

**14th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to
the Convention on Migratory Species of Wild Animals**
WCS recommendations, January 2024



Introduction to the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS):

WCS takes a science-based approach to the conservation and protection of wildlife and wild places, including many of the migratory species on the CMS Appendices. WCS works to study and conserve CMS-listed species and on related issues, such as transboundary cooperation, spatial planning, and ecological integrity and connectivity, across several continents and in all of the world's oceans.

WCS has a long history of partnership with CMS, which includes the signing of a formal Cooperation Agreement in 2007 and WCS's signing on as a Cooperating Partner to the MoU on the Conservation of Migratory Sharks (CMS Sharks MOU) in 2016. WCS shares with CMS and the CMS Parties the common goal of conserving migratory species through enhanced and collaborate actions at multiple levels and between all sectors and actors involved.

WCS will be represented by a small team of wildlife and policy experts at CMS CoP14 in Samarkand, Uzbekistan in February 2024. This document presents our views on many of the documents before the Parties at CoP14, including proposals to amend the CMS Appendices, which are based on the best available scientific and technical information from our field and country programs around the world. We have not included recommendations for species we do not work on, or are found in countries where we do not work. We have not addressed all issues or documents, but we stand ready to answer any questions Parties may have.

Decisions made by Party governments over the course of the meeting will have profound implications for the future of species and habitat conservation and sustainable development. We urge Parties to fully integrate implementation of CMS with their implementation of the GBF. We look forward to meeting with Parties and others during CoP14, and to advancing the conservation of migratory species.

Should you have any questions or concerns regarding WCS, or our position on any agenda item to be considered during CoP14, please contact Dr. Susan Lieberman, Vice President for International Policy at slieberman@wcs.org.

WCS-sponsored side events at CMS CoP14:

Title	Date	Time	Room
Listing Sand Tigers on CMS	13 Feb	12:45	4
Amazon Giant Migratory Catfish Species: Connecting the Amazon from the Andes to the Atlantic Ocean	13 Feb	13:45	1
Unlocking the Future: Innovative Climate Change Modeling for Biodiversity Conservation in Northeast Afghanistan and Beyond into Central Asia	14 Feb	18:15	4

The following are WCS Recommendations regarding selected CoP14 agenda items. We also are still analyzing some documents and consulting our field experts, and we may have updated recommendations to share with Parties during CoP14.

	Agenda items covered	pages
Strategic and Institutional Matters	14, 17	2
Scientific Assessments and Reports	20, 21	2-4
Interpretation and Implementation of the Convention	23, 26	4-5
• Aquatic species conservation issues	27	5-7
• Avian species conservation issues	28	7
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Amendment of CMS Appendices	31 (3, 9-14)	14-16
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14. Strategic planning

14.1 Implementation of the Strategic Plan for Migratory Species 2015-2023

14.2 New Strategic Plan for Migratory Species

WCS welcomes the efforts of the CMS Secretariat and Parties to implement the Strategic Plan for Migratory Species 2015-2023. There has been tremendous progress on several important aspects, such as awareness raising, cooperation on specific taxonomic groups and reforming economic and policy incentives in agriculture and energy. However, we note with concern that migratory species, like all biodiversity, continues to decline as we collectively fail to address direct drivers (e.g. infrastructure development) that are impeding their migration and other biological/ecological processes. In line with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, we must seek to reverse the decline of migratory species through a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach, realigning our economic systems to be nature positive.

We recommend that Parties adopt the new Strategic Plan for Migratory Species 2024-2032; however, we recommend an additional Target related to enhancing national compliance with the Convention. This is particularly necessary for species listed in CMS Appendix I where actions are documented that are in violation of legal obligations under the Convention. We urge Parties to use and strengthen the review mechanism in this regard.

17. CMS contribution to the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF)

WCS strongly supports this document, and the draft consolidated resolution and draft decisions in the Annexes. We congratulate the CMS Secretariat and Parties for their contributions to the final GBF, adopted by the Parties to the CBD, to which all CMS Parties are also Party. WCS was pleased to be part of the CMS Family working group on the GBF negotiations and looks forward to discussions at CoP14 on how CMS Parties and stakeholders can best contribute to implementation of the GBF, including through development and implementation of NBSAPs. We welcome the focus in the draft resolution on ecological connectivity, but also urge Parties to add reference to ecological integrity, which is clearly articulated in Goal A and Targets 1 and 2 of the GBF and is fundamental for the conservation of migratory species. We also urge reflection in the draft resolution that Parties should be encouraged to include all aspects of CMS implementation in their NBSAPs, but also in their outreach to bilateral, multilateral, and private donors as part of their GBF implementation.

20. Atlas of Animal Migration

WCS strongly supports continued work on additional modules for the global atlas on animal migration and urges Parties to provide additional resources to the CMS Secretariat and other key stakeholders for the development of such modules. WCS was pleased to work with the CMS Secretariat on several key initiatives, including the Central Asian Mammals Migration and Linear Infrastructure Atlas. A modular approach is appropriate, given high variability in data availability for different taxa and regions; however, this information should be aggregated to the extent possible and provided for decision-makers in an updateable, public portal (e.g. the CMS website). We note that data collection and presentation efforts are only as useful as their provision to decision makers, and strategic planning for maximizing the long-term value of these modular efforts is critical. WCS would be pleased to contribute to these efforts intersessionally. WCS recommends the adoption of the draft Decisions in the document, with the inclusion of the additional text from the Scientific Council.

