



CONVENTION ON MIGRATORY SPECIES

UNEP/CMS/Resolution 11.31 (Rev.COP14)

Original: English

ILLEGAL AND UNSUSTAINABLE TAKING OF WILDLIFE

Adopted by the Conference of the Parties at its 14th Meeting (Samarkand, February 2024)

Concerned that illegal and unsustainable taking of wildlife, including wildlife crime, is a growing threat to migratory species and the benefits they provide to ecosystems and people,

Recognizing that wildlife crime and offences continue to take place at an unprecedented scale with global reach, as wildlife trafficking continues to be highly lucrative with little risk of prosecution and thus ranks right behind arms and drug smuggling and human trafficking worldwide,

Further recognizing that the illegal taking and trade of wildlife can increase the risk for zoonoses and pathogen spillover from wildlife to humans,

Concerned that illegal and unsustainable taking of wildlife cause an immense loss of revenue for States and local communities, severely damage livelihoods and ecosystems, negatively impact on sustainable utilization and tourism, and in some cases, lead to threats to human lives and fund organized criminal and other violent groups,

Urges Parties and non-Parties to strengthen awareness and cooperation with relevant national agencies on wildlife trafficking and to monitor trade of specimens of species currently not listed in Appendices to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES),

Acknowledging that “The Future We Want”, adopted at Rio+20 and endorsed by consensus of the United Nations General Assembly, “recognize[d] the economic, social and environmental impacts of illicit trafficking in wildlife where firm and strengthened action needs to be taken on both the supply and demand sides”,

Noting the IPBES Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, which highlighted direct overexploitation as one of the two key drivers of biodiversity loss,

Noting that the United Nations General Assembly has adopted six Resolutions on wildlife trafficking, most recently Resolution 77/325, adopted on 25 August 2023 on *Tackling Illicit Trafficking in Wildlife* which, *inter alia*, calls upon Member States to make illicit trafficking in protected species of wild fauna and flora a serious crime, and to review and amend national legislation, as necessary and appropriate, so that offences connected to the illegal trade in wildlife are treated as predicate offences,

Welcoming the discussions taking place under the auspices of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime on strengthening the international legal framework for international cooperation to prevent and combat illicit trafficking in wildlife,

Taking note of the United Nations Environment Programme Governing Council Decision 27/9 on advancing justice, governance and law for environmental sustainability,

Recognizing the role of the CITES as the principal international instrument for ensuring that international trade in specimens of wild animals and plants does not threaten the species' survival,

Welcoming the adoption by the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) Resolution on illegal trade in wildlife (UNEP/EA.1/3), acknowledging the role of CMS in countering such illegal activities and including the call for strengthened cross-agency cooperation,

Further welcoming the continued work of the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime (ICWC), which includes UNODC, the Secretariat of CITES, Interpol, the World Customs Organization (WCO) and the World Bank, as an important collaborative effort to strengthen enforcement,

Noting the declaration and agreed urgent measures of the African Elephant Summit (Gaborone, December 2013), the Declaration of the Elysée Summit for Peace and Security in Africa (Paris, December 2013), the London Declaration on Illegal Wildlife Trade (London, February 2014), the anti-poaching declaration of African Ministers of Tourism and United Nations World Tourism Organization (Berlin, April 2014) and the declaration of the Conference to Combat Wildlife Trafficking and Illicit Trade (Dar es Salaam, United Republic of Tanzania, May 2014),

Further noting that the species listed on the CMS Appendices include many of those most affected by illegal and unsustainable taking of wildlife, including African Elephants, Argali mountain sheep, Saiga antelopes, Snow leopards, Cheetahs, Gorillas, Saker falcons, Sharks, Sturgeons, Manta rays and marine turtles, and that their decline has severe negative impacts, both ecological and socio-economic,

Welcoming the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework adopted under the Convention on Biological Diversity, which includes numerous Goals and Targets related to the conservation and sustainable use of wildlife, with particular relevance to migratory species, in particular Targets 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5,

