



**CONVENTION ON
MIGRATORY
SPECIES**

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**IMPROVING WAYS OF ADDRESSING CONNECTIVITY IN THE CONSERVATION OF
MIGRATORY SPECIES**

(Prepared by the Secretariat)

Summary:

This document provides an update on the implementation of Resolution 12.26 and Decisions 12.91 to 12.93 *Improving Ways of Addressing Connectivity in the Conservation of Migratory Species*.

The document proposes amendments to Resolution 12.26 and to Decision 12.93.

IMPROVING WAYS OF ADDRESSING CONNECTIVITY IN THE CONSERVATION OF MIGRATORY SPECIES

Background

1. The Conference of the Parties at its 12th meeting (COP12, Manila, 2017) adopted Resolution 12.26 and Decisions 12.91 to 12.93 *Improving Ways of Addressing Connectivity in the Conservation of Migratory Species*. Paragraph 3 of the Resolution requested the Secretariat to facilitate the sharing of information on connectivity within and between the instruments of the CMS Family and with other relevant multilateral environmental agreements.
2. Decision 12.93 reads as follows:

12.93 Directed to the Secretariat

The Secretariat, subject to the availability of resources, shall:

- a) *Explore options for establishing a working mechanism which would inter alia promote the sharing and review of information on connectivity within and between the instruments of the CMS Family, biodiversity-related multilateral environmental agreements and others, and where appropriate would facilitate joint attention by such instruments, agreements and organizations at strategic level to the matters covered by UNEP/CMS/Resolution 12.26 on Improving Ways of Addressing Connectivity in the Conservation of Migratory Species;*
- b) *Develop proposals for consideration by Parties on guidance for further improving the effective application of measures for addressing connectivity in the conservation of migratory species through national laws, policies and plans and through international cooperation;*
- c) *In cooperation with partners and as soon as possible after the conclusion of the 12th meeting of the Conference of Parties, mobilize the provision of support to interested Parties who are otherwise unable to do so from their own resources to undertake wide dissemination and deployment of a large number of energy-efficient and low-cost radio base stations coupled with radio transmitters in solar-powered "life-long" tags for tracking migratory species so as to improve knowledge about connectivity issues affecting these species; and*
- d) *In cooperation with partners, identify opportunities for reserving small allocations of the radio frequency spectrum in a standardized way among interested Range States for tracking migratory species and transferring data from radio tags.*

Activities to implement Resolution 12.26 and Decision 12.93

3. Since 2017, the CMS Secretariat has undertaken a large array of activities to promote and share information on connectivity with multiple partners, pursuant to the provisions of Resolution 12.26 and Decision 12.93 paragraph a). Many of these activities are also related to the Secretariat's engagement in the process to develop a post-2020 global biodiversity framework, which are reported on more fully in document UNEP/CMS/COP13/Doc.17.
4. In addition, the CMS Secretariat, in consultation with the Scientific Council and the Standing Committee, and in cooperation with the World Heritage Convention (WHC) and the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), submitted a request on behalf of the CMS Family for an assessment on connectivity to be undertaken in the context of the second work programme of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform (IPBES) up to 2030. The proposed assessment aimed at addressing many aspects of Resolution 12.26 and Decision 12.92 with regard to migratory species connectivity. Further details can be found in document UNEP/CMS/COP13/Doc.18.1.