21. Conservation status of migratory species

21.1 State of the World's Migratory Species

WCS greatly appreciates all of the work on analyzing and reporting the conservation status of migratory species. We welcome the updating of this document, to include comments and recommendations from the Sessional Committee of the Scientific Council (SCSC), which we participated in; we look forward to the final document. It is important to continue to highlight the significant importance of CMS and its implementation, and the conservation and protection of migratory species and their habitats, both in their own right, and in the delivery of several goals and targets of the GBF. In particular, the conservation of migratory species and their habitats, and CMS implementation, is critical for the implementation and delivery of Goal A and Targets 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 of the GBF. We particularly encourage Parties to highlight the concepts of ecological integrity and connectivity in their conservation programmes, and both their CMS implementation and development of their NBSAPs.

We recommend adoption of the draft resolution and draft decisions in Annexes 1 and 2 of Document 21.1 (Rev.1). We recommend however that, contingent on the availability of funding, a review of the conservation status of migratory species be prepared for each meeting of the CoP, rather than alternate meetings as proposed. In today's world, with the significant and rapidly increasing impacts of over-exploitation, climate change, disease, and other threats, such a useful report every 4-5 years may be too infrequent. WCS stands ready to work with the Secretariat, Scientific Council, Parties, and other partners/stakeholders on such analyses.

21.2 Assessment of the risk posed to CMS Appendix I-listed species by direct use and trade

WCS greatly appreciates this document, and all the data and analyses in it. It is vital for Parties to fully implement their obligations under CMS when allowing or managing the domestic exploitation, offtake, and use of CMS-listed species, and when allowing domestic or international trade in CMS-listed species. In particular, the information provided in the report clearly shows weak implementation of the CMS requirements for Appendix I-listed species, in terms of international trade. We greatly appreciate the focus on domestic use, exploitation, and trade, as no other Convention exists with this specific focus (for example, CITES only relates to international trade in listed species). Unfortunately, many CMS-listed species (whether Appendix I, II, or both) are significantly threatened by over-exploitation. We appreciate and call attention to Information document 41 (UNEP/CMS/COP14/Inf.41), "In depth review of the conservation status of individual CMS Appendix I-listed species", which lists all CMS Appendix I-listed species, and the CITES Appendix they are included in (or whether they are unlisted on CITES). It is vital that those CMS Parties that are also CITES Parties (all but 3 of the 133 CMS Parties)

fully incorporate and comply with their CMS obligations, when issuing their mandatory non-detriment and legal acquisition findings under CITES.

We urge Parties to adopt a decision or resolution at CoP14 clearly highlighting the obligations of Parties pursuant to Article III paragraph 5 of the CMS treaty¹, and that use or trade of species included in CMS Appendix I constitutes non-compliance with the Convention, with very limited exceptions (independent of a species' inclusion or non-inclusion on any of the CITES Appendices). We also urge Parties, when discussing the direct use of species, to use the term “offtake” or “use” rather than “harvest”, which is not applicable to all CMS taxa and implies commercial, managed offtake that may not be relevant in all cases (for example, exploitation of marine and freshwater species is referred to as “catch” or “fishing”, rather than “harvest”; harvest has a very agricultural context).

We recommend that Parties to CMS which are also Parties to CITES, consider inclusion on the CITES Appendices of any CMS Appendix I-listed species that is subject to international trade, as highlighted in this report. Furthermore, we encourage all Parties to record all trade in wild animals (captive-bred or wild-caught, CMS or CITES listed), to enable proper assessments of the impact and extent of trade.

21.3 In-depth review of the conservation status of individual CMS-listed species

WCS greatly appreciates all of the work on analyzing and reporting the conservation status of migratory species. We welcome the updating of this document, to include comments and recommendations from the Sessional Committee of the Scientific Council, which we participated in. Of the 10 taxa reviewed in this document, 4 are species WCS works on: *Vicugna vicugna* (Vicuña), *Podocnemis expansa* (South American river turtle), *Loxodonta cyclotis* (African forest elephant), *Sphyrna lewini* (Scalloped hammerhead shark). This is a very useful report, and project, which should be very helpful to governments in their prioritization processes, and development and implementation of species management plans. We look forward to discussing this further at CoP14.

23. National reports

WCS appreciates the efforts of many Parties to submit their National Reports in advance of CoP13. We note several key messages of the UNEP-WCMC analysis of National Reports in Annex 3, including that there remain significant legislative gaps at the national or domestic level with respect to prohibiting take of, or trade in, species in CMS Appendix I. Failure to prohibit the take of, or trade in, CMS Appendix I species must be recognized by Parties as a serious compliance issue that undermines the efforts of other Parties and the effectiveness of the Convention. We also note the finding of UNEP-WCMC that Parties have generally made limited progress towards tackling harmful incentives, including subsidies that are detrimental to migratory species and their habitats. As noted above, we must seek to reverse the decline of migratory species through a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach, realigning our economic systems to be nature positive. Parties should amend national report templates taking into consideration such gaps to inform a discussion among Parties ahead of CMS CoP15. This will likely take place through strengthening the national legislation programme (see below). Improving such aspects of national compliance must figure into the new strategic plan and into discussions of a strengthened review mechanism.

¹ Article III para 5: “Parties that are Range States of a migratory species listed in Appendix I shall prohibit the taking of animals belonging to such species. Exceptions may be made to this prohibition only if: a) the taking is for scientific purposes; b) the taking is for the purpose of enhancing the propagation or survival of the affected species; c) the taking is to accommodate the needs of traditional subsistence users of such species; or d) extraordinary circumstances so require”.

26. Definition of the terms 'Range State' and 'Vagrant'

This is a complex issue. A Working Group on this issue concluded that Parties would benefit from guidance to support them in assessing whether a species/population should be considered vagrant in their country, as this may have implications with regard to their responsibilities under CMS as a Range State. We appreciate the detailed discussion of this document during the meeting of the SCSC in July 2023, which we attended and participated in actively.

