

**5th Meeting of the Sessional Committee of the
CMS Scientific Council (ScC-SC5)**

Online, 28 June – 9 July 2021

UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC5/Doc.8.2

DISAGGREGATION OF HIGHER TAXA LISTED ON CMS APPENDIX II

(Prepared by Stephen Garnett, COP-appointed Councillor for Birds)

Summary:

In response to the tabling of UNEP/CMS/COP13/Doc.27.3, COP13 accepted the offer of the Scientific Council to work during the intersessional period and to provide advice to COP14 on the advantages and disadvantages of the various ways of treating the species currently aggregated under families or genera under CMS Appendix II.

This document aims at providing elements for the consideration of this issue by the 5th meeting of the Sessional Committee, including an overview of relevant work undertaken in the intersessional period between COP12 and COP13, and some suggestions on possible approaches for the disaggregation of higher taxa listed on Appendix II.

The Sessional Committee is requested to make recommendations on what is now required to arrive at a considered opinion on the advantages and disadvantages of the various ways of treating the species currently aggregated under families or genera under Appendix II.

DISAGGREGATION OF HIGHER TAXA LISTED ON CMS APPENDIX II

Background

1. Appendix II of CMS lists 63 bird families and three genera rather than individual species, as well as two families of mammals (Rhinolophidae and Vespertilionidae) and two of reptiles (Cheloniidae and Dermochelyidae). This document concerns birds, however considerations concerning approaches for treating the species currently aggregated in higher taxa is applicable to mammals and reptiles as well.
2. Using the taxonomy adopted by the 11th and 12th meetings of the Conference of the Parties as the standard for CMS for birds, it was determined that bird families and genera listed on Appendix II contain 2,822 species. Of these, 54 are already listed on Appendices I or II; 832 occur in a single country; 755 species occur in more than one country but do not move cyclically and predictably across one or more national jurisdictional boundaries; 896 do cross boundaries cyclically and predictably but do not have an unfavourable conservation status as species using the IUCN Red List criteria, leaving 85 species with characteristics of mobility and conservation status usually considered consistent with listing on Appendix II.
3. Following discussion of the document UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC4/Doc.11.3.2 on the disaggregation of bird families and genera listed under Appendix II, the Sessional Committee of the Scientific Council at its 4th meeting:
 - i. Agreed that it is better to have a list of species in place of aggregated families and genera;
 - ii. Endorsed the approach taken by the COP-appointed Councillors for Birds to
 - disaggregation of the families;
 - assessing whether the species in the formerly aggregated families and genera are species for which 'a significant proportion of whose members cyclically and predictably cross one or more national jurisdictional boundaries';
 - iii. Agreed that further work is required before it can be in a position to provide a considered opinion to the Conference of the Parties on the advantages and disadvantages of the various ways of treating the species currently aggregated under families or genera under Appendix II;
 - iv. Offered to work inter-sessionally following COP13 to provide advice to the Conference of the Parties at its 14th meeting.
4. This offer, presented in UNEP/CMS/COP13/Doc.27.3, was accepted by COP13 and returned to the Sessional Committee of the Scientific Council for action.

Discussion and analysis

5. As per ScC-SC4/Doc.11.3.2 and its revision at ScC-SC4, the following non-exhaustive list of alternative approaches appear to be available as recommendations for consideration
 - i. Retaining on Appendix II all members of the families as listed, noting that Res. 3.1 (Rev.COP12) states that the migratory species covered by higher taxa listings already in Appendix II need only be identified when Agreements were being prepared. This means retaining the full list as a reference for any future need (e.g. development of Agreements; Range State list; national reporting) without formally amending the Appendices.

- ii. Replacing family names with those of the species that belong to the families and genera currently aggregated under Appendix II that have been judged to have an unfavourable conservation status (i.e. those species not assessed as Least Concern) and, after consultation with range states, are determined to meet the definition of Migratory Species set out in Article 1.1 of the Convention (*“the entire population or any geographically separate part of the population of any species or lower taxon of wild animals, a significant proportion of whose members cyclically and predictably cross one or more national jurisdictional boundaries”*);
- iii. Replacing family names with those of the species that belong to the families and genera currently aggregated under Appendix II that have been judged as meeting the definition of Migratory Species of the Convention, regardless of the IUCN Red List status;
- iv. Deleting any species in a disaggregated family unless there is a full nomination for inclusion on Appendix II.

Recommended actions

6. The Sessional Committee is requested to make recommendations on what is now required to arrive at a considered opinion to the Conference of the Parties on the advantages and disadvantages of the various ways of treating the species currently aggregated under families or genera under Appendix II.