

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

Online, 28 June – 9 July 2021

UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC5/Doc.6.4.4

IMPACT OF PLASTIC POLLUTION ON AQUATIC, TERRESTRIAL AND AVIAN SPECIES

(Prepared by the Secretariat)

Summary:

This document reports on the implementation of Decisions 13.122 – 13.125 *Impacts of Plastic Pollution on Aquatic, Terrestrial and Avian Species* in the Asia Pacific region through CMS' involvement in the CounterMEASURE II project.

The Sessional Committee is requested to take note of the report.

IMPACT OF PLASTIC POLLUTION ON AQUATIC, TERRESTRIAL AND AVIAN SPECIES

Background

1. Decision 13.123 *Impacts of Plastic Pollution on Aquatic, Terrestrial and Avian Species* provides:

The Scientific Council is requested, subject to the availability of resources, to:

a) develop a concise report summarizing the status of knowledge on the impact of plastic pollution on CMS-listed species that inhabit in terrestrial and freshwater ecosystems, and submit the report to the Conference of the Parties at its 14th meeting, as well as a summary of existing guidance on measures to address such threats;

b) based on the report to be developed under paragraph 13.123 (a), recommend possible next steps for addressing this threat to CMS-listed species;

c) collaborate with other scientific mechanisms such as those under the International Whaling Commission, the United Nations Environment Programme and other multilateral environmental agreements to exchange available scientific and other relevant data and information related to the prevention and reduction of the impact of plastics on migratory species, including the report developed under paragraphs (a) and (b).

2. Following the adoption of Decisions 13.122 – 13.125 *Impacts of Plastic Pollution on Aquatic, Terrestrial and Avian Species* by the 13th meeting of the Conference of the Parties and in line with paragraph (c) of Decision 13.123, the CMS Secretariat worked with the UNEP Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ROAP) to develop a collaborative effort to implement a project funded by the Government of Japan, which contributes to the implementation of Decision 13.123 in the Asia and Pacific region.

CounterMEASURE II

3. The project, "[Promotion of Action against Marine Plastic Litter in Asia and the Pacific \(CounterMEASURE II\)](#)" is a U.S.\$5.7-million project aiming at generating, sharing and disseminating scientific knowledge on plastic pollution in the Mekong, Ganges and selected rivers in Sri Lanka and Myanmar to inform policy and decision-making processes at the local, national, regional and global level. The project has three key results:

Key Result 1: Knowledge on plastic pollution in the Mekong, Ganges and selected Sri Lanka and Myanmar rivers generated to inform policy and decision-making processes.

Key Result 2: Knowledge on plastic pollution in the Mekong, Ganges and selected rivers in Sri Lanka and Myanmar is managed, shared and disseminated.

Key Result 3: National, regional and global policies, alliances and financial mechanisms are informed and influenced by the science on plastic pollution in rivers through best practices demonstrated from the Mekong and Ganges rivers examples.

4. The CMS Secretariat leads the Migratory Species Focal Area of CounterMEASURE II, which contributes towards the achievement of all three key results and manages a budget of U.S.\$ 271,000 to be implemented by March 2022. The Secretariat works with a number of implementing partners to:
 - a. Produce a report summarizing the current knowledge on the impact of plastic pollution on migratory species in freshwater and terrestrial ecosystems, with a focus on Asia and the Pacific region (National Oceanography Centre (United Kingdom)).
 - b. Assess the level of risk posed by exposure to plastic in the migratory species that occur in the Mekong and Ganges River Basin (Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization (Australia)).
 - c. Conduct research on the scope and impact of plastic pollution in Mekong and Ganges River fauna with a focus on migratory species of freshwater fish (Mekong River Commission Secretariat).
 - d. Prepare a monitoring protocol on the impact of plastics on fauna living in the Mekong River Basin (Mekong River Commission Secretariat).
 - e. Conduct outreach activities to raise awareness on plastic pollution and its impact on migratory species in the Mekong and Ganges River Basins.
5. Reports received from the implementing partners will be evaluated by a Scientific Advisory Group, established to review all outputs from the project.

Discussion and analysis

6. While not all of the above listed outputs of the CounterMEASURE II project are directly relevant to Decision 13.123 (a), the report produced under paragraph 4 (a) of this document is relevant. Therefore, and to assist the Scientific Council with the implementation of Decision 13.123 (a), the report from the project will be made available to the 6th meeting of the Sessional Committee for review and recommendation on possible next steps for addressing the threat of plastic pollution on CMS-listed species to the 14th meeting of the CMS Conference of the Parties.

Recommended actions

7. The Sessional Committee is recommended to take note of this document.