We appreciate the hard work that went into producing the draft guidance, but also note that the SCSC did not agree to recommend the guidance for adoption by the CoP. We recommend that the draft guidance **not** be adopted by CoP14; we concur with several Parties and Scientific Council members, who recommended at the SCSC meeting that the problem must be understood more fully before trying to "fix" it.

WCS notes that there are some very useful elements in the draft guidance. However, as species change their range and movement patterns due to climate change impacts, Parties may declare them as vagrant, which may preclude conservation measures for the species. With climate change, or even assisted colonization, populations thought to be vagrants may become established, often within the historical range of the species. The issue may be far too fluid for draft guidance at this time.

We also believe that if a population or species is determined by a country to be a vagrant, that should not mean it ignores the species, and should not monitor and ideally conserve it; we suggest recommending that Parties monitor all populations of CMS-listed species.

27. Aquatic species conservation issues

27.1. Fisheries-induced threats

27.1.1 Bycatch

This is an outstanding document, with important information on regulatory and technical bycatch mitigation for cetaceans, marine turtles, and sharks, with clear recommendations. The annex on bycatch mitigation for sharks is detailed, complete, and scientifically sound, and the recommendations on mitigating shark bycatch are excellent; WCS supports them all. We concur that CMS should contribute its expertise and convening power to significantly reduce bycatch in small-scale or artisanal fisheries that threaten several CMS Appendix-listed species, recognizing that a different suite of conservation solutions will be needed to address bycatch in small-scale versus commercial fisheries. WCS recommends adoption of the draft decisions in the document.

27.2.2 Marine noise

Anthropogenic marine noise, including from marine seismic surveys and commercial shipping, is an increasingly major threat to many marine species, and in particular threatens the conservation of many cetaceans and other marine mammals included on the CMS Appendices. WCS and key partners from IUCN, governments and the private sector launched a multi-disciplinary partnership, "The Global Alliance for Managing Ocean Noise" (GAMEON), that enlists industry, government, academia and NGOs to use research and technology to monitor and mitigate ocean noise impacts and inform policy. We call attention to Target 7 of the GBF, in which Parties committed to tackling pollution from all sources that negatively impacts biodiversity, ecosystems, and their contributions to human wellbeing. With respect to document 27.2.2, we recommend an additional sub-paragraph d.dis under draft decision 14.AA that would read "explicitly consider and address threats from marine noise pollution in the development of national targets and strategies aligned with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework."

27.4 Area-based Conservation Management

27.4.1 Important Marine Mammal Areas

WCS appreciates all of the tremendous work that has been done on the identification of IMMAs, including for CMS-listed marine mammals. WCS recommends adoption of the draft Decisions in the Annex to this document, with the suggested amendments from the Scientific Council, through the SCSC at its July 2023 meeting. We urge Parties to use IMMAs (in addition to ISRAs and other tools) in the implementation of the relevant area-based targets of the GBF.

27.4.2 Important Shark and Ray Areas (ISRAs)

WCS strongly supports and welcomes this initiative, and the work and leadership of the IUCN Species Survival Commission's Shark Specialist Group (SSG). We value this science-based identification of areas that are important for the conservation of sharks and rays, and we believe it is best kept distinct from Important Marine Mammal Areas. We welcome the updating of this document, to include comments and recommendations from the July 2023 meeting of the Sessional Committee of the Scientific Council (SCSC), which we participated in, and we support the recommendations in Document 27.4.2/Add.1.

WCS recommends adoption of the Draft Resolution and Draft Decisions in Document 27.4.2/Rev1/Annex 1, with these amendments: The SCSC recommended including the KBA Partnership in operative paragraph 5 (in addition to CBD and the International Maritime Organization), but that text has not been included. In draft decision 14.AA, we recommend inclusion of GBF Target 1 in addition to Target 3 (as was recommended by the SCSC). The use of the publicly available ISRA data will greatly enhance the spatial planning in Target 1, including ecological integrity and connectivity, in addition to area-based conservation measures in Target 3; indeed, and not only for sharks and rays, Target 3 cannot effectively be implemented without implementation of Target 1. We support the recommendations of the SCSC for draft decisions 14.CC and 14.DD as well, and we urge their inclusion.

27.5. Marine Mammals

27.5.1 Conservation priorities for cetaceans

WCS appreciates this document, including the many excellent recommendations therein. We also appreciate the excellent review, analysis, and recommendations in Information Document 27.5.1a. WCS recommends adoption of the draft resolution and draft decisions in this document. WCS has extensive field programs and scientific research on cetaceans across the globe, and staff serving as Cetacean Specialist Group regional coordinators; we have staff scientists with particular expertise in cetacean genetics, impacts of anthropogenic noise, acoustic monitoring of cetaceans, and Arctic and Latin American species. We look forward to continuing to work with CMS Parties, IGOs, NGOs, and others on cetacean conservation.

27.7 Fish

27.7.2 Freshwater fish, including the European Eel

WCS appreciates this document, and the attention of CMS Parties to the conservation of migratory freshwater fish species. WCS collaborates closely with national and regional governments, Indigenous Peoples organizations, civil society, and local communities in the conservation of migratory species of the Amazon Basin, and other river systems. We strongly support the adoption of the proposals under

consideration at CoP14 (see below) for inclusion of *Brachyplatystoma rousseauxii* and *Brachyplatystoma vaillantii* in CMS Appendix II, and the enhanced conservation and management collaboration across the entire migratory routes of these two highly migratory freshwater catfish species. We recommend adoption of the draft decisions in this document, and the enhanced attention within CMS to the conservation of migratory freshwater fish.

