

Information for media

What is CMS?

CMS stands for Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals. It is also known as the Convention on Migratory Species or the 'Bonn Convention'.

CMS is an environmental treaty under the aegis of UN Environment and provides a global platform for the conservation and sustainable use of migratory animals and their habitats.

CMS brings together the States through which migratory animals pass, the 'Range States', and lays the legal foundation for internationally coordinated conservation measures throughout a migratory range.

As the only global convention specializing in the conservation of migratory species, their habitats and migration routes, CMS complements and co-operates with a number of other international organizations, NGOs and partners in the media as well as in the corporate sector.

Parties

States and Regional Economic Integration Organizations that have agreed to be bound by the Convention ('joined' CMS) are known as Parties. There are currently 124 Parties, namely 123 countries and the European Union.

CMS acts as a framework Convention, encouraging the establishment of regional, species-specific instruments. These instruments may range from legally binding treaties (called Agreements) to less formal arrangements, such as Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs), and can be adapted to the requirements of particular regions.

The development of models tailored according to the conservation needs throughout the migratory range is a capacity unique to CMS.

Reviews

CMS continually reviews the conservation status of listed species, a task conducted by the Scientific Council, which can make recommendations to a Party or Parties.

Why is CMS needed?

CMS is a unique mechanism that brings together countries through which migratory species move in order to promote coordinated, cross-border conservation.

Most migratory species are potentially exposed to threats associated with development, including habitat destruction and loss of biodiversity in breeding areas. Overexploitation such as hunting and unmanaged fishing along migration routes puts further pressure on migratory populations, while climate change can have an impact on migration cycles.

Poor coordination and a lack of cooperation across jurisdictions can mean that the conservation of migratory species is neglected and the contribution that the animals can make to economies is undervalued.

How does CMS work?

CMS provides for separate, international legally binding instruments and other agreements among Range States of single migratory species or, more often, groups of species. These agreements can be adapted

to the requirements of particular regions with the aim of enhancing the effectiveness of the Convention's efforts. To date, 19 international MOUs and seven Agreements have been concluded under the CMS umbrella, for bats, birds, elephants, dolphins and whales, marine turtles and seals, and many others.

Species-specific Agreements and MOUs, concluded under CMS, are open to all Range States of a species, regardless of whether they are Party to the Convention.

The Convention has established several bodies to support its implementation. The Conference of the Parties (COP) is the CMS decision-making body and meets every three years.

The Standing Committee provides policy and administrative guidance between regular meetings of the COP. It comprises representatives from each CMS region plus the Depositary and the host of the next and previous COPs.

The Scientific Council advises the COP and the Secretariat on technical matters and priorities for research and conservation and consists of experts appointed by CMS Parties.

All three bodies can establish working groups on particular species or other topics. Working groups provide advice or recommendations to policy-makers, leading to Resolutions being tabled at COP for adoption.

CMS also engages in global campaigns, such as World Migratory Bird Day and operates capacity-building programs. Capacity-building aims to strengthen human, scientific, technological, organizational and institutional capabilities of countries, which helps them to comply with Multilateral Environmental Agreements.

What do Appendix listings mean?

The species covered by CMS are listed in one or both of two Appendices, according to the degree of protection they need.

Appendix I includes migratory species threatened with extinction. CMS Parties strive towards strictly protecting these animals, conserving or restoring the places where they live, mitigating obstacles to migration and controlling other factors that might endanger them. Besides establishing obligations for each State joining the Convention, CMS promotes concerted action among the Range States of many of these species.

Appendix II includes migratory species that need or would significantly benefit from international co-operation. For this reason, the Convention encourages the Range States to conclude global or regional agreements.

How is CMS financed?

The core administrative costs of the Secretariat, the Conference of the Parties and its subsidiary bodies, the Standing Committee and the other permanent Committees, are financed by contributions from the Parties to the Convention based on the United Nations scale of assessment.

Parties also make voluntary contributions in support of special measures and projects aimed at improving implementation of the Convention. The CMS also receives grants to undertake its work.

What is CMS COP?

The Conference of the Parties (COP) to CMS is the ultimate decision-making body of the Convention and comprises all its Parties.

At each regular meeting of the COP, Parties submit proposals based on an agreed set of biological criteria to help determine whether a species should be included in Appendices I or II or to amend the listing of a species in these two Appendices. Proposals are discussed and then submitted for decision.

Designated government officials attend the COP from different ministries, such as those responsible for environment, fisheries, forestry, agriculture etc. or foreign affairs. They take part in discussions based upon their respective countries' position on particular proposals and decisions.

Regular meetings of the CMS COP take place every three years. The 11th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CMS COP11) took place in Quito, Ecuador from 4 to 9 November 2014. The 12th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CMS COP12) will take place in Manila, the Philippines from 23 to 28 October 2017.

