

Major topics COP12

The 12th Meeting of the CMS Conference of the Parties to the Convention (CMS COP12) will be held at the Philippine International Convention Center (PICC) in Manila, Philippines, from 22 to 28 October 2017.

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.

Listing proposals

New species are likely to be proposed for listing on the CMS Appendices, including the African Lion, African Wild Ass, Chinkara (antelope species), the Przewalski Horse, the Urial (wild sheep), 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 Little Bustard for inclusion on Appendix 2. The endangered Whale Shark may be considered for uplisting to Appendix I.

Aquatic species

Oceans and marine resources play an essential role in human well-being and social and economic development. However, marine mammals, marine turtles, sharks and seabirds face bycatch, pollution, underwater noise, overfishing and hunting. For the first time, aquatic bushmeat will be on the agenda. CMS Family Guidelines to reduce marine noise activities will be presented for adoption. A sound protection concept is already being applied in the North Sea.

Further draft Resolutions on bycatch, marine debris and ghost nets aim to mitigate threats to aquatic species. Live captures of cetaceans, boat-based wildlife watching and swimming with cetaceans will deal with the commercial use of the species.

Avian species

Migratory birds are under threat. Following the example of the Intergovernmental Task Force on Illegal Killing, Taking and Trade of Migratory Birds in the Mediterranean, a new intergovernmental task force is being proposed to address the illegal killing of migratory birds in Asia.

A Multi-Species Action Plan to better protect 15 species of Old World Vultures will be presented for adoption by COP12. Conservation measures to tackle threats to vultures will be applicable in all 124 Range States of the Action Plan. The new approach of developing such a plan is based on the similar ecology and threats to the species.

An Action Plan for the Americas’ Flyways to coordinate conservation work in the Americas and Single-species Action Plans for the following species will be tabled: European Turtle Dove, Far Eastern Curlew, Baer’s Pochard, European Roller.

Terrestrial species

A new initiative for cooperation between CMS and CITES to conserve African carnivores will be launched. Big cats, including the African Lion, the Cheetah and Leopard as well as the African Wild Dog will benefit from the carnivore initiative.

The African Elephant Action Plan, an initiative developed under the aegis of CITES, will be presented for adoption by CMS COP. A roadmap for the critically endangered African Wild Ass with less than 70 animals remaining in the wild is under development. A migration Atlas of migration routes and infrastructure in Central Asia will be launched.

Cross-cutting issues

Three issues, ecological networks, climate change and renewable energy that are relevant for a wide array of migratory animals are linked. As habitats of migratory species deteriorate or shift because of climate change and other disturbance, it is necessary to establish and strengthen ecological networks of interconnected sites for migratory species. Improving protection of critical sites and the corridors that connect them with each other, helps increase gene flow and resilience to climate-induced changes.

Renewable energy technologies are expected to play a crucial role to mitigate the effects of climate change, and migratory species conservation is therefore expected to benefit from them. However, the deployment of such technologies and associated infrastructure such as power lines may cause harm to migrating animals. Such harm can in many cases be significantly reduced through a careful selection of sites for the deployment of infrastructure and technical mitigation measures. For example, placing power cables underground or fitting them with wildlife friendly devices can minimize potential hazard for migratory birds; modifying the cut-in speed of wind turbines can substantially reduce the mortality of bats and birds. The Resolutions will consolidate and amend earlier Resolutions.

A **High Level Panel** will precede the COP on 22 October 2017. Environment Ministers, Executives of International Organizations and Goodwill Ambassadors will discuss, in an open round table format, the interlinkages 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.

Champions 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.

The 46th Meeting of the CMS Standing Committee will be held on the same day, while the 47th Meeting is scheduled to take place on 28 October 2017.

