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NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Delegations

Subject: AOB for the meeting of the Council (Environment) on 25 June 2026
Fifteenth Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Migratory
Species of Wild Animals (CMS COP 15) (Campo Grande, Brazil, 23 - 29
March 2026)
– Information from the Presidency and the Commission

CMS COP15 was held in Campo Grande, Brazil, from 23 to 29 March 2026 under the theme “Connecting Nature to Sustain Life”.

Over 2000 people attended COP15, including delegates representing 76 Parties (of which 60 with proper credentials), as well as United Nations agencies, international and national NGOs and media. Attendance was somewhat lower than expected due to the hostilities in the Middle East and the lack of funds to sponsor delegations from developing countries.

The urgency of action was underlined by an update to the **State of the World’s Migratory Species** presented at the COP. The updated report showed that 49% of migratory species populations conserved by CMS are declining, (5% increase since 2024), and 24% of species face extinction (2% increase).

COP15 decided on one hand on the listing proposals to add or remove species from the CMS Appendices as well as on concerted actions on listed species. On the other hand, it addressed several key issues affecting migratory species.

Forty new species, subspecies, and populations were added to the CMS Appendices at COP15:

In **Appendix I**, comprising migratory species in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of their range, and where take is not allowed after listing, the following was added: the Pelagic Thresher, Bigeye Thresher, Common Thresher, Scalloped Hammerhead Shark, Great Hammerhead Shark, Lesser Yellowlegs, Hudsonian Godwit, Hudsonian Whimbrel, nine species of Gadfly Petrel (Barau's, Vanuatu, Black-capped, Zino's, Magenta, Atlantic, Fiji, Mascarene, and Beck's), Striped Hyena, Giant Otter, and the Zimbabwe population of Cheetah.

In **Appendix II**, comprising migratory species that have an unfavourable conservation status and require international cooperation for their conservation and management, the following was added: the Zimbabwe population of Cheetah, Striped Hyena, and Giant Otter, Flesh-footed Shearwater, Snowy Owl, Ibera Seedeater, Patagonian Narrownose Smoothhound, Spotted Sorubim, and seventeen species or populations of Gadfly Petrels (Tahiti petrel, Phoenix petrel, Trindade petrel, Chatham petrel, Collared petrel, White-necked petrel, Northern Cook's petrel, Southern Cook's petrel, Masatierra petrel, Desertas petrel, Juan Fernandez petrel, Cape Verde petrel, Gould's petrel (white winged); Gould's petrel (New Caledonian petrel); Stejnjneger's petrel, Chilean Kermadec petrel, Pycroft's petrel).

None of the above listings requires a change to EU law since either the species is already protected under EU law, or the EU is not a range state for the species.

Some proposals were **withdrawn** in the course of the COP. Firstly, this concerned the removal from Appendix I to the Convention (while maintaining it in Appendix II) of the Bukhara deer, proposed by Uzbekistan, since it became clear during the COP that a majority of Parties felt there was no proper scientific basis for this proposal. Secondly, the Angular angelshark, which had been proposed for Appendix II by Brazil. Since there was no agreement between the range states on the follow up to the listing, following consultations with Argentina and Uruguay, Brazil withdrew the proposal.

The CMS COP also **coordinates and supports implementation of the Convention** through concerted actions and species-focused actions plans, developed together with the range states, including many EU Member States.

COP15 agreed on new Concerted Actions with targeted conservation plans for several species: Chimpanzee, Straw-colored Fruit Bat, Eurasian Lynx, Striped Hyena, several Giraffes, Sperm whale of the Eastern Tropical Pacific, Franciscana Dolphin, Lahille Bottlenose Dolphin Antipodean Albatross, Flesh-footed Shearwater, Peruvian or Humboldt Pelican, Magellanic plover, Sand Tiger Shark, Basking Shark, Blue Shark and all Devil and Manta Ray species.

COP15 also adopted new or updated species-focused Action Plans, concerning the Jaguar, Topo Shark, Amazonian Migratory Catfish, European Eel, Humpback Whales, Bustards, Steppe Eagle, Landbirds in the African-Eurasian Region, African-Eurasian Vultures.

COP15 furthermore adopted several resolutions and decisions regarding the three taxa (aquatic, avian and terrestrial) as well as on cross-cutting issues relevant for migratory species.

- As regards the **aquatic area**, the COP addressed again deep-sea mining. As defended by many EU Member States and the European Union delegation, the report on deep sea mining commissioned by the CMS Secretariat before COP15 will be distributed without the proposed recommendations. Importantly, the previous COP decision (which urges Parties not to engage in, or support, deep-sea mining until sufficient and robust scientific information has been obtained) was left untouched.

Significant decisions in this area were adopted on several other aquatic species conservation issues of relevance to the EU, such as on **Bycatch** (focusing specifically on Appendix I and Appendix II species), **Fish Aggregating Devices** (requesting Parties to consider a range of measures to limit the impact of fish aggregating devices on migratory species), **Marine pollution** (addressing a wide range of marine pollution sources), **Marine noise** (where it was not possible to include a reference to military sonar, unlike at COP 14), **Vessel strikes** (requesting Parties to reduce the risk of vessel strikes on at-risk whales and asking the Scientific Council to map shipping lanes and develop advice on rerouting measures), **Conserving Seamount Ecosystems** (urging Parties to prioritise protection and to conduct research), **Cetacean Action Plans**, **Freshwater Fish** (noting the Global Assessment of Migratory Freshwater Fishes) and the **European Eel** (establishing the Action plan for the European Eel).

