**CONSERVATION IMPLICATIONS OF ANIMAL CULTURE AND SOCIAL COMPLEXITY**

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*(Prepared by the COW)*

DRAFT DECISIONS

**CONSERVATION IMPLICATIONS OF ANIMAL CULTURE AND SOCIAL COMPLEXITY**

***Directed to Parties***

14.AA Parties are requested to:

1. Support actions and research, including of Concerted Actions, that investigate the conservation implications of animal culture and social learning for a diverse range of taxa, including fish and reptiles;
2. Apply a precautionary approach by considering cultural processes as relevant for the conservation of all species for which there is evidence for social learning;
3. Where specific cultural groups have been identified, give specific attention to threats (including human-wildlife conflict) and good practices that might be specific to this particular cultural unit;
4. Upon receiving a request from the Secretariat, submit information on any actions taken in line with paragraphs a) to c) for transmission to the Expert Working Group on Animal Culture and Social Complexity;
5. Use information generated by the Expert Working Group on Animal Culture and Social Complexity on the growing understanding of the conservation implications of animal culture and social complexity within their interactions with the CMS daughter agreements;
6. Provide technical and/or in-kind support to allow the Expert Working Group on Animal Culture and Social Complexity to undertake the reviews, develop the guidance and facilitate the cooperation with IUCN as requested in Decision 14.BB, and to convene an in-person workshop during the intersessional period before COP15.

***Directed to the Scientific Council***

14.BB The Scientific Council is requested to:

1. Invite newly appointed Councillors that have relevant expertise to engage in the Expert Working Group on Animal Culture and Social Complexity;
2. Consider the outputs of the Expert Working Group on Animal Culture and Social Complexity and make recommendations to COP15, based on its findings.

***Directed to the Scientific Council, through its Expert Working Group on Animal Culture and Social Complexity***

14.CC The Scientific Council, through its Expert Working Group on Animal Culture and Social Complexity, subject to the availability of external resources, is requested to:

1. Promote the practical application of the increasing knowledge about animal culture and social learning in conservation management by:
   * 1. Exploring shortcuts for incorporating social learning into management, complementing traditional management techniques, including developing guidance on methodologies for detecting social learning and providing advice on phylogenetic inference;
     2. Reviewing updates on culture-related Concerted Actions and providing guidance as required;
     3. Considering whether further culture-related Concerted Actions should be brought forward and developing proposals as appropriate;
     4. Conducting a review that identifies instances in which social learning is involved in animal behaviours and mitigation measures for human-wildlife conflict;
     5. Conducting a review of examples at the intersection of social learning and changes in behaviour related to climate change in human-wildlife conflict;
     6. Developing guidance for engagement with stakeholders to illustrate why animal culture and social learning are relevant to conservation;
     7. Continuing further development of case studies illustrating the importance of animal culture and social learning in the conservation of CMS-listed species;
     8. Exploring the potential link with Important Marine Mammal Areas (IMMAs), Important Shark and Ray Areas (ISRAs) and other place-based conservation tools that identify sites or seascapes of biodiversity importance;
     9. Exploring the impacts of hunting on social structure;
     10. Exploring opportunities for linking with the GEO BON global biodiversity observation network;
2. Support research on animal culture and social learning by:
   * 1. Developing guidance on methodology for detecting social learning;
     2. Incorporating a variety of ‘lines of evidence’ on social learning and animal culture, including from local communities, and traditional knowledge of Indigenous Peoples;
3. Make use of the potential synergies with CMS Agreements/MOUs/Initiatives by:
   * 1. Developing a table of all CMS Agreements/MOUs/Initiatives to identify the species of highest priority;
     2. Compiling examples into a document or brochure outlining the relevance of animal culture and social learning;
     3. Passing this publication on to Parties and Signatories in the context of upcoming meetings;
4. Increase collaboration with IUCN on matters related to animal culture, including by:
   * 1. Bringing the issues and opportunities around social learning and animal culture to the attention of the World Conservation Congress in 2025;
     2. Convening a workshop in collaboration with the IUCN Species Survival Commission (SSC) Human-Wildlife Conflict & Coexistence Specialist Group to further explore human-wildlife interactions in connection with social learning;
     3. Engaging with the relevant IUCN bodies to develop synergies for integrating social learning and cultural processes into management activities.

***Directed to the Secretariat***

14.DD The Secretariat shall:

1. Request Parties to submit, about 18 months before COP15, information on actions taken in line with Decisions 14.AA a) to c) for transmission to the Scientific Council and its Expert Working Group on Animal Culture and Social Complexity;
2. Subject to the availability of external resources, convene an in-person workshop to assist the Expert Working Group on Animal Culture and Social Complexity with providing best practice advice on the implementation of management strategies for species that learn socially, categorizing and designating cultural units and identifying any further culture-based Concerted Actions;
3. Subject to the availability of external resources, support the Scientific Council and its Expert Working Group with the development of a publication outlining the relevance of animal culture and social learning for publication on the CMS website and support the development of the reviews and guidance foreseen in Decision 14.CC.