5. The IPBES Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, which was released this year, has already provided some evidence of the interlinkages between connectivity, biodiversity conservation and sustainable development. The CMS Secretariat reviewed the assessment and prepared a summary of its findings in relation to key connectivity issues. The review is contained in UNEP/CMS/COP13/Inf.17.
6. The Secretariat also worked with partners in the preparation of a proposal for a motion to be considered at the IUCN World Conservation Congress (Marseilles, France, 2020), which calls for the integration of connectivity conservation and international cooperation in the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. The motion was submitted on 28 August 2019 by BirdLife International with the support of a large array of BirdLife partners and other organizations as well as the Swiss Government. The Secretariat also collaborated in submitting proposals for a side event around the theme of connectivity to be held at the Congress.
7. Connectivity will also be in the spotlight in 2020 by being at the core of the COP13 slogan and the theme of next year's World Migratory Bird Day Campaign.
8. The CMS Secretariat convened a first informal meeting on connectivity on 17 May 2019 in Bonn, together with the Beyond the Aichi Targets Task Force of the World Commission of Protected Areas (WCPA) of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). The meeting involved experts including representatives of the Working Group on the CMS Family's contributions to the post-2020 framework and the Secretariat of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands. As a follow-up to the meeting, the Secretariat prepared two fact sheets on connectivity and the post-2020 framework, which are available on the website at the following links: www.cms.int/en/publication/fact-sheet-connectivity-and-post-2020-biodiversity-framework-introduction and www.cms.int/en/publication/fact-sheet-connectivity-and-post-2020-biodiversity-framework-elements-new-goals-and-targets.
9. A second informal meeting on connectivity will be held on 11 November 2019 in Bonn, in cooperation with the Beyond the Aichi Target Task Force of the IUCN WCPA, with the participation of the IUCN Connectivity Specialist Group, other biodiversity-related conventions and multilateral environment agreements, and other relevant organizations. The key objectives of the meeting will include refining the concept and terminology of connectivity, considering options for reflecting connectivity in the post-2020 framework, and building momentum for addressing connectivity in other relevant fora and platforms, such as IPBES, the Sustainable Development Goals, and the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration.
10. Although the CMS Secretariat was not able to fully implement Decision 12.93 paragraph b) on country-level support, it provided guidance in response to requests from Parties and has been considering ways to advance such support. The second informal meeting on connectivity will give special attention to country-level support. In this context, it will consider, *inter alia*, the IUCN Guidelines on *Safeguarding Ecological Corridors in the Context of Ecological Networks for Conservation*, which are being finalized and will be submitted to the IUCN World Conservation Congress for adoption (10-19 June 2020 in Marseilles).
11. Concerning Decision 12.93, paragraphs c) and d), no progress could be made to promote radio tracking of migratory species due to the lack of capacity of the Secretary.

Recent Developments

12. Beyond the CMS context, the importance of the concept of connectivity has been growing over recent years and has been the subject of numerous recent scientific papers, along with its recognition by numerous actors and in various processes.

13. The United Nations General Assembly declared 2021 – 2030 to be the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration to draw attention to the need to scale up the recovery of degraded and destroyed ecosystems. Efforts and activities promoted through the proposed UN Decade will provide opportunities to improving connectivity in the landscape, which will in turn increase ecosystems functioning and resilience.
14. In parallel, connectivity for the marine environment has been receiving increasing attention, including through the project “MiCO, Migratory Connectivity in the Ocean” which generates actionable knowledge for the conservation of migratory marine species. *The importance of migratory connectivity for global ocean policy* (Dunn D.C., Harrison A.-L. et al. 2019), was recently published with inputs from the CMS Secretariat and the Scientific Council. The study highlighted the importance of the use of migratory connectivity in international marine policy and provided specific guidance on how to incorporate connectivity in the design of conservation and management measures.

Amendment of Resolution 12.26 and Decisions 12.91 to 12.93

15. As described above, the Secretariat has undertaken numerous activities to support implementation of the provisions of Decision 12.93 paragraph a) and Resolution 12.26. with regard to the sharing and review of information on connectivity. Because these efforts entail a continuing process, it is proposed to delete the related provision from Decision 12.93 to reflect it in a revised Resolution 12.26. Similarly, the provisions of Decision 12.93 concerning radio tracking of migratory species are moved to Resolution 12.26 because of the potential long-term nature of these solutions. Furthermore, the Secretariat did not make any progress on their implementation as these actions are thought to be better directed to Parties.
16. Additional amendments to both Decision 12.91 and Resolution 12.26 are proposed to better support the implementation of connectivity-based measures on the ground following newly available guidance.

Recommended actions

17. The Conference of the Parties is recommended to:
 - a). adopt the draft amendments to Resolution 12.26 contained in Annex 1 of this document;
 - b). adopt the draft Decisions contained in Annex 2 to this document that amend Decisions 12.91 and 12.93.
 - c). renew draft Decision 12.92 contained in Annex 2.