- Regarding **avian issues**, COP15 adopted UNEP/CMS/COP15/CRP26.1, amending Resolution 11.16 (Rev.COP14), on the **Prevention of Illegal Killing, Taking and Trade of Migratory Birds**, including proposed amendments to the ToR for an Asia Pacific Illegal Taking of Migratory Birds Intergovernmental Task Force. Resolution 11.15 (Rev.COP14) agrees to continue the **Preventing Poisoning** Working Group and the Intergovernmental Task Force on Phasing Out the Use of Lead Ammunition and Lead Fishing Weights. The COP adopted a resolution advancing the seabird agenda, including formalising **marine flyways** as a CMS concept, expanding the scope of the Flyways Working Group to include marine flyways, and approving decisions supporting the agenda. A **Multi-species Action Plan to Conserve African, Eurasian and Australian Bustards (2026-2037)** led by Hungary was adopted, together with a **Steppe Eagle Global Action Plan**.
- As regards **terrestrial species** conservation, the **Joint CITES-CMS African Carnivores Initiative** will have its programme of work revised; the **Central Asian Mammals Initiative** may see Parties concluding new transboundary agreements to strengthen the conservation of specific transboundary conservation regions, following the CAMI Work Programme 2026-2032. The COP took note of the Regional Action Plan for **Jaguar** Conservation and called for the CMS Secretariat to continue cooperation with the CITES Secretariat and others to facilitate reinforced cooperation among all Jaguar Range States.

Regarding cross-cutting issues, the **illegal and Unsustainable Taking of Migratory Species** figured prominently at COP15, with the establishment of a new **Global Initiative on Taking of Migratory Species (GTI)** and with decisions requesting the Secretariat to develop a more integrated approach to effectively support Parties in addressing pressures from illegal and unsustainable taking of migratory species, including by conducting an in-depth analysis of the scale of illegal and unsustainable take of migratory species listed on both CMS appendices.

On ‘**ecological connectivity**’, COP15 adopted UNEP/CMS/COP15/CRP28.2, with amendments to Resolution 14.16, and decisions requesting Parties give special attention to the issues in UNEP/CMS/COP15/ Doc.28.2/Rev.1 when planning, implementing, and evaluating actions designed to support the protection, conservation, restoration and effective management of migratory species, particularly when identifying, prioritising, designating, restoring, and managing protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures; when evaluating the sufficiency and coherence of ecological networks; and when monitoring ecological connectivity over time.

On the ‘**relationship with the CBD/Global Biodiversity Framework**’ and the implementation of the ‘**Samarkand Strategic Plan for Migratory Species**’, several elements were highlighted to stress the importance of close involvement of the CMS, in particular in the ongoing work under the CBD regarding the Global review. The COP reiterated that the GBF is essential for the implementation of the CMS but similarly, that the implementation of the GBF cannot be achieved without the CMS. Furthermore, references to indicators related to funding provided by developed countries to developing countries were removed from the draft indicator framework as requested by the EU.

On the issue of ‘**the financial mechanism**’ for the CMS, the COP agreed not to explore the GEF to become the Financial Mechanism but to strengthen the use of the available global, regional and national pathways to mobilize GEF funds for the implementation of the CMS. Furthermore, CMS COP 15 requested the Standing Committee, with the support of the CMS Secretariat to prepare a strategy on **resource mobilisation** for submission to and adoption by COP 16.

Administrative issues

Discussions on Budgetary matters resulted in the adoption of a **budget** for the triennium 2027-2029, with an increase of slightly over 8% compared to the previous three years. This leads to a total for the 3 years of just over 11 million Euro, mostly to take into account inflation, falling short of the moderate growth scenario defended by the CMS Secretariat. With an ever-expanding agenda and ambition, the CMS Convention budget is clearly stretched, and completion of the now-agreed agenda will rely significantly on finding external resources.

COP15 elected new members of the **Scientific Council**, including two new councillors for terrestrial mammals and wildlife health. The COP accepted the nominations for the Sessional Committee of the Scientific Council from the regional committees, with Bulgaria, Italy and UK for Europe. It also elected new members of the **Standing Committee**. For the European region these are Belgium, Montenegro and the UK, with respectively France, North Macedonia and Monaco as alternates.

Brazil, as the host of the COP, showed a **very high level of political engagement** with a High Level Segment attended by President Lula da Silva and by proposing a ‘Pantanal Declaration’ entitled ‘Promoting Connectivity to Protect Migratory Wildlife’. This Declaration was adopted during the High Level Segment by the three ‘Pantanal states’ (Brazil, Bolivia and Paraguay) and opened for signature by other states. As this declaration was not shared beforehand and not subject to negotiations, it attracted only a limited number of signatories (19), none of them from EU and Member States.

As COP 16 will celebrate 50 years of CMS, the depository of the Convention, Germany, offered to host this celebratory edition of the COP at the seat of the Convention. The COP accepted **Germany’s offer to host COP 16, in Bonn, in 2029.**
