



**CONVENTION ON
MIGRATORY
SPECIES**

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Agenda Item 27.5

**SINGLE SPECIES ACTION PLAN
FOR THE ATLANTIC HUMPBACK DOLPHIN (*Sousa teuszii*)**

(Prepared by the Secretariat)

Summary:

This document presents a new Single Species Action Plan and contains a draft Resolution and draft Decisions for adoption.

Revision 1 corrects a country designation and adds a footnote to Annex 2.

Revision 2 updates the draft Single Species Action Plan presented in Annex 2 to reflect discussions of the Range States held in Saly, Senegal, on 6 September 2023, as part of the CMS Marine Megafauna Week: Atlantic Coast of Africa.

SINGLE SPECIES ACTION PLAN FOR THE ATLANTIC HUMPBACK DOLPHIN (*Sousa teuszii*)

Background

1. The Atlantic Humpback Dolphin (*Sousa teuszii*), or Cameroon Dolphin, is listed on CMS Appendices I and II and has been assessed as 'Critically Endangered (CR)' on the *IUCN Red List of Threatened Species*. [Concerted Action 12.3 \(Rev.COP13\)](#)¹ foresaw the development of an Action Plan at a Range State meeting. Due to lack of funding for the meeting, the Secretariat, in consultation with the other members of the Steering Committee for the Concerted Action, led the development of the draft Single Species Action Plan (SSAP) for the Atlantic Humpback Dolphin (*Sousa teuszii*) presented in this document. This activity was undertaken with funds provided by the Government of the Principality of Monaco under the Migratory Species Champion Programme.
2. The overall goal of the Action Plan is to promote the long-term sustainability of Atlantic Humpback Dolphin populations and their habitats by reducing the negative impacts of human activities, with a particular focus on research, awareness-raising, capacity-building and conservation action.
3. Fewer than 3,000 individuals of the species are thought to remain. Found only in shallow-water habitats on the Atlantic coast of Africa – between the Non-Self Governing Territory of Western Sahara² in the north and Angola in the south – the species and its habitats are threatened by the expansion of the fishing sector, coastal construction, and habitat degradation in the 19 countries³ within its range.
4. The most serious threat is from bycatch in gillnet fisheries that are common practice throughout its range. Additional threats from direct hunting, coastal development and habitat degradation also require urgent action.

Development of the Single Species Action Plan

5. A Steering Committee for the Concerted Action was established in March 2021. Following a nomination process, members were approved by the National Focal Points of the Range States. The Committee includes proponents of the Concerted Action, scientists with a long-standing involvement with CMS – both with an interest in this species specifically and the [Western African Aquatic Mammals MOU](#) more broadly – and members of the relevant working group of the Consortium for the Conservation of the Atlantic Humpback Dolphin (CCAHD) (see below). The Steering Committee advised on the terms of reference for a consultancy to develop the SSAP, reviewed an early draft, and provided support throughout the process.
6. The draft SSAP was prepared by CMS consultant A.G. Fruhauf Minton in collaboration with E. Eniang, T. Collins, A.T. Kamla, L.W. Keith Diagne, J.R. Kema Kema, and C.R. Weir, with legal analysis by B. Sommermeyer and C. Pruett of Law of the Wild.

1 The implementation report of Concerted Action 12.3 (Rev.COP13) is contained in [UNEP/CMS/COP14/Doc.32.2.5](#).

2 Western Sahara has been listed in the United Nations list of Non-Self-Governing Territories since 1963 under Article 73e of the Charter of the United Nations.

3 **Confirmed presence:** Angola; Benin; Cameroon; Republic of Congo; Gabon; Gambia; Guinea; Guinea-Bissau; Mauritania; Nigeria; Senegal; Togo; and Non-Self Governing Territory of Western Sahara. **Presence unknown in:** Ghana, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Democratic Republic of Congo

7. Written consultations on the draft SSAP were initiated through CMS Notification 2022/15 in September 2022. A revised draft addressing comments received was sent to Range State Focal Points in December 2022. For both rounds of consultations, the Secretariat followed up with Focal Points and Scientific Councillors in each of the Range States. Following the deadline for comments in February 2023, the draft Action Plan presented in this document was finalized.

