat,
 - b. consider the approval of the use of a portion of core budget savings for activities proposed by the Secretariat.

ESTIMATED COST AND ACTIVITIES

1. The Secretariat has costed this initial update of the data available on CMS-listed species and their Range States at USD 100,000. The proposed budget contains the following activities:
 - i) COP14 updates (USD 14,000): reflect the decisions taken at COP14 including new listings, taxonomic and nomenclatural changes, and the advisory list in Resolution 14.19 (including distribution of the species);
 - ii) Cross check of existing synonyms and common names in the three languages of the Convention and filling any gaps (USD 5,000);
 - iii) Verification of listings and distributions for species that are listed in CMS Family instruments (USD 10,000): ensure they are up to date and aligned between the instruments and CMS;
 - iv) Update of distribution information for all CMS-listed species (USD 71,000): this includes the following activities:
 - a. Review of names of all CMS listed species against taxonomic and nomenclatural references and CITES, highlighting any obvious gaps or errors and proposing any nomenclature changes to the Appendices to the COP (USD 7,500);
 - b. Review of the Appendix I Range State information; this would include a review of 188 taxa, of which approximately 25% are aquatic (USD 25,000);
 - c. Review of the Appendix II species with the exception of the bird species listed at genus or family levels; this would cover 254 taxa, of which approximately 30% are aquatic, and 100 are bird species listed in the Appendices in their own right (USD 38,500);
 - d. Review of the Appendix II bird species listed at genus or family levels, once the Working Group on Maintaining Lists of Species Listed in CMS Appendices has made its recommendation on which species listed through higher taxa should be displayed in the online databases (this matter may need to be presented to the COP and is not included in this estimate).
2. Pending the availability of resources, the databases could be further developed to contain a searchable document library (60,000 USD), to have improved download features (10,270 USD), or an improved MoU display (8,500 USD).