

**CONVENTION ON
MIGRATORY
SPECIES**

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SUSTAINABLE TOURISM AND MIGRATORY SPECIES

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

Recalling UN General Assembly Resolution 69/233, calling for the “Promotion of sustainable tourism, including ecotourism, for poverty reduction and environmental protection”,

Emphasizing that UN General Assembly Resolution 69/233 invited “governments, international organizations, other relevant institutions and other stakeholders, as appropriate, to encourage and support best practices in relation to the implementation of relevant policies, guidelines and regulations in sustainable tourism, including the ecotourism sector, and to implement and disseminate existing guidelines”,

Recognizing that in the new Agenda 2030 and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), approved by the UN General Assembly, tourism is included as a goal under three of the SDGs: SDG 8: *Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all*, SDG 12: *Sustainable Consumption and Production* and SDG 14: *Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development*,

Noting that 2017 was declared the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development by the United Nations,

Aware of existing guidelines that address the impacts of tourism on biodiversity, inter alia, the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) on the promotion of “sustainable tourism” and “ecotourism”; the IUCN-WCPA *Sustainable tourism in protected areas*, the World Heritage Convention’s *Managing Tourism at World Heritage Sites*; and the *CBD Guidelines on biodiversity and tourism development*,

Recognizing the frameworks and plans under various regional and sub-regional initiatives that include measures to address the impacts of tourism on natural resources and species, such as but not limited to, the Coral Triangle Initiative in the Asia Pacific, the Sulu Sulawesi Marine Ecoregion in South-East Asia, the Caribbean Regional Sea Programme, particularly through its protocol on Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPAW), and the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (AEWA) with its guidelines on the development of ecotourism at wetlands,

Emphasizing that the tourism sector accounts for 7 per cent of worldwide exports, one in eleven jobs and 10 per cent of global GDP,

Acknowledging the role of sustainable tourism as a positive driver towards environmental protection, the eradication of poverty, improved quality of life, the empowerment of local communities and its impact to the three dimensions of sustainable development (economic, social and environmental), particularly in developing countries,

Aware that ecotourism is a growing market which has the potential to take up increased market share,

Further aware that ecotourism that involves wildlife interaction with a range of terrestrial and marine migratory species – birds, marine turtles, whales, dolphins, Dugongs, sharks, rays, seals, among others - increasingly plays a significant role in the industry,

Recognizing that ecotourism activities can increase awareness and drive positive change in attitudes towards wildlife conservation, including generating resources to support protection of migratory species and their habitats,

Aware that the sustainability of tourism involving migratory species is dependent on the non-disruption of the migration cycle thus providing assurance of regular and predictable influx of migratory species populations,

Affirming that all countries need to take equal responsibility for ensuring sustainable and unobtrusive tourism activities in relation to migratory species,

Noting that ecotourism activities can have the best intentions but be undermined by a lack of clear understanding on migratory species behaviour and requirements, including potential creation of new inequalities in access to resources and distribution of benefits,

Welcoming Resolution 11.29 on Sustainable Boat-based Marine Wildlife Watching and Resolution 11.23 on Conservation Implications of Cetacean Culture, adopted by CMS Parties at the 11th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties of the CMS in Quito, November 2014,

Further welcoming the report and analysis of case studies provided in the Convention on Migratory Species' publication *Wildlife watching and tourism: A study on the benefits and risks of a fast-growing tourism activity and its impacts on species*, as well as the report and analysis of case studies provided in the joint Ramsar-UNWTO publication on "Wetlands and sustainable tourism",

Recognizing that a number of governments have put in place comprehensive national regulations or guidelines to ensure the sustainability of tourism activities with stringent regulations on interactions with wild animals,

Recognizing further the value of migratory species in the promotion of ecotourism and in the national economy, and that adequate management interventions and national policies are provided to support effective wildlife conservation and ecotourism management,

Acknowledging that there are numerous voluntary certifications and criteria that responsible ecotourism facilities and organizations have adopted,

Noting that sustainable tourism can contribute to global biodiversity and sustainable development goals and targets including the new Agenda 2030 and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation Strategies, the Aichi Targets established in the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 adopted by the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Strategic Plan for Migratory Species 2015-2023 of CMS on the reduction of pressures to migratory species, and the conservation of wetlands by the Ramsar Convention,

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

1. *Urges* Parties to adopt, as they consider appropriate measures such as national action plans, regulations and codes of conduct, binding protocols or additional legal frameworks and legislation, aiming to ensure tourism activities do not negatively affect species anywhere within their migratory range;
2. *Recommends* that Parties in promoting tourism or recreational activities involving wildlife interaction, take into account the following basic philosophies:
 - a) Tourism activities should not inhibit the natural behaviour and activity of migratory species nor adversely affect their associated habitat;
 - b) The activities should not have significant negative impact on the long-term survival of species populations;
 - c) Tourism activities should create sustainable social and economic benefits within local communities;
 - d) Revenues generated from the activity should be able to provide resources for the conservation of the species or group of species subject to tourism, including the protection of their habitat, and sustaining best practices;
 - e) Tourism involving wildlife should take into account the safety of observers and wildlife as well as risk to human health;
3. *Requests* that Parties consider developing appropriate measures and guidelines dependent on the target species, including, but not limited to:
 - a) Accreditation of operators, provisions of training and a clear code of conduct;
 - b) Allowable types of interactions;
 - c) Level of activity, including aspects such as maximum interaction hours per day, maximum observation time per interaction, or number of individuals/vehicles within designated interaction zones or distances;
 - d) Appropriate equipment or technologies to be used with limits on any that could cause undue disturbance to target species;
 - e) Consider seasonal or life stage-specific regulations or exclusions (e.g. during the mating season);
 - f) Monitoring of implementation through the relevant agencies and authorities, with suitable engagements with operators to facilitate compliance;
 - g) Monitoring potential impacts of tourism activities to target species;
4. *Recommends* that the same measures are made applicable to non-dedicated or opportunistic interactions;
5. *Encourages* Parties to apply the Precautionary Principle where there is a lack of information concerning the effects of interactions brought about by tourism on a species;

6. *Encourages* Parties to perform regular appraisals of enacted measures to account for any new research or relevant information, and adapt regulations as appropriate;
7. *Recommends* that relevant government agencies of Parties provide adequate resources to support thorough ecotourism planning process, and the development of protocols and standards applicable for target species or species groups. Protocols shall be directly and clearly stated to ensure that impacts are avoided especially on breeding, foraging, and resting areas of specific population;
8. *Recommends* that Parties collaborate closely with relevant stakeholders in planning for tourism involving wildlife such as, but not limited to, regulatory agencies, conservation organizations, scientific experts, private operators, indigenous and local communities.