Also welcoming the Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction,

Recognizing the specific role of CMS in the global response to the illegal and unsustainable taking of wildlife by strengthening population management *in situ*, including population monitoring, awareness-raising, capacity-building, national law enforcement and creation of community-based approaches, both within Range States and across national borders where illegal and unsustainable taking of wildlife is often hardest to control,

Further recognizing the ongoing work of the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement (AEWA) to provide mechanisms for structured, coordinated and inclusive decision-making and implementation to ensure the sustainable use of species, while maintaining them at a favourable conservation status, and the work of the Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of Migratory Birds of Prey in Africa and Eurasia (Raptors MOU) to ensure sustainability of any harvest of Saker Falcons including through development of an adaptive management framework under the CMS Saker Falcon Global Action Plan,

Recalling the value of CMS instruments, including its regional agreements and action plans, and its role in creating a platform for engaging all relevant stakeholders in addressing illegal and unsustainable taking of wildlife in concert with all other aspects of wildlife conservation and management,

Further recalling that CMS Parties have adopted Resolutions on minimizing the risk of poisoning to migratory birds (Resolution 11.15 (Rev.COP14)), on the illegal killing, taking and trade of migratory birds (Resolution 11.16 (Rev.COP14)) and on the Central Asian Mammals Initiative (Resolution 11.24 (Rev.COP13)), which includes a programme of work for the conservation of large mammal migrations in Central Asia providing *inter alia* for anti-poaching and other actions to minimize wildlife crime,

Recognizing that illegal and unsustainable taking of wildlife are not confined to terrestrial landscapes but also have an impact on the marine environment, where Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated fishing (IUU) and other forms of illegal and unsustainable taking such as bycatch constitute a severe threat to migratory species, especially in the High Seas but also in areas within national jurisdiction,

Further recognizing the efforts and the initiative of Parties to develop and implement legislative provisions and programmes and to ensure that any utilization of wildlife, where it occurs, is sustainable, recognising that in some circumstances utilization of wildlife may contribute to conservation and is allowed to secure community livelihoods,

Welcoming the close collaboration between CMS and CITES in working to ensure that the use of transboundary wildlife is legal and sustainable including measures to eradicate illegal and unsustainable taking of wildlife and *noting* the adoption of the CMS-CITES Joint Work Programme 2021-2025 at the 73rd Meeting of the CITES Standing Committee and the 52nd Meeting of the CMS Standing Committee,

Recalling the joint CITES-CMS African Carnivores Initiative (ACI) and its Programme of Work, which includes objectives and actions addressing illegal and unsustainable taking of the ACI species, and

Instructs the Secretariat to continue strengthening collaboration with relevant organizations and stakeholders such as the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the World Customs Organization (WCO), in order to address illegal trade in wildlife and to strengthen the monitoring of trade in specimens of species currently not listed in CITES Appendices,

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

1. *Encourages* Parties and non-Parties to take measures to increase awareness among relevant authorities, including enforcement, legislative, prosecution and judicial authorities, private sector and the public of illegal and unsustainable taking of wildlife and the negative impacts that it has on migratory species and the benefits they provide;
2. *Urges* Parties and non-Parties to identify the drivers of illegal and unsustainable taking of migratory species within their jurisdiction and develop strategies to effectively address such activities, including engagement with local communities in identifying drivers and developing and implementing conservation strategies to address them;
3. *Recommends* that Parties and non-Parties provide greater information and training for their enforcement, prosecution and judicial authorities with respect to the significant threat of illegal and unsustainable taking of and trade in migratory species; including integrating training on wildlife crimes and offences into the national curricula of relevant training academies/schools where possible;