How does CMS COP work?

Every three years, the rules that govern CMS are debated and agreed on at its Conference of the Parties (COP). Prior to each COP, Parties can submit proposals for amending the two Appendices or existing agreements or proposals to adopt new decisions and agreements as well as to amend the rules of procedure.

The provisional agenda and the list of proposals offers a good indication of some of the key issues that are likely to be debated at the Convention.

At the COP, the proposals are discussed in Committees and then decided upon, normally by consensus in Plenary.

Decisions taken at COP12 will find their way into legislation, regulation, and operating practices across the globe.

a. Plenaries

Plenaries are the decision-making sessions of the COP.

b. Committees

The Committee of the Whole is responsible for making recommendations to the Conference on any matter of a scientific or technical nature, including proposals to amend the Appendices of the Convention, as well as recommendations concerning financial, administrative and any other matter to be decided upon by the Conference. The Conference and the Committee of the Whole may establish working groups to enable them to carry out their functions.

Recommendations of the Committee of the Whole, some of which may be in draft resolutions or decisions, are forwarded to the Plenary session for final adoption.

c. The Bureau

The Bureau of the Conference has the general duty of forwarding the business of the meeting including, where appropriate, altering the timetable and structure of the meeting and specifying time limits for debates.

d. The Credentials Committee

The Credentials Committee examines the credentials and recommends their acceptance for adoption by the Conference of the Parties. Credentials are powers granted by the Head of State, Head of Government or the Minister of Foreign Affairs, enabling a delegate to represent the Party at the meeting.

Pending a decision on their credentials, delegates may participate provisionally in the meeting.

e. The Budget/Finance Committee

The Budget/Finance Committee convenes during the Conference of the Parties under a Chair appointed by the Conference of the Parties. Its main task during the COP is to review, discuss and clear the meeting documents related to the budget and finance that have been presented by

the Secretariat for approval by the COP. It recommends the approval the budget proposal for the next triennium. Participation in the Committee is open to all Parties but its Budget Working Group meeting is usually closed to the public.

f. Regional meetings

Five regions meet separately during COP. The five major geographical regions are: Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Oceania. Regional meetings also take place in-between COPs.

g. Working Groups

Working Groups are normally established either in a formal or informal manner in the context of the bodies of CMS and its instruments. Some of them operate only during the meeting of these bodies while others have the mandate to work intersessionally to provide advice or recommendations. Depending on the nature of their mandate, Working Groups can be composed of Member States' representatives or scientific experts within or without the technical bodies of these instruments.

g. Participation

Before the Parties undertake any business in sessions of the Plenary or Committee of the Whole, a quorum of the Parties must be present in the room. This entails one half of Parties having registered delegations at the meeting. The Chair will wait until the necessary number is reached.

h. Rules of Procedure

The Rules of Procedure define the structure for the conduct of meetings of the COP, and the process for making decisions. Adoption of the Rules of Procedure is needed at each meeting and takes place in Plenary session.

Chairs are primarily responsible for ensuring that the rules are implemented.

i. Interventions

- **Substantive intervention**

- **Motion**

A motion is a formal proposal by a delegation that the assembly take a certain action. A Party may request action on a particular subject by making a 'motion'.

- **Point of order (procedural motion)**

Party delegates at a Committee or Plenary session may challenge a procedural decision of the Chair by raising a 'point of order'. The Chair will apply the Rules of procedure in deciding on the point of order.

If a Party disagrees with the decision of the Chair on a Point of Order, the Party may appeal. The Chair must immediately put the appeal to a vote.

j. Decision-making

The Conference shall as far as possible decide on draft resolutions, draft decisions and other documents by **consensus**.

Whenever the Conference of the Parties does not reach a consensus, the Chair must propose its adoption be put to a vote.

What is the CMS Secretariat?

The CMS Secretariat was established by the Convention and has designated roles and functions, including arranging and servicing the COP. It is administered by UN Environment (UNEP) and is located at Bonn, Germany. It has a pivotal role, fundamental to the Convention and its functions are laid down in [Article IX](#) of the text of the Convention. They include:

- to arrange for and service meetings of the Conference of the Parties, and of the Scientific Council;
- to maintain liaison with and promote liaison between the Parties, the standing bodies set up under agreements and other international organizations concerned with migratory species;
- to prepare for the Conference of the Parties reports on the work of the Secretariat and on the implementation of this Convention;
- to maintain and publish a list of Range States of all migratory species included in Appendices I and II;
- to promote, under the direction of the Conference of the Parties, the conclusion of agreements,
- to maintain and make available to the Parties a list of agreements and, if so required by the Conference of the Parties, to provide any information on such agreements;
- to maintain and publish a list of the recommendations made by the Conference of the Parties; and
- to provide for the general public information concerning the Convention and its objectives.