ANNEX 1

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO RESOLUTION 12.26

IMPROVING WAYS OF ADDRESSING CONNECTIVITY IN THE CONSERVATION OF MIGRATORY SPECIES

Recalling Article III.4 of the Convention under which Parties shall endeavour to conserve and, where feasible and appropriate, restore the habitats of Appendix I species which are of importance in removing the species from danger of extinction and to prevent, remove, compensate for or minimize, as appropriate, obstacles that seriously impede the migration of the species, and Article V.5 under which Agreements in respect of Appendix II species should provide for maintenance of a network of suitable habitats “appropriately disposed in relation to the migration routes”,

Also recalling Article I.1 of the Convention under which “range” is defined for the purposes of the Convention as all the areas of land or water that a migratory species inhabits, stays in temporarily, crosses or overflies at any time on its normal migration route,

Noting that the Strategic Plan for Migratory Species 2015-2023 emphasizes that the conservation of migratory species at the population level demands the application of a migration systems approach, involving conservation strategies that give holistic attention to populations, species and habitats as well as the entire span of migration routes and the functioning of the migration process,

Further noting that the Strategic Plan emphasizes that the multi-dimensional connectedness of migratory species gives them a special role as ecological keystone species and indicators of the linkages between ecosystems and of ecological change, while also exposing these species to special vulnerabilities,

Noting in particular Target 9 of the Strategic Plan which concerns the application of a migration systems approach in cooperative activities between States, and Target 10 which concerns the adoption of a functional basis for area-based conservation measures,

Acknowledging that since its entry into force in 1983 the Convention on Migratory Species has provided the primary specialized intergovernmental framework for cooperative efforts on issues of connectivity in this context, and that the implementation of relevant provisions under the Convention forms a key contribution to the achievement of objectives adopted in other intergovernmental fora including Goals 14 and 15 in “Transforming our World”, the United Nations’ 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Aichi Targets 11 and 12 in the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016-2024,

Recalling Resolution 10.3 *The Role of Ecological Networks in the Conservation of Migratory Species*¹ on the role of ecological networks in the conservation of migratory species and Resolution 10.19 *Migratory Species Conservation in the Light of Climate Change*² on climate change, both of which highlight the critical importance of connectivity for conservation and management of migratory species, and in the case of Resolution 10.3 ~~encourages~~ encouraged Parties to enhance connectivity of protected areas and to make explicit the relationship between areas of importance for migratory species and other areas which may be ecologically linked to them; to select areas for conservation in such a way as to address the needs of migratory species throughout their life cycles and migratory ranges; and to set network-scale objectives for the conservation of migratory species relating for example to restoration of fragmented habitats and removal of barriers to migration on land and at sea,

¹ Now consolidated as Resolution 12.7

² Now consolidated as Resolution 12.21

Recalling Resolution 11.25 *Advancing Ecological Networks to Address the Needs of Migratory Species*³ on advancing ecological networks to address the needs of migratory species, which ~~expresses~~ expressed deep concern at the increasing fragmentation of habitats for migratory species and ~~urges~~ urged Parties to promote connectivity *inter alia* through the development of site networks that are appropriately defined, coordinated and managed, and other measures which cater for the entire migratory range and migratory lifecycle requirements of the animals concerned, giving consideration to ways in which connectivity can contribute to the elimination of obstacles to migration, including disturbance, habitat fragmentation and discontinuities in habitat quality as well as more obvious physical obstacles, while also taking care to assess any risks of potential unwanted consequences of increased connectivity,

Recognizing the important role played by existing ecological networks worldwide in the conservation of migratory species particularly through the role of these networks in supporting connectivity, including the networks reviewed for COP11 in document UNEP/CMS/COP11/Doc.23.4.1.2 as well as those operated at national level,

Acknowledging the relevance of the Critical Site Network Tool developed initially for waterbird populations in the African-Eurasian flyway under the aegis of the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (AEWA) and led by Wetlands International and BirdLife International with the support of the Government of Germany, and its recent redevelopment as an open-access web portal providing a strong basis for identifying ecological networks and emphasizing their connectivity aspects, while also providing insights into climate change vulnerability and informing conservation decision-making at site, national and international levels',

Welcoming the report of the expert meetings on connectivity, convened in Italy in 2015 and 2017, provided to COP12 ~~the present meeting~~ in document UNEP/CMS/COP12/Inf.20,

Having regard to the report of the 2nd Meeting of the Sessional Committee of the Scientific Council,

Welcoming the efforts made by the Secretariat in collaboration with Parties and partners to promote connectivity in various fora and platforms;

