



Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals

Secretariat provided by the United Nations Environment Programme



37th Meeting of the Standing Committee

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CMS/StC37/17
Agenda Item 12

DRAFT RESOLUTION ON ECOLOGICAL NETWORKS

1. The present draft Resolution is submitted to the Standing Committee for review and guidance on how CMS could contribute to the protection of critical sites and the setting up of ecological networks for migratory species.
2. The issue was discussed at the 16th Scientific Council last June and it was concluded that the Secretariat should work on developing a draft Resolution for submission to the Standing Committee and seek a sponsoring country to table it at COP10. The document used as reference for the Scientific Council was UNEP/CMS/ScC16/Inf.15.

Action requested:

The Standing Committee is invited to review the draft Resolution, and to give comments or guidance for a submission to CMS COP10, as necessary, to the Secretariat.

**DRAFT RESOLUTION ON THE POTENTIAL ROLE OF CRITICAL SITES AND
ECOLOGICAL NETWORKS WITHIN THE CMS FRAMEWORK**

(Prepared by the CMS Secretariat)

Recognizing that habitat destruction and fragmentation are among the primary threats to migratory species, and that the identification and conservation of habitats, in particular, the critical sites and connecting corridors, are thus of paramount importance for the conservation of these species;

Further recognizing that habitat fragmentation increases the vulnerability of species' populations by reducing the area of habitat available to local populations and limiting opportunities for dispersal, migration and genetic exchange;

Recalling that ecological connectivity can have multiple advantages, such as maintenance of viable populations and migratory pathways, reduced risk of population extinction and higher resilience to climate change;

Further recalling that ecological networks usually include core areas and corridors, and sometimes also nature restoration areas and buffer zones, and that such critical site networks are particularly relevant in the context of acute habitat fragmentation, which is being observed on a global scale;

Conscious that initiatives for ecological networks exist both at national and international levels and that both are relevant and can support transboundary cooperation for the conservation of migratory species;

Aware that the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) addresses this issue through its Programme of Work on Protected Areas and IUCN through its Commission on Protected Areas, and that networks of protected areas are a cornerstone *inter alia* of the Ramsar Convention, the UNESCO World Heritage Convention, the Bern Convention and EU biodiversity policy;

Recalling that networks of critical sites are needed in order to achieve connectivity among them and to protect migratory species along their entire migration route, and that corridors can occur in any habitat and should meet the requirements of the targeted species;

Considering that the designation of protected areas across very large areas is not always possible and that additional wider countryside measures usually need to be applied in order to address and mitigate the anthropogenic changes at the wider landscape scale;

Acknowledging that the practical approach to the identification, designation, protection and management of critical sites will vary from one taxonomic group to another or even from species to species, and that the flyway approach provides a useful framework to address habitat conservation and species protection for migratory birds along migration routes;

Further acknowledging that flyways constitute a specific type of migration corridor and that migratory birds depend on widely separated areas for their survival, and that measures designed to conserve these networks should focus on the breeding grounds, wintering areas and feeding and resting places;

Noting that the Convention text makes specific reference to habitat conservation:, e.g. in Article III.4 , Article V.5e and Article VIII.5e;

Recognizing with satisfaction that the recently developed Critical Site Network Tool under the African-Eurasian Flyways GEF Project (also known as the Wings over Wetlands Project) is a state-of-the-art webportal for flyway-level information on waterbirds and the sites they use in the African-Eurasian region, to underpin planning and management at site level;

Considering that CMS could apply the ecological network approach in a number of ways and that all of these activities are dependent on close cooperation and the input of the range states affected, in the first instance by CMS Parties and Signatories of its daughter agreements;

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

1. *Requests* Parties to promote the identification of the most relevant sites and corridors for migratory species, with an emphasis on those that are transboundary and would benefit from international cooperation;
2. *Invites* Parties to enhance the coverage, quality and connectivity of protected areas as a contribution to the development of representative systems of protected areas and coherent ecological networks that include all taxonomic groups of migratory species;
3. *Urges* Parties to undertake habitat restoration and management at protected areas and critical sites in order to ensure habitat availability during the different stages of the life cycle of migratory species;
4. *Urges* Parties to explore actively the potentially suitable areas for transboundary cooperation on protected areas, ensuring that barriers to migration are to the greatest possible extent eliminated or mitigated and that migratory species are managed under commonly agreed criteria;
5. *Instructs* the Secretariat, resources permitting, to support coordination and communication to strengthen synergies with global conventions, regional conventions and other international initiatives, as well as national policies and strategies in the establishment of protected areas and ecological networks, and in particular in the implementation of CBD's Programme of Work on Protected Areas and the LifeWeb initiative;
6. *Invites* Parties to undertake concerted efforts to integrate protected areas into wider landscapes and sectors, including through the use of connectivity measures such as the development of biological corridors, where appropriate, and the restoration of degraded habitats and landscapes in order to address the impacts of climate change and increase resilience to climate change;
7. *Calls on* Parties and Range States to consider the network approach in the implementation of existing CMS initiatives such as the Monk Seal MoU, the West African Elephant MoU, the Gorilla Agreement, the Saiga Antelope MoU and the Bukhara Deer MoU and – as is already the case - in the work on flyways;

8. *Requests* the Secretariat to work with Parties and the Scientific Council in organizing regional and sub-regional workshops to promote the conservation and management of critical sites and ecological networks among Parties;
9. *Encourages* Parties to explore the applicability of ecological networks and corridors to marine migratory species that are under pressure from human activities such as oil and gas exploration, overexploitation, fishing and coastal development;
10. *Further encourages* Parties in collaboration with the Secretariat to explore the full potential of Appendix II listing to promote international cooperation for the conservation of migratory species that represent outstanding examples of animal migrations;
11. *Instructs* the Secretariat, resources permitting, to continue its close collaboration with the Scientific Council, the secretariats and scientific bodies of the CMS daughter agreements, and other biodiversity organizations and biodiversity-related bodies, to produce scientific and technical advice to assist Parties and Range States in establishing coherent networks of critical sites for migratory species;
12. *Further instructs* the Secretariat, resources permitting, in collaboration with the Scientific Council, to support Parties and Range States in the elimination of obstacles to migration and in promoting the elaboration of guidelines to prevent the impact of infrastructures such as roads, highways, railways, electricity lines and wind farms;
13. *Requests* bilateral and multilateral donors to provide financial assistance to developing countries and countries with economies in transition for the implementation of this Resolution;
14. *Further requests* the support of the Global Environment Facility to assist eligible countries with the joint implementation of priority projects for the conservation of critical sites and ecological networks for migratory species.