



CONVENTION ON MIGRATORY SPECIES

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IMPORTANT MARINE MAMMAL AREAS (IMMAS)

Adopted by the Conference of the Parties at its 12th Meeting (Manila, October 2017)

Acknowledging that critical habitats for CMS-listed pinnipeds, sirenians, otters, polar bears and cetaceans extend from the tropics to the poles, from shallow estuarine, riverine and coastal areas to the high seas (marine areas beyond the limits of national jurisdiction),

Recognizing that Important Marine Mammal Areas (IMMAs) are an advisory, expert-based classification applied to the world's oceans, coastal waters and shorelines, and relevant inland water bodies, consisting of discrete portions of habitat, important to marine mammal species, that have the potential to be delineated and managed for conservation,

Conscious that aquatic mammals are useful indicators and umbrella species to support the identification and design of area-based conservation measures, and concerned that these species are overlooked by many national and international efforts to develop and apply area-based marine conservation and management measures such as the creation of marine protected areas and other forms of habitat protection,

Also conscious that the application of area-based marine conservation and management measures as tools for marine mammal conservation has been shown to be effective in a number of areas. The process to identify IMMAs provides the needed guidance to develop such conservation initiatives,

Welcoming the progress of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Joint Species Survival Commission (SSC)/World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) Marine Mammal Protected Areas Task Force in developing robust selection and review criteria for identifying IMMAs that complement and contribute to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Ecologically or Biologically Significant Areas (EBSAs), the International Maritime Organization (IMO) Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas (PSSA), and the IUCN Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs),

Recalling Resolution 11.25¹ on *Advancing Ecological Networks to Address the Needs of Migratory Species* highlighting the potential of IMMAs to contribute to the conservation of migratory species and promote ecological networks and connectivity,

Acknowledging Resolution 12.26 on *Improving Ways of Addressing Connectivity in the Conservation of Migratory Species*, highlighting the importance of ensuring all aspects of connectivity in the development of conservation measures,

Welcoming the ongoing effort by ACCOBAMS on Cetacean Critical Habitats (CCH) as outlined in ACCOBAMS Resolution 6.24 on *New Areas of Conservation of Cetacean Habitats*, which applies a threat-based approach to identifying important areas for cetaceans,

¹ Now consolidated as Resolution 12.7

Encouraging the ongoing liaison with the International Whaling Commission (IWC) on using IMMAs to mitigate threats, such as ship strikes, by jointly approaching IMO and presenting selected IMMAs (IWC/67/Rep01(2017) Annex J),

Recalling CBD/COP/DEC/XIII/2 on *Progress towards the achievement of Aichi Biodiversity Targets 11 and 12*, which in paragraph 5 b) *inter alia* invites Parties, in establishing new and/or expanding existing protected areas, or taking other effective area based conservation measures, to give due consideration to areas that protect the habitats of species, in particular threatened, endemic and migratory species, including through such mechanisms as important bird and marine mammal areas,

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

1. *Acknowledges* the Important Marine Mammal Areas (IMMAs) criteria and identification process described in the IMMA Guidance Document posted on the website of the IUCN Joint SSC/WCPA Marine Mammal Protected Areas Task Force (www.marinemammalhabitat.org) for CMS-listed pinnipeds, sirenians, otters, polar bears and cetaceans;
2. *Requests* Parties and *invites* all Range States, intergovernmental organizations and partners to identify specific areas where the identification of IMMAs could be particularly beneficial, for example through stimulating protected area network design and connectivity, or addressing threats to aquatic mammals more comprehensively;
3. *Recommends* that such work to identify specific areas engages the authorities of Parties in the spirit of transparency at an early stage;
4. *Invites* Parties, Range States, intergovernmental organizations and partners to request the support of the IUCN Joint SSC/WCPA Marine Mammal Protected Areas Task Force to advance these approaches; and
5. *Also invites* the Convention on Biological Diversity, the International Maritime Organization and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature to consider IMMAs as useful contributions for the determination of Ecologically or Biologically Significant Areas (EBSAs), Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas (PSSA), Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs).