



CONVENTION ON MIGRATORY SPECIES

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CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT OF WHALES AND THEIR HABITATS IN THE SOUTH ATLANTIC REGION

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

Aware of international commitments and goals to conserve cetacean population of the South Atlantic Region, in particular pursuant to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) for which the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) is the lead partner in the global conservation of migratory species over their entire range,

Recognizing the importance of cetacean conservation in international fora, as reflected, inter alia, in the Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling (IWC), the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular regarding, but not limited to, Sustainable Development Goal 14 *Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development*,

Noting that the Strategic Plan for Migratory Species 2015-2023, has the mission “to promote actions to ensure the favourable conservation status of migratory species and their habitats, and to ensure the ecological integrity, connectivity and resilience of migration systems”,

Aware that whales are highly migratory animals and may face multiple and cumulative threats with possible effects over a wide area, and that their conservation entail a concerted multilateral effort to halt population decrease and ensure recovery in a range of marine and coastal habitats, thus contributing also to the conservation of other species,

Acknowledging that cetaceans, particularly highly migratory great whales, make significant ecological contributions to the functioning of marine ecosystems that are beneficial to the global environment, including nutrient distribution and carbon sequestration from the atmosphere,

Also recognizing that no fewer than 51 species of cetaceans inhabit the waters of the South Atlantic Ocean and some of them are highly migratory baleen whales that feed in the Antarctic and Sub-Antarctic oceans during summer and breed in tropical, subtropical and temperate waters in winter and spring, and that several of these species are listed both on Appendices I and II of CMS, and that urgent action should be taken to establish and maintain a favourable conservation status,

Concerned that in modern whaling, which has been seen as possibly the largest hunt in human history, approximately 3,000,000 whales were killed around the world between 1900-1999, of which about 71 per cent were hunted in the southern hemisphere,

Recalling Article 2, paragraph 1 of the Convention, where “[t]he Parties acknowledge the importance of migratory species being conserved and of Range States agreeing to take action to this end whenever possible and appropriate, paying special attention to migratory species the conservation status of which is unfavourable, and taking individually or in co-operation appropriate and necessary steps to conserve such species and their habitat”,

Further recalling that Resolution 9.9 on Migratory Marine Species expresses concern that migratory marine species face multiple, cumulative and often synergistic threats with possible effects over vast areas, such as bycatch, over-fishing, pollution, habitat destruction or degradation, marine noise impacts and deliberate hunts as well as climate change,

Also noting that CMS calls for international cooperative action to conserve migratory species and that CMS Article IV encourages CMS Parties to conclude Agreements, including non-legally binding agreements, in respect of any population of migratory species,

Bearing in mind that knowledge of the biology, ecology, migratory routes, population and conservation status of many whales is still deficient and that international cooperation will facilitate research on these species and support the development and implementation of conservation measures,

Further recognizing that the CMS Scientific Council has scientific and technical expertise that can be shared to support the implementation of this Action Plan,

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

1. *Adopts* the “Action Plan for the Protection and Conservation of South Atlantic Whales” (heretofore referred to as the “Action Plan”, contained in the Annex), and urges Parties and encourages non-Parties and stakeholders to implement and support the Action Plan as a matter of priority;
2. *Calls on* Parties, in particular Range States, to strengthen existing measures under CMS and other relevant multilateral environmental agreements, including through collaborative arrangements with other Parties and institutions, especially where these contribute to the goals of the Action Plan, in order to address threats and promote the conservation of great whale species in the South Atlantic area, with special regard to those listed in Appendices I and II;
3. *Encourages* Parties to redouble their efforts to increase public awareness of, and support for, great whales’ conservation along migratory routes in the South Atlantic among the general public and stakeholders;
4. *Calls on* Parties and *invites* non-Parties and stakeholders to strengthen national and local capacity for cetacean conservation and the implementation of the Action Plan including, inter alia, by developing training courses, translating and disseminating examples of best practice, transferring technology, and promoting the use of online tools to address specific issues that are relevant to the Action Plan;
5. *Requests* the Secretariat and the Scientific Council to work with the Scientific and Conservation Committees of the International Whaling Commission to increase understanding of cetaceans' contribution to the functioning of marine ecosystems, including by co-hosting a workshop to review the existing data and research and identify opportunities to expand this work; and
6. *Requests* the Scientific Council to promote work to address key gaps in knowledge and future research directions to support the implementation of the Action Plan and other conservation measures in the South Atlantic area.