



**IMPORTANT MARINE MAMMAL AREAS (IMMAs)**

(UNEP/CMS/COP12/Doc.24.2.1)

*(Prepared by the Aquatic Working Group)*

**DRAFT RESOLUTION**

*Acknowledging* that critical habitats for CMS-listed pinnipeds, sirenians, otters, polar bears and cetaceans extend from the tropics to the poles, from shallow estuarine, riverine and coastal areas to the high seas (marine areas beyond the limits of national jurisdiction);

*Recognizing* that Important Marine Mammal Areas (IMMAs) are an advisory, expert-based classification applied to the world's oceans, coastal waters and shorelines, and relevant inland water bodies, consisting of discrete portions of habitat, important to marine mammal species, that have the potential to be delineated and managed for conservation;

*Conscious* that aquatic mammals are useful indicators and umbrella species to support the identification and design of area-based conservation measures, and concerned that these species are overlooked by many national and international efforts to develop and apply area-based marine conservation and management measures such as the creation of marine protected areas and other forms of habitat protection;

*Also conscious* that the application of area-based marine conservation and management measures as tools for marine mammal conservation has been shown to be effective in a number of areas. The process to identify IMMAs provides the needed guidance to develop such conservation initiatives.

*Welcoming* the progress of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Joint Species Survival Commission (SSC)/World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) Marine Mammal Protected Areas Task Force in developing robust selection and review criteria for identifying Important Marine Mammal Areas (IMMAs) that complement and contribute to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Ecologically or Biologically Significant Areas (EBSAs), the International Maritime Organization (IMO) Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas (PSSA), and the IUCN Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs);

*Recalling* Resolution 11.25 on Advancing Ecological Networks to Address the Needs of Migratory Species highlighting the potential of IMMAs to contribute to the conservation of migratory species and promote ecological networks and connectivity;

*Acknowledging* Resolution 12.[XX] on *Improving Ways of Addressing Connectivity in the Conservation of Migratory Species*, highlighting the importance of ensuring all aspects of connectivity in the development of conservation measures;

*Welcoming* the ongoing effort by ACCOBAMS on Cetacean Critical Habitats (CCH) as outlined in ACCOBAMS Resolution 6.24 on *New Areas of Conservation of Cetacean Habitats*, which applies a threat-based approach to identifying important areas for cetaceans;

*Encouraging* the ongoing liaison with the International Whaling Commission (IWC) on using

IMMAs to mitigate threats, such as ship strikes, by jointly approaching IMO and presenting selected IMMAs as (IWC/67/Rep01(2017) Annex J);

*Recalling* CBD/COP/DEC/XIII/2 on Progress towards the achievement of Aichi Biodiversity Targets 11 and 12, which in paragraph 5 b) inter alia invites Parties, in establishing new and/or expanding existing protected areas, or taking other effective area based conservation measures, to give due consideration to areas that protect the habitats of species, in particular threatened, endemic and migratory species, including through such mechanisms as important bird and marine mammal areas;

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

1. *Acknowledges* the Important Marine Mammal Areas (IMMAs) criteria and identification process described in the IMMA Guidance Document posted on the website of the IUCN Joint SSC/WCPA Marine Mammal Protected Areas Task Force ([www.marinemammalhabitat.org](http://www.marinemammalhabitat.org)) for CMS-listed pinnipeds, sirenians, otters, polar bears and cetaceans;
2. *Requests* Parties and *invites* all Range States, intergovernmental organizations and partners to identify specific areas where the identification of IMMAs could be particularly beneficial, for example through stimulating protected area network design and connectivity, or addressing threats to aquatic mammals more comprehensively;
- 2.bis *Recommends* that such work to identify specific areas engages the authorities of Parties in the spirit of transparency at an early stage;
3. *Invites* Parties, Range States, intergovernmental organizations and partners to request the support of the IUCN Joint SSC/WCPA Marine Mammal Protected Areas Task Force to advance these approaches; and
4. *Also invites* the Convention on Biological Diversity, the International Maritime Organization and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature to consider IMMAs as useful contributions for the determination of Ecologically or Biologically Significant Areas (EBSAs), Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas (PSSA), Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs).

## DRAFT DECISIONS

### **Directed to the Scientific Council**

12.AA The Scientific Council should:

- a) collaborate with the IUCN Joint SSC/WCPA Marine Mammal Protected Areas Task Force to include data on CMS-listed pinnipeds, sirenians, otters, polar bears and cetaceans in the identification of IMMAs;
- b) upon receiving information from the IUCN Joint SSC/WCPA Marine Mammal Protected Areas Task Force about newly identified IMMAs, review their relevance for CMS-listed species, consider any contributions received from Parties, and provide advice concerning conservation measures;

### **Directed to the Secretariat**

12.BB The Secretariat should:

- a) collaborate with the IUCN Joint SSC/WCPA Marine Mammal Protected Areas Task Force to promote the value of IMMAs for the conservation of CMS-listed aquatic mammals;
- b) transfer information on newly identified IMMAs received from the IUCN Joint SSC/WCPA Marine Mammal Protected Areas Task Force to the Scientific Council and to the Parties and invite contributions from Parties and Range States;
- c) report to the Standing Committee at its 48<sup>th</sup> and 49<sup>th</sup> meeting on the progress in implementing this decision.