Collaboration with the Consortium for the Conservation of the Atlantic Humpback Dolphin

8. In December 2019, scientists concerned about the conservation status of Atlantic Humpback Dolphins met in the margins of the World Marine Mammal Conference in Barcelona, Spain, to discuss actions needed to improve the outlook for this species and opportunities for supporting CMS conservation efforts. This meeting laid the foundation for the CCAHD, which brings together national partner organizations and individuals within the Range States, international conservation management bodies, and cetacean scientists from around the world to advise on the conservation of the Atlantic Humpback Dolphin.
9. This development significantly changed the momentum for conservation of the species across the range, pulling together knowledge of the status of populations and threats that was previously inaccessible. Accordingly, this network proved invaluable in pulling together the background information for the first draft of the SSAP for consideration by the Range States. Several CCAHD members participated in the drafting process. These stakeholders are also expected to play an important role in assisting governments in implementing the actions set out in the SSAP. In February 2021, following consultations with the Concerted Action Steering Committee, the Secretariat informed Range State Focal Points that it had partnered with the CCAHD to support implementation of the Concerted Action – a move that was welcomed by Range State Focal Points.

Discussion and analysis

10. The SSAP provides a common approach for addressing the urgent conservation needs of the Atlantic Humpback Dolphin. It does so in a comprehensive, multi-pronged fashion, addressing gaps in knowledge, resources, capacity, legislation and enforcement. Given the alarming deterioration in the conservation status of this species, collective action from both Parties and stakeholders across numerous sectors will be important. The SSAP will help to draw attention to the plight of the species, and to galvanize much-needed action.
11. It is critical that following its adoption, immediate steps are taken to implement the actions set out in the SSAP. To do this will require support from countries outside the region.

Recommended actions

12. The Conference of the Parties is recommended to:
 - a) adopt the draft Resolution contained in Annex 1 of this document, including the SSAP, which is annexed to the Resolution (Annex 2);
 - b) adopt the draft Decisions contained in Annex 3 of this document.

DRAFT RESOLUTION

**SINGLE SPECIES ACTION PLAN
FOR THE ATLANTIC HUMPBACK DOLPHIN (*Sousa teuszii*)**

Noting that the Atlantic Humpback Dolphin (*Sousa teuszii*) was listed on CMS Appendix II in 1991 and Appendix I in 2009,

Concerned that the Atlantic Humpback Dolphin has been assessed by the *IUCN Red List of Threatened Species* in 2017 as Critically Endangered (CR) and the population trend was assessed as decreasing, raising serious concerns about the viability of the species given ongoing high threat levels,

Deeply concerned that the species and its habitat are threatened by the expansion of the fishing sector, direct hunting, coastal construction and habitat degradation throughout its range,

Recognizing that a multi-pronged approach is required that simultaneously addresses knowledge, resource, capacity and legal gaps that hinder effective conservation of the species, while, at the same time implementing and enforcing existing laws and regulations that can mitigate threats to the species,

Recalling Concerted Action 12.3 (Rev.COP13), which called for the development of an action plan for the Atlantic Humpback Dolphin, reflecting the concern of Range State governments and other stakeholders about its conservation status,

Recognizing the support of the Consortium for the Conservation of the Atlantic Humpback Dolphin (CCAHD) in the implementation of the above-mentioned Concerted Action,

Noting the linkages between the Single Species Action Plan and the Memorandum of Understanding concerning the Conservation of the Manatee and Small Cetaceans of Western Africa and Macaronesia (Western African Aquatic Mammals MOU),

Further noting the high relevance of several work areas of CMS to the conservation of the Atlantic Humpback Dolphin, especially concerning bycatch, aquatic wild meat, marine pollution, underwater noise, and connectivity,

Affirming the need to address the threats to the species and its habitat in close collaboration with the Convention for the Co-operation in the Protection and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the West and Central African Region (Abidjan Convention),

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

1. *Adopts* the Single Species Action Plan (SSAP) for the Atlantic Humpback Dolphin (*Sousa teuszii*) contained in Annex [...] with the goal of promoting the long-term sustainability of its populations and their habitats by reducing the negative effects of human activities through research, awareness-raising, capacity-building and conservation action;

