

CMS COP12: Information for media

What is CMS?

CMS stands for Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals. It is also known as the Convention on Migratory Species or the 'Bonn Convention'.

CMS is an environmental treaty under the aegis of UN Environment and provides a global platform for the conservation and sustainable use of migratory animals and their habitats.

CMS brings together the States through which migratory animals pass, the 'Range States', and lays the legal foundation for internationally coordinated conservation measures throughout a migratory range.

As the only global convention specializing in the conservation of migratory species, their habitats and migration routes, CMS complements and co-operates with a number of other international organizations, NGOs and partners in the media as well as in the corporate sector.

Parties

States and Regional Economic Integration Organizations that have agreed to be bound by the Convention ('joined' CMS) are known as Parties. There are currently 124 Parties, namely 123 countries and the European Union.

CMS acts as a framework Convention, encouraging the establishment of regional, species-specific instruments. These instruments may range from legally binding treaties (called Agreements) to less formal arrangements, such as Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs), and can be adapted to the requirements of particular regions.

The development of models tailored according to the conservation needs throughout the migratory range is a capacity unique to CMS.

Reviews

CMS continually reviews the conservation status of listed species, a task conducted by the Scientific Council, which can make recommendations to a Party or Parties.

Why is CMS needed?

CMS is a unique mechanism that brings together countries through which migratory species move in order to promote coordinated, cross-border conservation.

Most migratory species are potentially exposed to threats associated with development, including habitat destruction and loss of biodiversity in breeding areas. Overexploitation such as hunting and unmanaged fishing along migration routes puts further pressure on migratory populations, while climate change can have an impact on migration cycles.

Poor coordination and a lack of cooperation across jurisdictions can mean that the conservation of migratory species is neglected and the contribution that the animals can make to economies is undervalued.

How does CMS work?

CMS provides for separate, international legally binding instruments and other agreements among Range States of single migratory species or, more often, groups of species. These agreements can be adapted to the requirements of particular regions with the aim of enhancing the effectiveness of

the Convention's efforts. To date, 19 international MOUs and seven Agreements have been concluded under the CMS umbrella, for bats, birds, elephants, dolphins and whales, marine turtles and seals, and many others.

Species-specific Agreements and MOUs, concluded under CMS, are open to all Range States of a species, regardless of whether they are Party to the Convention.

The Convention has established several bodies to support its implementation. The Conference of the Parties (COP) is the CMS decision-making body and meets every three years.

The Standing Committee provides policy and administrative guidance between regular meetings of the COP. It comprises representatives from each CMS region plus the Depositary and the host of the next and previous COPs.

The Scientific Council advises the COP and the Secretariat on technical matters and priorities for research and conservation and consists of experts appointed by CMS Parties.

All three bodies can establish working groups on particular species or other topics. Working groups provide advice or recommendations to policy-makers, leading to Resolutions being tabled at COP for adoption.

CMS also engages in global campaigns, such as World Migratory Bird Day and operates capacity-building programs. Capacity-building aims to strengthen human, scientific, technological, organizational and institutional capabilities of countries, which helps them to comply with Multilateral Environmental Agreements.

What do Appendix listings mean?

The species covered by CMS are listed in one or both of two Appendices, according to the degree of protection they need.

Appendix I includes migratory species threatened with extinction. CMS Parties strive towards strictly protecting these animals, conserving or restoring the places where they live, mitigating obstacles to migration and controlling other factors that might endanger them. Besides establishing obligations for each State joining the Convention, CMS promotes concerted action among the Range States of many of these species.

Appendix II includes migratory species that need or would significantly benefit from international co-operation. For this reason, the Convention encourages the Range States to conclude global or regional agreements.

How is CMS financed?

The core administrative costs of the Secretariat, the Conference of the Parties and its subsidiary bodies, the Standing Committee and the other permanent Committees, are financed by contributions from the Parties to the Convention based on the United Nations scale of assessment.

Parties also make voluntary contributions in support of special measures and projects aimed at improving implementation of the Convention. The CMS also receives grants to undertake its work.

What is CMS COP?

The Conference of the Parties (COP) to CMS is the ultimate decision-making body of the Convention and comprises all its Parties.

At each regular meeting of the COP, Parties submit proposals based on an agreed set of biological

criteria to help determine whether a species should be included in Appendices I or II or to amend the listing of a species in these two Appendices. Proposals are discussed and then submitted for decision.

Designated government officials attend the COP from different ministries, such as those responsible for environment, fisheries, forestry, agriculture etc. or foreign affairs. They take part in discussions based upon their respective countries' position on particular proposals and decisions.

Regular meetings of the CMS COP take place every three years. The 11th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CMS COP11) took place in Quito, Ecuador from 4 to 9 November 2014. The 12th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CMS COP12) will take place in Manila, the Philippines from 23 to 28 October 2017.

How does CMS COP work?

Every three years, the rules that govern CMS are debated and agreed on at its Conference of the Parties (COP). Prior to each COP, Parties can submit proposals for amending the two Appendices or existing agreements or proposals to adopt new decisions and agreements as well as to amend the rules of procedure.

The provisional agenda and the list of proposals offers a good indication of some of the key issues that are likely to be debated at the Convention.

At the COP, the proposals are discussed in Committees and then decided upon, normally by consensus in Plenary.

Decisions taken at COP12 will find their way into legislation, regulation, and operating practices across the globe.

a. Plenaries

Plenaries are the decision-making sessions of the COP.

b. Committees

The Committee of the Whole is responsible for making recommendations to the Conference on any matter of a scientific or technical nature, including proposals to amend the Appendices of the Convention, as well as recommendations concerning financial, administrative and any other matter to be decided upon by the Conference. The Conference and the Committee of the Whole may establish working groups to enable them to carry out their functions.

Recommendations of the Committee of the Whole, some of which may be in draft resolutions or decisions, are forwarded to the Plenary session for final adoption.

c. The Bureau

The Bureau of the Conference has the general duty of forwarding the business of the meeting including, where appropriate, altering the timetable and structure of the meeting and specifying time limits for debates.

d. The Credentials Committee

The Credentials Committee examines the credentials and recommends their acceptance for adoption by the Conference of the Parties. Credentials are powers granted by the Head of State, Head of Government or the Minister of Foreign Affairs, enabling a delegate to represent the Party at the meeting.

Pending a decision on their credentials, delegates may participate provisionally in the meeting.

e. The Budget/Finance Committee

The Budget/Finance Committee convenes during the Conference of the Parties under a Chair appointed by the Conference of the Parties. Its main task during the COP is to review, discuss and clear the meeting documents related to the budget and finance that have been presented by the Secretariat for approval by the COP. It recommends the approval the budget proposal for the next triennium. Participation in the Committee is open to all Parties but its Budget Working Group meeting is usually closed to the public.

f. Regional meetings

Five regions meet separately during COP. The five major geographical regions are: Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Oceania. Regional meetings also take place in-between COPs.

g. Working Groups

Working Groups are normally established either in a formal or informal manner in the context of the bodies of CMS and its instruments. Some of them operate only during the meeting of these bodies while others have the mandate to work intersessionally to provide advice or recommendations. Depending on the nature of their mandate, Working Groups can be composed of Member States' representatives or scientific experts within or without the technical bodies of these instruments.

g. Participation

Before the Parties undertake any business in sessions of the Plenary or Committee of the Whole, a quorum of the Parties must be present in the room. This entails one half of Parties having registered delegations at the meeting. The Chair will wait until the necessary number is reached.

h. Rules of Procedure

The Rules of Procedure define the structure for the conduct of meetings of the COP, and the process for making decisions. Adoption of the Rules of Procedure is needed at each meeting and takes place in Plenary session.

Chairs are primarily responsible for ensuring that the rules are implemented.

i. Interventions

- **Substantive intervention**
- **Motion**
A motion is a formal proposal by a delegation that the assembly take a certain action. A Party may request action on a particular subject by making a 'motion'.
- **Point of order (procedural motion)**
Party delegates at a Committee or Plenary session may challenge a procedural decision of the Chair by raising a 'point of order'. The Chair will apply the Rules of procedure in deciding on the point of order.
If a Party disagrees with the decision of the Chair on a Point of Order, the Party may

appeal. The Chair must immediately put the appeal to a vote.

j. Decision-making

The Conference shall as far as possible decide on draft resolutions, draft decisions and other documents by **consensus**.

Whenever the Conference of the Parties does not reach a consensus, the Chair must propose its adoption be put to a vote.

What is the CMS Secretariat?

The CMS Secretariat was established by the Convention and has designated roles and functions, including arranging and servicing the COP. It is administered by UN Environment (UNEP) and is located at Bonn, Germany. It has a pivotal role, fundamental to the Convention and its functions are laid down in [Article IX](#) of the text of the Convention. They include:

- to arrange for and service meetings of the Conference of the Parties, and of the Scientific Council;
- to maintain liaison with and promote liaison between the Parties, the standing bodies set up under agreements and other international organizations concerned with migratory species;
- to prepare for the Conference of the Parties reports on the work of the Secretariat and on the implementation of this Convention;
- to maintain and publish a list of Range States of all migratory species included in Appendices I and II;
- to promote, under the direction of the Conference of the Parties, the conclusion of agreements,
- to maintain and make available to the Parties a list of agreements and, if so required by the Conference of the Parties, to provide any information on such agreements;
- to maintain and publish a list of the recommendations made by the Conference of the Parties; and
- to provide for the general public information concerning the Convention and its objectives.

What will the CMS COP12 cover?

CMS COP12 will be guided by the theme 'Their Future is Our Future. Sustainable Development for Wildlife and People'. It will create a link between the Sustainable Development Goals agreed by the United Nations and international wildlife, emphasizing the vital services that migratory animals provide to human health and wellbeing (e.g. as a source of food and medicine, as pollinators and seed dispersers, and as a means of pest control.)

COP12 will be the largest global gathering of people focused on wildlife this year, attracting CMS Parties, intergovernmental and international and national organizations, the private sector, conservationists, local and international NGOs and experts from multiple disciplines.

Over 400 government delegates, including delegates representing more than 120 countries and observers from around the world and across very region will attend.

At COP12, Parties will review progress made since COP11 in Quito, Ecuador in November 2014 and the future direction of the Convention.

COP12 will consider inter alia the following issues and proposals:

- Proposals to include new species under CMS Appendices, including the African Lion, African Wild Ass, Chinkara (an antelope species), the Przewalski's Horse, and South American bats, as well as all subspecies of leopard and giraffe.
- Ten species of vultures and the Steppe Eagle will be considered for listing on Appendix I and the Lesser Grey Shrike for inclusion on Appendix II. The endangered Whale Shark may be considered for inclusion in Appendix I.
- For the first time, aquatic wild meat will be on the agenda.
- CMS guidelines to reduce marine noise activities will also be presented for adoption.
- Draft resolutions on bycatch, marine debris, including ghost gear, aim to mitigate threats to aquatic species. They will be presented for adoption.
- Draft best practice guidelines on live captures of cetaceans, boat-based wildlife watching and swimming with cetaceans will deal with the commercial use of the species.
- A new intergovernmental task force will be proposed to address the illegal killing of migratory birds in Asia.
- CMS COP12 will also tackle crosscutting issues concerning ecological networks, climate change and renewable energy.
- A Multi-Species Action Plan to better protect 15 species of Old World Vultures will be presented for adoption.
- An Action Plan for the Americas' Flyways to coordinate conservation work in the Western Hemisphere will be tabled;
- Single-species Action Plans for the Far Eastern Curlew, Baer's Pochard and European Roller will be tabled;
- A new initiative for cooperation between CMS and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) to conserve African carnivores will be launched. This will benefit the African Lion, the Cheetah and Leopard as well as the African Wild Dog.
- The African Elephant Action Plan, an initiative developed under the aegis of CITES, will be presented for adoption.
- A Conservation Roadmap for the critically endangered African Wild Ass with fewer than 70 animals remaining in the wild will be presented.
- A migration Atlas of migration routes and infrastructure in Central Asia will be launched.

A **High-Level Panel** will precede COP12 on 22 October 2017. Environment Ministers, Executives of International Organizations and Goodwill Ambassadors will discuss, in an open round table format, the inter-linkages between sustainable development and the conservation of wildlife with special focus on migratory species and the Sustainable Development Goals.

The discussion will result in a Declaration, which will be presented to the Conference for consideration and adoption.

Champion Night

Several governments will be recognized as Migratory Species Champions for their long-term support to initiatives that benefit migratory species conservation. Each Champion will emphasize the need to halt large-scale declines in species across the board and urge others to take up this role in support of the Convention's goals.

There will also be over 50 side events including the launch of the Report on Cetaceans of the Red Sea with UNEP Goodwill Ambassador Yann Arthus-Bertrand.

The event will mark the first time the CMS conference will be held in Asia since the international treaty was adopted in Bonn, Germany in 1979 and came into force in 1985