4. *Encourages* Parties, non-Parties and stakeholders to increase national efforts on population estimates, management and monitoring of migratory species, and develop and implement science-based management plans for CMS-listed species;
5. *Urges* Parties and non-Parties to develop and implement effective and transparent systems for collecting data on scale of exploitation of migratory species, and make public accurate data on the scale of take of CMS listed species;
6. *Calls on* the Scientific Council to work with relevant stakeholders regularly to analyze data on the scale of take of CMS-listed species to identify those species for which cumulative take is clearly unsustainable and make recommendations;
7. *Urges* all Parties to take all necessary actions to prevent the illegal and unsustainable use and take of CMS-listed species and to take appropriate measures to ensure that their legislation fully implements the provisions of the Convention, is communicated to the public and provides for penalties of wildlife crime that are effective, act as a deterrent and reflect the gravity of the offence and provide for the confiscation of specimens taken in violation of the Convention;
8. *Urges* Parties and *invites* non-Parties to strengthen national and transboundary law enforcement with emphasis on interdisciplinary cooperation and intelligence sharing between relevant stakeholders, such as rangers, wildlife management, customs, police and the military;
9. *Suggests* that Parties and non-Parties establish cooperative bilateral and multilateral arrangements for the management of shared wildlife populations and habitats with common boundaries, in order to minimize illegal and unsustainable taking, use, sale and trafficking;
10. *Encourages* Parties, where relevant and appropriate, and where posing no risk to human, wildlife or other animal health, to enhance cooperation for the repatriation of live, illegally-traded wildlife with due consideration for the welfare of live wild animals, and promote the establishment of legal frameworks in recipient countries that ensure a timely and cost-efficient repatriation of live animals and eggs, ensuring that any such framework is consistent with Parties' obligations under CITES and national legislation and subject to relevant biosecurity and environmental concerns and policies, including relevant IUCN Guidelines for the management of confiscated, live organisms;
11. *Encourages* Parties and non-Parties, funding agencies and CMS Partners to support capacity-building nationally, across borders and in the High Seas for rangers, customs, police, the military and other relevant bodies;
12. *Calls upon* Parties, non-Parties and relevant development agencies to promote community-based approaches in order to minimize the illegal and unsustainable taking of migratory species;
13. *Suggests* the enacting of national laws that prohibit the possession and trade in illegally obtained wildlife specimens and products, including those obtained in contravention of legislation in their country, and ensuring that confiscated wildlife specimens are disposed of in the best possible manner aligned with the purposes of the Convention, and that does not stimulate further illegal trade;
14. *Recommends* that Parties and non-Parties work to reduce demand for illegally obtained wildlife specimens and products within their domestic markets and utilize CMS to exchange knowledge and lessons learned regarding successful demand-side reduction strategies;

15. *Proposes* that Parties and relevant funding agencies provide adequate, predictable and timely financial support for implementing the provisions of this Resolution;
16. *Calls upon* Parties and other Range States that have not already done so, to sign the CMS instruments relevant to species particularly affected by illegal and unsustainable taking of migratory species, such as the Gorilla Agreement, AEWA, and the MOUs on Sharks, Raptors and IOSEA marine turtles, and to implement the relevant provisions;
17. *Further calls* upon the Scientific Council to facilitate the use of best practice developed across relevant CMS instruments, including ensuring a consistent approach to addressing unsustainable take through adaptive harvest management;
18. *Welcomes* the cooperation between the Secretariat and the members of the Collaborative Partnership on Sustainable Wildlife Management (CPW) and *encourages* the Secretariat to continue working closely with the CPW;
19. *Encourages* Parties and the Secretariat to engage actively with the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC), the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC), and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), at both the Secretariat and national levels, on issues that relate to illegal use and take of CMS-listed species;
20. *Encourages* the many stakeholders addressing the illegal and unsustainable taking of migratory species to collaborate closely, including Parties, non-Parties, intergovernmental, international and national organizations, multilateral environmental agreements and established networks, such as ICCWC and each of its partner agencies (CITES, INTERPOL, UNODC, the World Bank and the WCO), UNEP, Regional Fishery Management Organizations (RFMOs), and regional Wildlife Enforcement Networks (WENs) as well as through engaging in specific task forces to address the issue, such as the various avian task forces to address illegal killing, hunting, taking and trade; and
21. *Instructs* the Secretariat to continue strengthening collaboration with relevant organizations and stakeholders in order to address the illegal and unsustainable taking of migratory species.