2. *Urges Parties and invites non-Party Range States to implement the relevant provisions of the SSAP;*
3. *Calls on Parties to strive for active collaboration between governmental and non-governmental stakeholders within each range country to maximize the effective use of resources and expertise, to ensure that the results of research and awareness-raising activities can support the design and implementation of effective policy and management;*
4. *Further calls on Parties and other stakeholders to facilitate regional collaboration between stakeholders in different *Sousa teuszii* Range States to ensure that knowledge and experience gained in one country can be used to most effectively implement conservation action in another, especially in countries where cross-border populations are suspected to occur;*
5. *Encourages Parties and non-Party States to provide technical and/or financial support to activities included in the SSAP;*
6. *Invites other relevant intergovernmental frameworks, in particular the Convention for the Co-operation in the Protection and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the West and Central African Region (Abidjan Convention) and the African Union, to take into account the provisions of the SSAP in the consideration of their activities and to support implementation of relevant SSAP activities that fall within their mandates, as appropriate;*
7. *Invites the Consortium for the Conservation of the Atlantic Humpback Dolphin (CCAHD) to continue its active support of research and conservation measures for this species; and*
8. *Instructs the Secretariat to bring the SSAP to the attention of all Range States and relevant intergovernmental organizations and to monitor the implementation of the SSAP.*

ANNEX 2

**SINGLE SPECIES ACTION PLAN
FOR THE ATLANTIC HUMPBACK DOLPHIN (*Sousa teuszii*)**

NB: The Single Species Action Plan for the Atlantic Humpback Dolphin (*Sousa teuszii*) is presented as a separate file [here](#).

ANNEX 3

DRAFT DECISIONS

**SINGLE SPECIES ACTION PLAN
FOR THE ATLANTIC HUMPBACK DOLPHIN (*Sousa teuszii*)**

Directed to Parties

14.AA Parties that are Range States to the species are requested to:

- a) Undertake those actions of the SSAP specified for immediate implementation and for delivery within three years as a matter of priority, continue ongoing activities, and start implementation of those actions of the SSAP specified to be addressed within five years;
- b) Set up the necessary structures to ensure active collaboration among stakeholders within each Range State to maximize the effective use of resources and expertise, for example through the formation of national working groups;
- c) Actively engage with stakeholders in neighbouring *Sousa teuszii* Range States to facilitate knowledge-sharing and effective collaboration, especially where cross-border populations are suspected to occur;
- d) Provide a brief report on their implementation of the SSAP in time for the last meeting of the Sessional Committee before the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP15) using a template provided by the Secretariat;
- e) Encourage non-Party Range States to adopt the SSAP for their use.

14.BB Non-Range Parties are requested to provide technical and capacity-building support to Range States for the implementation of activities outlined in the Action Plan.

Directed to intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations

14.CC Intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations are encouraged to support implementation of the SSAP, including through provision of technical support and expertise.

Directed to the Scientific Council through its Aquatic Mammals Working Group

14.DD The Scientific Council through its Aquatic Mammals Working Group is requested to:

- a) Support the Secretariat in the development of a simple reporting template designed to gather information on the implementation of SSAP;
- b) Review information provided by Parties on the implementation of the SSAP and prepare a brief summary and analysis;
- c) Make recommendations on the further implementation of the SSAP to the last meeting of the Sessional Committee of the Scientific Council prior to COP15.

Directed to the Scientific Council

14.EE The Scientific Council is requested to:

- d) Consider the information provided by Parties on the implementation of the SSAP, as well as the summary and analysis and the resulting recommendations of the Aquatic Mammals Working Group;
- e) Provide guidance on the further implementation of the Action Plan to COP15.

Directed to the Secretariat

14.FF The Secretariat shall:

- a) Encourage non-Party Range States to adopt the SSAP;
- b) Develop a simple reporting form in collaboration with the Aquatic Mammals Working Group enabling assessment of progress in the implementation of the SSAP, and disseminate this to Parties that are Range States to the species to enable reporting sufficiently in advance of the last meeting of the Sessional Committee of the Scientific Council prior to COP15;
- c) Convene a meeting of Range States, as soon as possible after COP14 and subject to the availability of external resources, regarding implementation of priority actions and to facilitate coordination across the region.