27.7.3 Implementation of the CMS Appendix-I listing for the Oceanic Whitetip Shark (*Carcharhinus longimanus*)

WCS appreciates this document from the Maldives on the Oceanic Whitetip Shark, a CMS Appendix-I species that is listed as ‘Critically Endangered’ globally on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. The document discusses the continued presence of Oceanic Whitetip Sharks in international trade, and thereby take and trade on a global scale (in spite of its precarious conservation status, inclusion on CMS Appendix-I, management measures in RFMOs, and national management measures. The Maldives submitted a draft Concerted Action that was discussed at the meeting of the SCSC in July 2023. The SCSC recommended that the Maldives submit draft Decisions instead, which the Maldives has done. WCS appreciates the flexibility of the Maldives, as well as its continued commitment to the conservation of this species, as well as many other shark species. WCS strongly recommends adoption of the draft Decisions in the Annex to this document, which will help promote enhanced compliance with the Appendix I listing of the Oceanic Whitetip Shark. We note that draft Decision 14.AA calls on Parties to “...provide to the CMS Secretariat information on their domestic and regional management measures for the oceanic whitetip shark – clarifying how they meet the objectives of the CMS Appendix I listing.” We support this strongly, but suggest that it could be “meet the objectives and obligations of the CMS Appendix I listing”.

28. Avian species conservation issues

28.4 Flyways

28.4.2 Initiative for Central Asian Flyway

WCS appreciates this document from India and supports the proposed establishment of the Central Asian Flyway Initiative. We look forward to working with Parties and others at the CoP to improve the text of the resolution, Terms of Reference, and draft decisions; we also look forward to working with governments and other stakeholders in Central Asia on this flyway initiative.

29. Terrestrial species conservation issues

29.1 Joint CITES-CMS African Carnivores Initiative (ACI)

WCS appreciates the document, which summarizes the work of the ACI, and we support the recommendations therein. WCS experts were pleased to have attended the 2nd Meeting of Range States of the Joint CITES-CMS African Carnivores Initiative in Entebbe, Uganda, 1-4 May 2023.

WCS recommends that Parties adopt the draft Decisions this document. WCS supports the ACI as a means of collaboration between Range States, multilateral environmental agreements, and conservation organizations to facilitate the conservation of the African lion (*Panthera leo*), cheetah (*Acinonyx jubatus*), leopard (*Panthera pardus*) and wild dog (*Lycaon pictus*). We note that this work also will deliver on relevant targets of the GBF.

WCS operates the largest and longest standing NGO field conservation program in Africa, with science-based projects in: Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Republic of the Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Kenya, Madagascar, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda. Our primary field focus for the ACI species is on lion conservation,

and we collaborate closely with Range States across the range of the lion. We look forward to further engagement with Range States, and through CMS CoP14, the CMS Scientific Council, and CITES policy processes.

29.3 Central Asian Mammals Initiative

WCS welcomes this document, which summarizes all the work of CAMI (Secretariat, Parties, other partners) since CMS CoP13, and includes recommended draft decisions. WCS recommends adoption of these decisions. We look forward to continuing to work with CAMI Range States and other partners on the conservation of species covered by CAMI, and their habitats. WCS has conservation programmes benefiting several of the CAMI species and works in many Central Asian countries. WCS is also a signatory to the Saiga MoU and works actively on the conservation of Saiga in Mongolia, and on efforts to combat trafficking in Saiga horn and derivatives across Asia.

We value the contribution of CAMI to strengthening the conservation of Central Asian migratory mammals, through provision of a common framework to coordinate conservation activities in the region and to coherently address major threats to migratory species. In addition to species-specific actions, this initiative facilitates focus on spatial planning and mitigation of the impacts of linear infrastructure, and managing the wildlife-livestock-human health interface, as critical conservation challenges in this region.

29.4 African Elephant

29.4.1 African Elephant Action Plan (AEAP)

The document summarizes the AEAP, and recommends some minor edits to Resolution 12.19. WCS recommends adoption of the proposed amendments to the resolution, as well as the amendments recommended by the SCSC at its July 2023 meeting. WCS appreciates that the updated AEAP is a Range State product, and represents the consensus views and priorities of the Range States of *Loxodonta africana* and *Loxodonta cyclotis*, and their assessment of the most urgent activities needed to protect and conserve elephants of both species across their range in Africa. WCS has active field programmes focused on African elephants in 12 Range States of these species and looks forward to continuing to work with Range States, local communities, IGOs, other NGOs, and civil society to continue to enhance the conservation status of African forest and savannah elephants.

29.4.2 West African Elephant MoU

The document summarizes the consensus decision of the signatories to the West African Elephant MoU, to adopt the AEAP as the core strategy for African Elephant conservation under the MoU and implementing the AEAP and the African Elephant Fund structure. They agreed that signatories will implement the provisions of the AEAP as the basis for conserving all populations of the species in West Africa, with a focus on conserving transboundary populations and prioritizing the implementation of transboundary conservation activities through the development of projects and fundraising proposals. The Signatories also agreed that the MoU would endorse the scientific consensus and recognize the African Elephant as two distinct species (*Loxodonta africana* and *Loxodonta cyclotis*). WCS supports these decisions by the MoU signatories and looks forward to continuing to work with African elephant Range States on the conservation of both species of African elephants.