*The Conference of the Parties to the
Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals*

1. *Urges* Parties and *invites* others to give special attention to the issues highlighted in this Resolution when planning, implementing and evaluating actions designed to support the conservation and management of migratory species, both at national level and in the context of international cooperation, including in particular when:
 - (i) devising strategic conservation objectives, so that these may more often be expressed in terms of whole migration systems, and in terms of the requirements for the functioning of the migration process itself, as opposed to merely the status of populations or habitats;
 - (ii) identifying, prioritizing, developing and managing protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, both within and beyond areas of national jurisdiction, taking account *inter alia* of the need for connectivity to be a key factor in the definition of appropriate conservation management units, including at the landscape or seascape scale, and the need for actions to be addressed to the connections between places as well as to the places themselves;
 - (iii) strengthening and expanding ecological networks to conserve migratory species worldwide and enhancing their design and functionality in accordance with ~~Resolutions 10.3 and 11.25~~ Resolution 12.7 (Rev.COP13) *The Role of Ecological Networks in the Conservation of Migratory Species*;

³ Now consolidated as Resolution 12.7

- (iv) evaluating the sufficiency and coherence of ecological networks in functional and qualitative terms as well as in terms of extent and distribution, having regard to ~~Resolution 41.25~~ Resolution 12.7 (Rev.COP13) and to the desirability of sharing experiences and best practices on this issue;
- (v) monitoring and assessing the effectiveness of the protection and management of the areas and networks referred to in the present paragraph;

1.(bis) Invites Parties to make use of existing guidelines including those prepared by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN);

2. *Encourages* Parties and *invites* others, working with all relevant stakeholders in government authorities, local communities, the private and other sectors, to intensify efforts to address threats to the conservation status of migratory species which are manifested as threats to connectivity, including barriers to migration, fragmented resources and disrupted processes, genetic isolation, population non-viability, altered behaviour patterns, shifts in range caused by climate change or depletion of food or water resources, inconsistencies in management across and beyond national jurisdictions, and other factors;

2.bis Requests the Secretariat to coordinate the sharing and review of information on connectivity within and between the instruments of the CMS Family, biodiversity-related multilateral environmental agreements and others, and where appropriate facilitate joint attention by such instruments, agreements and organizations at strategic level to the matters;

3. ~~Also requests the Secretariat to to facilitate the sharing of information on connectivity within and between the instruments of the CMS Family, biodiversity-related multilateral environmental agreements and others including~~ bringing this Resolution to the attention of the process under the auspices of the Convention on Biological Diversity for identifying and describing Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas, the process under the auspices of the United Nations General Assembly to develop an international legally binding instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction, the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, the United Nations Environment Programme Global Connectivity Conservation Project and the IUCN World Commission of Protected Areas Connectivity Conservation Specialist Group, and to take cognizance of serial nominations of World Heritage Sites under the World Heritage Convention within a multinational ~~flyway migration~~ context of migration;

4. *Invites* Parties, other States and relevant organizations to provide support for the long-term maintenance of large-scale databases on migratory species distributions, movements and abundance such as the European Union for Bird Ringing (EURING), Movebank, the International Waterbird Census, BirdLife International's Seabird Tracking Database, the World Database on Key Biodiversity Areas and the UNESCO-IOC Ocean Biogeographic Information System;

5. *Further invites* Parties, other States and relevant organizations to provide support for the enhancement of the databases referred to in the preceding paragraph in order to address in more targeted ways a range of connectivity questions of relevance to CMS implementation as well as to engage in targeted joint analyses of animal movements and other factors using these databases in an integrated way across the marine and terrestrial realms so as to improve understanding of the biological basis of migratory species connectivity; and

6. *Urges Parties and invites* others to foster the development of radio receiver systems that could be deployed worldwide to detect movements of small animals on land and at sea.

7. Invites Parties to disseminate and deploy a large number of energy-efficient and low-cost radio base stations coupled with radio transmitters in solar-powered "life-long" tags for tracking migratory species so as to improve knowledge about connectivity issues affecting these species;

8. Also invites Parties to reserve small allocations of the radio frequency spectrum in a standardized way for tracking migratory species and transferring data from radio tags.
9. Notes that the present Resolution has repeals Resolution 10.3 *The Role of Ecological Networks in the Conservation of Migratory Species* and Resolution 11.25 *Advancing Ecological Networks to Address the Needs of Migratory Species*.

DRAFT DECISIONS

**IMPROVING WAYS OF ADDRESSING CONNECTIVITY IN THE CONSERVATION OF
MIGRATORY SPECIES*****Directed to Parties***

13.AA (12.91) Parties are ~~invited~~ requested to:

- a) ~~Review the means by which the measures for addressing~~ address connectivity in the conservation of migratory species set out in Decisions and Resolutions of the Conference of the Parties, making use of available guidance, as appropriate, and include connectivity in implementation of other relevant and applicable international agreements, such as in commitments, including ~~UNEP/CMS/Resolutions 12.7 on *The Role of Ecological Networks in the Conservation of Migratory Species*, 12.26 on *Improving Ways of Addressing Connectivity in the Conservation of Migratory Species*, National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans,~~ and include such actions in the National Report to be submitted to the 14th meeting of the Conference of Parties ~~others can be applied more effectively through their national laws, policies and plans and through international cooperation;~~
- b) support the ~~development~~ application of the African-Eurasian Bird Migration Atlas; the development of the proposed CMS Global Atlas of Migratory Animal Movements, as well as the further redevelopment and application of the African-Eurasian Critical Site Network tool, as contributions to the provision of a sound scientific basis for action and as contributions also to the fostering of greater public awareness concerning connectivity issues;
- c) Provide support, both financial and in kind, for the implementation of Resolution 12.26 (Rev.COP13) on *Improving Ways of Addressing Connectivity in the Conservation of Migratory Species* and Decisions 13.BB and 13.CC. ~~work of the Scientific Council described below.~~

Directed to the Scientific Council

13.BB (12.92) The Scientific Council, subject to the availability of resources, should undertake the following tasks for enhancing the scientific understanding of connectivity issues in relation to migratory species:

- a) Review the scope for existing major databases to support relevant analyses and syntheses of information on connectivity, and identify options inter alia for ensuring sustainability and enhanced operability and coordination of such databases for this purpose;
- b) Investigate options for creating relevant data and knowledge holding capabilities and for enhancing analysis capabilities under the auspices of the CMS, in collaboration with suitably qualified institutions and processes;
- c) Investigate and report on the linkages between migratory species connectivity and ecosystem resilience;

- d) Having regard in particular to the Strategic Plan for Migratory Species, assess the needs and develop focused objectives for new research on key connectivity issues, including but not limited to climate change, which affect the conservation status of each of the major taxonomic groups of migratory wild animals covered by CMS in each of the world's major land and oceanic regions, and produce a report on the findings of this assessment prior to the 13⁴th meeting of the Conference of Parties;
- e) Consider the need for additional guidance within the framework of the CMS on assessing threats to migratory species connectivity in particular priority situations identified by the work described in sub-paragraph (d) above; and
- f) Make recommendations as appropriate arising from the work described in this Decision;

Directed to the Secretariat

13.CC (12.93) The Secretariat, subject to the availability of resources, ~~shall~~ is requested to explore options for establishing a working mechanism which would inter alia promote the sharing and review of information on connectivity within and between the instruments of the CMS Family, biodiversity related multilateral environmental agreements and others, and where appropriate would facilitate joint attention by such instruments, agreements and organizations at strategic level to the matters covered by UNEP/CMS/Resolution 12.26 on Improving Ways of Addressing Connectivity in the Conservation of Migratory Species;

- a) support Parties in implementing Resolution 12.26 (Rev.COP13) by providing specific ~~Develop proposals for consideration by Parties on~~ guidance for further improving the effective application of measures for addressing connectivity in the conservation of migratory species through national laws, policies and plans and through international cooperation.
- b) ~~In cooperation with partners and as soon as possible after the conclusion of the 12th meeting of the Conference of Parties, mobilize the provision of support to interested Parties who are otherwise unable to do so from their own resources to undertake wide dissemination and deployment of a large number of energy efficient and low cost radio base stations coupled with radio transmitters in solar-powered "life-long" tags for tracking migratory species so as to improve knowledge about connectivity issues affecting these species; and~~
- c) ~~In cooperation with partners, identify opportunities for reserving small allocations of the radio frequency spectrum in a standardized way among interested Range States for tracking migratory species and transferring data from radio tags.~~