29.6 Jaguar

29.6.1 Conservation measures

29.6.2/Rev. 1 Initiative for the Jaguar

WCS appreciates the attention to the conservation of the jaguar across its vast range. We appreciate Doc. 29.6.1 from the Secretariat, and support adoption of the 4 draft Decisions therein (as did the SCSC). We also greatly appreciate Document 29.6.2/Rev.1, submitted by Costa Rica, Argentina, Brazil, Ecuador, Panama, Peru and Paraguay, all jaguar Range States. That document contains 5 draft Decisions and a draft Resolution, in Annexes 1 and 2, and we strongly recommend their adoption. Doc. 29.6.2/Rev.1 introduces the CMS Jaguar Initiative, which we strongly support, as an innovative, ambitious initiative for the conservation of this iconic species.

WCS recalls with appreciation the consensus adoption at CMS CoP14 of the proposal submitted by Costa Rica, Argentina, Bolivia, Paraguay, Peru, and Uruguay to include the jaguar on CMS Appendices I and II, and the collaborative work on the conservation of the jaguar that has ensued. WCS is a member of the 2030 Jaguar Roadmap Coordination Committee, a unique effort that unites 16 governments of countries in the jaguar range, NGOs, IGOs, local communities, and the private sector to jointly ensure the conservation of jaguars, and the ecological integrity and connectivity of associated priority landscapes across their range.

The jaguar is an emblematic species of the Americas, due to both its importance in maintaining natural landscapes and ecosystem functionality, and because its presence can be a metric of conservation objectives attained. Jaguars are the apex predator across much of the Western Hemisphere, and have been an important element of indigenous cultures in the Americas for centuries. Today, the jaguar is threatened by habitat loss and degradation, direct persecution, poaching, illegal trade, and declines in prey populations.

WCS works to protect jaguars in eight large wild landscapes across eight Latin American countries, working with partners to secure large, well-protected high integrity areas for jaguars and their prey; ensuring connectivity between those areas; and collaborating with the communities that live in these landscapes to help meet their needs while improving conditions for jaguars and other wildlife. We look forward to adoption of the CMS Jaguar Initiative, and to continued collaboration with Parties, IGOs, NGOs, communities, and all stakeholders. We encourage CoP14 attendees to attend the side event on this species on Monday, the 12th of February.

29.7 Pastoralism

WCS appreciates this document supports work on this issue, and recommends inclusion of issues that relate to transhumance as well. WCS notes the July 2023 meeting in Yaoundé, Cameroon of the [“Second International Conference of Ministers on Transboundary Transhumance Nexus: transhumance, protected areas and natural resources, development, peace and security”](#). The conference was organized by the Congo Basin Forest Partnership (CBFP) in close collaboration with the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the Central African Forest Commission (COMIFAC) and Cameroon, with the financial support of the German Government. The Ministerial Conference [Communique](#) recommend that States: “Carry out studies at country level to assess the impact of transhumance on security, biodiversity, well-being and the risk of zoonotic diseases emerging at the interface human, wildlife and livestock”.

In this context, we recommend amending Decisions 14.AA and 14.BB as follows:

14.AA Parties are requested to:

- a) carry out studies at the national level to assess the impact of transhumance on security, biodiversity, well-being, and the risk of zoonotic disease emergence at the human/wildlife/livestock interface; and
- b) submit to the Secretariat information on these studies and national measures for rangeland management and pastoralism and share information on challenges, lessons learned and needs for further capacity development.

14.BB The Scientific Council is requested, subject to the availability of external resources, to establish a multi-stakeholder Working Group on pastoralism and CMS-listed species, composed of stakeholders with experience and knowledge on transhumance, managing rangelands, pastoralism and wildlife. The Working Group is asked to:

- a) Analyse available information relevant to pastoralism, the impact of transhumance on security, biodiversity, well-being, and the risk of zoonotic disease emergence at the human/wildlife/livestock interface; and potential impacts on CMS-listed species, including existing models and best practice case studies and the compilation of responses received by the Secretariat under Decision 14.AA;
- b) Provide recommendations to support Parties in addressing the impact of pastoralism and transhumance on CMS-listed species.

30. Crosscutting conservation issues

30.1 Intentional take

30.1.1 Priorities for addressing illegal and unsustainable taking of migratory species

WCS supports adoption of these amendments, but also strongly urges Parties to include all of the amendments to Reso. 11.31 that were proposed by the SCSC, and thereby the Scientific Council, at its July 2023 meeting, and can be found in Doc. 30.1.1/Add.1. WCS greatly appreciates this document, and the efforts of the Secretariat in drafting it; the document discusses the increasing threat of unsustainable and illegal use and removal from the wild to migratory species of wild animals. It also proposes amendments to Resolution 11.31 and Decisions to address these issues. We do not find those recommended amendments in Document 30.1.1 Rev.1, and strongly encourage their inclusion in their entirety. WCS also recommends adoption of the draft decisions in Annex 2 of this document, also with the amendments recommended by the SCSC.

We also encourage Parties to consider inclusion in the amended resolution, reference to engagement with the UN Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) and the UN Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC), since illegal take of migratory animal species and associated crime and corruption are also relevant to CMS implementation.

Implementation of this resolution, and addressing illegal and unsustainable take of migratory species, is critical to implementation of the GBF as well, and we strongly urge Parties to prioritize this work (particularly but not exclusively in the context of Target 5 of the GBF). There is a lot of attention by governments to illegal international trade in wildlife, and to CITES implementation, but many migratory animal species are not listed on the CITES Appendices, and many are subject to highly detrimental illegal and/or unsustainable domestic use as well. Indeed, all international trade starts with domestic

take and use, and as such this issue should be seen as a domestic priority. We therefore encourage increased attention by CMS (Parties, Secretariat, and partner organizations) to the prevention of both illegal and unsustainable use and take of CMS-listed species.

30.1.3 Terrestrial and avian wild meat

WCS greatly appreciates this document, and the efforts of the Secretariat in drafting it. The document is an important and useful summary of the take and use of terrestrial migratory animal species for wild meat, which is both an increasing threat for many CMS-listed species and poses a risk of pathogen spillover to humans and other animals. This is a significant part of the broader suite of issues related to intentional taking of migratory species, as discussed in Doc. 30.1.1. The document recommends adoption of the draft decisions in Annex 2 of Document Doc.30.1.1. As discussed above, WCS supports adoption of these draft decisions, but also strongly urges Parties to include all of the amendments to these draft decisions that were proposed by the SCSC, and thereby the Scientific Council, at its July 2023 meeting, and can be found in Documents 30.1.1/Add.1 and 30.1.3/Add.1.

WCS contributed to, and appreciates, the report that is cited in the document. We work on this issue extensively through our country and field programmes across the globe, including in particular through the Sustainable Wildlife Management (SWM) Programme (a partnership between FAO, CIRAD, CIFOR, and FAO), funded by the European Union with co-funding from FFEM and AFD.

We wish to highlight that the report shows that, in addition to the threat to species and the subsistence needs of local communities, there is strong evidence that pathogen spillover and zoonotic disease emergence are linked to human activities that bring wildlife, domestic animals and humans into increasingly intense contact, including encroachment into natural habitats and contact with live wild animals (particularly birds and mammals) for domestic use and trade to commercial markets for human consumption. Therefore, we strongly urge Parties to take all necessary action to reduce the human/wildlife interface, particularly through closure of, or strong regulatory actions relevant to, large commercial urban markets for live wild animals, while at the same time working to ensure the health, safety, and nutritional needs of Indigenous Peoples and local communities.

30.2 Conservation planning and management

30.2.1 Ecological Connectivity

30.2.1.1 Ecological Connectivity – Policy Aspects

30.2.1.2 Ecological Connectivity – Technical Aspects

WCS welcomes and appreciates both excellent documents, and the tremendous efforts by the CMS Secretariat, Parties, NGOs, and others to ensure that connectivity, a major issue for migratory species, is prioritized. WCS recognizes that connectivity is a key element in ecological integrity and welcomes the inclusion of both connectivity and ecological integrity in the GBF, and strongly urges Parties and other stakeholders to prioritize both, particularly in spatial planning and the adoption of area-based conservation measures.

WCS was pleased to have been a member of the CMS intersessional Working Group on connectivity and collaborated in advocacy to include connectivity in the GBF. We also appreciate the collaboration between the Secretariat and the Center for Large Landscape Conservation, the IUCN WCPA, and the WCPA Connectivity Conservation Specialist Group. We also appreciate the global partnership on GBF Target 3, developed jointly by the CBD Secretariat and the IUCN WCPA (of which we are a partner), and look forward to its contribution to prioritization of connectivity, and ecological integrity, in GBF implementation.

WCS recommends adoption of the draft consolidated Resolution contained in Annex 2 of this document, with some recommended edits; we recommend the adoption of the draft Decisions in Annex 3. Some of our suggestions are as follows; we look forward to working with Parties at CoP14 on this important resolution.

- We value the inclusion of recognition of [KBAs](#) in the 25th preambular paragraph. However, many countries have yet to fully identify KBAs using the most recent [Standard](#); it could be useful to add text in the operative part of the resolution recommending that Parties that have not yet done so, work with partners, including the [KBA Partnership](#), to establish national KBA Coordination Groups and identify their country's KBAs as part of spatial planning.
- In the penultimate preambular paragraph, the text states that ecological integrity is implicit in Target 1. We note that Target 1 highlights ecological integrity, of which connectivity is a key element. Therefore, it might be better for this paragraph to state (added text is underscored), “*Noting that Goal A, and Targets 1, 2, 3 and 12 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework include effective language on ecological connectivity and ecological integrity, and that it is implicit in Target 1;*”
- In new operative paragraph 4, we recommend inclusion of “and ecological integrity” after “manifested as threats to connectivity”.
- The draft consolidated resolution deletes reference to guidelines prepared by IUCN. We recommend inclusion of an operative paragraph inviting Parties to use existing guidelines, particularly those developed by the IUCN WCPA.

30.3 Infrastructure

30.3.1 Infrastructure and impact assessment

WCS was pleased to contribute to the Guidelines for Addressing the Impact of Linear Infrastructure on Large Migratory Mammals in Central Asia, and to work closely with relevant range States and the CMS Secretariat on the Central Asian Mammals Migration and Linear Infrastructure Atlas. We note that this has already been a useful tool for Parties and has been able to guide decisions on infrastructure that have helped maintain the integrity and connectivity of key habitat for species like the Saiga antelope. This issue is highly relevant across many CMS Parties and geographies. We would be pleased to join a working group under the Scientific Council on linear infrastructure and review/develop options to mitigate the impacts of linear infrastructure on migratory species.

We appreciate the progress noted in Document 30.3.1. We recommend the adoption of the proposed amendments to Resolution 7.2 (Rev. CoP12) and particularly the amendments in paragraphs 1, 4-bis, 4-quater. We would be pleased to join the working group on this issue, particularly to assess the implementation of the Guidelines referenced above.

30.4 Threats

30.4.3 Wildlife disease

WCS greatly appreciates this excellent document, and the attention of the Secretariat, Parties, and the Scientific Council to issues of wildlife health, disease, and pathogen spillovers. The document includes proposed amendments to Resolution 12.6, a proposed new Resolution on Avian Influenza, and draft decisions.

We note that wildlife may not show morbidity, mortality, or any signs of disease, but may carry pathogens with potential to spill over, often mutate, and infect other wildlife, livestock, or people, which can lead to epidemics or pandemics, or serious disease implications in other wildlife. This is noted in the document, but bears highlighting. We also note that the document and draft resolution

highlight the need for disease surveillance; whilst valid, there is also a significant need for pathogen surveillance. We appreciate that attention in the document to livestock/wildlife interactions and disease. Additionally, although the document notes the significant risk from live wildlife markets, we encourage specific reference to large commercial urban markets for live wildlife, particularly birds and mammals for human consumption, as posing serious risk of pathogen spillovers, and the need for governments to consider closing such markets as key to prevention of pandemics at source (whilst recognizing and ensuring the food security and cultural needs of those Indigenous Peoples and local communities that are dependent on wildlife).

The full review of this issue, Document [COP14/Inf.30.4.3](#), was not yet available when this briefing was prepared; we look forward to seeing it and contributing further on this important issue. WCS appreciates the inclusion of recommendations of the Scientific Council, through the SCSC, and we recommend that Parties adopt the amendments to the resolution, the draft Avian Influenza resolution, and the draft Decisions, with some small modifications:

- In preambular paragraph 12 of proposed revised Reso. 12.6, a new paragraph states, “*Further noting* that transmission of disease from wildlife is often related to changes in human activities and, while novel or unusual zoonotic pathogens of wildlife pose a pandemic or other risks to people, the source of the majority of zoonotic infections is from livestock and/or companion animals”. Even if the majority of zoonoses originate from livestock, as we have learned from the COVID19 pandemic, the risk to human health from avoidable spillover events can be catastrophic.
We suggest adding, “, nevertheless, pathogen spillover and any zoonotic infections from novel pathogens directly from wildlife pose a significant risk to wildlife, livestock, and people.”
- Operative paragraph 1 of proposed revised Reso. 12.6 includes several actions to address the drivers of population decline and disease emergence. We recommend inclusion of “preventing over-exploitation” and “reducing the wildlife/livestock/human interface”.
- Operative paragraph 2 of proposed revised Reso. 12.6 refers to “pathogen pollution to wildlife”. We recommend changing the paragraph to refer directly to pathogen spillovers and to include live wildlife markets, to read (additions underscored):
Urges Parties and others to minimize the risk of infectious disease risks to wildlife and pathogen spillover by:
 - b) endeavouring to prevent ~~additional sources of pathogen spillover pollution to and from wildlife and their environment~~ from feral or otherwise released animals, from legally and illegally traded plants and animals (particularly for urban markets), and from invasive non-native species, recognizing, at all times, the value of preventative approaches, and
 - c) focusing efforts on reducing or otherwise managing those practices that are high risk for pathogen transfer and drivers ~~for~~ of pathogen change;
- Operative paragraph 12 of the proposed revised Reso. 12.6 urges the Secretariat and Parties to engage with the WHO intergovernmental negotiating body. We note that Parties are engaged, but Environment/Wildlife Ministries, and CMS focal points, need to engage as well. We suggest the following amendments:
Urges the Secretariat, CMS focal points, and Party Environment Ministries and Parties to engage with the WHO intergovernmental negotiating body to ensure that One Health approaches, wildlife issues, and pandemic prevention at source, are reflected in the WHO convention, agreement or other international instrument on pandemic prevention, preparedness and response under negotiation;
We recommend similar modifications to draft Decision 14.AA, particularly to encourage Environment/Wildlife Ministries to engage with their Health Ministries on the ongoing WHO negotiations.

31. Amendment of the Appendices

31.4 Proposals for amendment of Appendices I and II of the Convention

WCS hereby submits the following recommendations to the Parties regarding a few proposals to amend the CMS Appendices. We have not included recommendations for species we do not work on, or those that are found exclusively in countries where we do not work (although we may indeed recommend their adoption). We also are still analyzing some proposals and consulting our field experts, and may have updated recommendations to share with Parties during CoP14.

31.4.3 Proposal for the inclusion of the Guanaco (*Lama guanicoe*) in Appendix II

WCS appreciates the submission by the Range States of Bolivia, Chile, Paraguay, and Peru of this proposal to include the guanaco in Appendix II, and the support of the Scientific Council for its adoption. WCS strongly recommends adoption of this proposal; the species meets the CMS Criteria for inclusion in Appendix II. WCS looks forward to adoption of this proposal, and continued collaboration with the Range States of the guanaco and local communities, particularly in the conservation and management of habitats throughout the species' range, efforts to combat illegal use and trade, and efforts to effectively and equitably conserve and manage shared populations.

We encourage CoP14 attendees to attend the side event on this species on Tuesday, the 13th of February.

31.4.9 Proposal for the inclusion of the Sand Tiger Shark (*Carcharias taurus*) in Appendix I and II

WCS appreciates the submission by Brazil and Panama of this proposal to include the sand tiger shark (*Carcharias taurus*) in Appendices I and II, as an important contribution to the conservation of this Critically Endangered species. We also appreciate the analysis of listing proposals for sharks and rays, provided by the Sharks MOU Advisory Committee, and the conclusion of the Scientific Council through the SCSC that the species “meets the criteria for inclusion in Appendix I and II, with reference to its regular and cyclical migratory behaviour associated with seasonal and reproductive events in most areas along its range distribution, as well as to its conservation status as a globally ‘Critically Endangered’ species”. We further note that the SCSC did not reach consensus on whether the two Australian populations qualify as migratory in accordance with the CMS definition. We note therefore with appreciation that the proponents have effectively modified the proposal to address the concerns of the Scientific Council. WCS strongly recommends adoption of this proposal; the species meets the CMS Criteria for inclusion in both Appendix I and II. We invite CoP14 attendees to attend the side event on this species and this proposal, on Tuesday, the 13th of February.

31.4.10 Proposal for the inclusion of the Blackchin Guitarfish (*Glaucostegus cemiculus*) in Appendix II and the Mediterranean Sea population of this species in Appendix I

WCS recommends adoption of this proposal.

31.4.11 Proposal for the inclusion of the Bull Ray (*Aetomylaeus bovinus*) in Appendix II and the Mediterranean Sea population of this species in Appendix I

WCS recommends adoption of this proposal.

31.4.12 Proposal for the Inclusion of the Lusitanian Cownose Ray (*Rhinoptera marginata*) in Appendix II and the Mediterranean Sea Population of this Species in Appendix I

WCS recommends adoption of this proposal.

**31.4.13 Proposal for the inclusion of the Gilded Catfish (*Brachyplatystoma rousseauxii*) in Appendix II and
31.4.14 Proposal for the inclusion of the Laulao Catfish or Piraqueta (*Brachyplatystoma vaillantii*) in Appendix II**

WCS appreciates the submission by Brazil and Panama of the proposals to include the Gilded Catfish (dorado in Spanish, dourada in Portuguese; *Brachyplatystoma rousseauxii*) and the Laulao Catfish (manitoa in Spanish, piramutaba in Portuguese; *Brachyplatystoma vaillantii*) in Appendix II, as an important contribution to the conservation of these species. We also appreciate the determination of the Scientific Council through the SCSC that both species meet the criteria for inclusion in Appendix II. WCS strongly recommends adoption of both proposals.

The dorado and manitoa are giant migratory catfish native to Brazil, Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, French Guiana, Guyana, Suriname, Peru and Venezuela, whose distributions extend across the vast Amazon and Orinoco River basins. The species epitomize the health and connectivity of Amazonian freshwater ecosystems, as well as the needs, well-being, and livelihoods of the peoples of the Amazon Basin.

The migratory movements of the dorado catfish, for example, are widely recognized in the Amazon Basin, where this unique species migrates in the world's largest continental waters. This extraordinary migratory journey spans an astonishing distance of more than 11,000 kilometers round trip, from spawning areas in the Andes piedmont to the estuary nursery areas at the mouth of the Amazon River in the Atlantic Ocean. The dorado was recently assessed as Vulnerable on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species due to the construction of hydroelectric dams and overexploitation.

These two highly migratory species are very important in the commercial fisheries of the Amazon, and their inclusion on CMS Appendix II will help promote and ensure increased collaborative, equitable, community-focused conservation, monitoring and effective management measures across the species' range. The dorado is already declining, and the further decline of both of these long-distance migratory species would undermine not only the livelihoods and food security of peoples of the Amazon, but freshwater biodiversity of the entire basin.

There is a great deal of discussion in documents prepared for CoP14 on ecological connectivity. No species symbolize the value of retaining and protecting habitat connectivity and ecological integrity than these two migratory giant catfish.

Many people think of the Amazon as a vast highly intact tropical forest, but it is also the largest freshwater system in the world; it is the most biologically diverse place on Earth, and home to hundreds of Indigenous Peoples and traditional cultures, and its connectivity is through its waters. The conservation of these two catfish, across their entire migratory route from the Andes to the Atlantic Ocean, can serve as a flagship for the entire ecosystem. WCS teams in the region are pleased to work with governments, Indigenous Peoples, local communities, universities, and other partners on the conservation of the waters and freshwater species of the Amazon. We invite CoP14 attendees to join us at our side event on these species, and how they truly connect the Amazon basin, on Tuesday, the 13th of February.

32.1 Concerted Actions

32.2 Assessment of progress in the implementation of Concerted Actions and possible proposals for their extension

32.2.2 Report on the implementation of the Concerted Action for the Giraffe (*Giraffa camelopardalis*)

WCS appreciates the impediments to implementation of this Concerted Action, particularly due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We agree with the recommendation to renew this Concerted Action, as also recommended by the SCSC.

32.2.3 Report on the implementation of the Concerted Action for the Humpback Whales (*Megaptera novaeangliae*) of the Arabian Sea

WCS appreciates the continuing conservation on the humpback whales of the Arabian Sea, and we are pleased to be part of the Arabian Sea Whale Network. We support the recommendation in the document, and of the SCSC, to extend this Concerted Action for the next triennium.

32.2.9 Report on the implementation of the Concerted Action for the Common Guitarfish (*Rhinobatos rhinobatos*) and the Bottlenose Wedgefish (*Rhynchobatus australiae*)

WCS appreciates this report from the IUCN SSC Shark Specialist Group (SSG) on the implementation of the Concerted Action for *Rhinobatos rhinobatos* and *Rhynchobatus australiae*. We agree with the recommendation of the SSG, and the concurrence of the SCSC, to renew the Concerted Action for the Common Guitarfish and Bottlenose Wedgefish as proposed in Annex 1.

Annex: Acronyms

ACI	African Carnivores Initiative (of CMS and CITES)
AFD	French Development Agency
CAMI	Central Asian Mammals Initiative
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CIFOR	Center for International Forestry Research
CIRAD	French Agricultural Research Centre for International Development
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
CoP	meeting of the Conference of the Parties
CoP14	14 th meeting of the CMS CoP (February 2024, Samarkand)
EBSA	Ecologically or Biologically Significant Area
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FFEM	French Facility for Global Environment
GBF	Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework
KBA	Key Biodiversity Area
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
RFMO	Regional Fisheries Management Organization
SCSC	Sessional Committee of the Scientific Council
SSG	IUCN Species Survival Commission Shark Specialist Group
WCPA	IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas