



The Convention on Migratory Animals

« ...Each generation of man holds the resources of the earth for future generations and has an obligation to ensure that this legacy is conserved and, where utilized, is used wisely... »

– from the preamble of the Convention

Why conserve migratory animals?

Animal migrations are as familiar as geese in the sky on an autumn afternoon and as mysterious as the peregrinations of sea turtles across thousands of miles of open ocean. They represent a fascinating phenomenon in which species move between areas which they inhabit at different times of the year in search of favourable resources for feeding, sheltering and breeding.

Beside their intrinsic value, migratory species provide benefits and services to communities and ecosystems, many of these crucial for livelihoods and culture, and conservation efforts contribute to poverty alleviation. The species underlie activities of economic, cultural and social value. Recently, they have become attractions for eco-tourists such as bird spotters or whale watchers.

Their decline is not only a major aesthetic loss, but it is also a major environmental and economic problem, given the important ecosystem services these species provide.

Migratory animals are essential components of the ecosystems that support all life on Earth, e.g. by acting as pollinators and seed distributors. Migratory animals are effective indicators of environmental changes that affect us all. Since they use different habitats for different phases of their life cycles, these animals have evolved to make use of different environments and resources that are only temporarily available; consequently they are more vulnerable than sedentary animals. They range from antelopes to fish, from whales to elephants, from bats to birds. Even seemingly frail insects, such as the Monarch butterfly, can cover enormous distances.

If we are successful at saving the world's great animal migrations, we will have protected natural phenomena that provide us with inspiration, sustenance, recreation, and numerous ecosystem benefits. At the very least, we will have ensured that future generations can enjoy some of the same flocks of birds, schools of fish, and herds of mammals that have inspired and sustained us for thousands of years.

CMS: a framework convention

CMS provides for separate, international legally-binding instruments and other agreements among range states of single migratory species or, more often, groups of species. These agreements can be adapted to the requirements of particular regions with the aim of enhancing the effectiveness of the Convention's efforts.

19 international MoU and 7 Agreements have been concluded under the CMS umbrella, for bats, birds, elephants, dolphins and whales, marine turtles and seals as listed below.

	ACAP - www.acap.aq
	AEWA - www.unep-aewa.org
	ACCOBAMS - www.accobams.org
	ASCOBANS - www.ascobans.org
	EUROBATS - www.eurobats.org
	GORILLAS - www.cms.int/gorillas
	WADDEN SEA SEALS - www.waddensea-secretariat.org

Need for cooperation across a Migratory Range

The agreements may range from legally-binding treaties, i.e. Agreements, to less formal instruments, such as Memoranda of Understanding. The development of models specially designed according to conservation needs throughout the migratory range is a unique feature of CMS. All agreements have specific management and conservation plans.

CMS Parties are to adopt strict protection measures for migratory species that are in danger of becoming extinct. These are listed in Appendix I of the Convention after Parties have considered the best scientific evidence available.

Agreements

Parties are urged to conclude agreements concerning species whose conservation status would be improved by international concerted action; these species are listed on Appendix II.

Agreements are independent international treaties in their own right. They have their own budgets and, in most cases, their own staff. Their provisions are legally binding, but the process of bringing them into being can take a long time, as after the successful negotiation of the text, they have to be ratified by national parliaments.

Memoranda of Understanding (MoU)

MoUs are an alternative arrangement to promote international action. These are administrative arrangements among ministries rather than international treaties. They do not need to be ratified and are consequently less onerous to conclude, so can come into effect quite quickly. Their provisions are however not legally binding and they depend on voluntary contributions rather than mandatory subscriptions to finance their implementation.

International concerted action

While migrating, many species cross national borders - artificial constructs which are, of course, not recognized by animals. Borders not only divide countries, they also separate national legislation, interests and political priorities. Migratory animals are particularly vulnerable in international waters, where it is even more necessary for countries to assume their shared responsibility to conserve this common natural heritage.

- ▷ Aquatic Warbler
- ▷ Dugong
- ▷ High Andean Flamingos
- ▷ South Andean Huemul
- ▷ West African Elephant
- ▷ Ruddy-headed Goose
- ▷ Grassland Birds of southern South America
- ▷ Great Bustard Middle-European
- ▷ Western African Aquatic Mammals
- ▷ Marine Turtles of the Atlantic Coast of Africa
- ▷ Marine Turtles IOSEA
- ▷ Mediterranean Monk Seal
- ▷ Cetaceans in the Pacific Islands Region
- ▷ Slender-billed Curlew
- ▷ Raptors (Africa and Eurasia)
- ▷ Saiga Antelope
- ▷ Siberian Crane
- ▷ Migratory Sharks
- ▷ Bukhara Deer



Networking for Migratory Species

CMS has chosen the development and adoption of ecological networks as its focus for the Tenth Conference of the Parties. Ecological Networks are connections between habitats of migratory animals that facilitate migration and promote resilience in the face of ecological change. Migrating animals are often the vehicles connecting dispersed habitat, transferring nutrients, energy and other biological resources. But, migrations themselves require paths that support the journey.

Due to different human pressures, many habitat areas are becoming degraded and fragmented. As a result, species are becoming more and more isolated. There is an urgent need to establish these networks in order to preserve migratory passages.

The migratory range approach

The migratory range approach is the leading rationale for the Convention. Migratory species can be best conserved through joint international cooperative efforts, linking species- and

ecosystem-based approaches at national levels, coordinated across a migratory range. This approach reflects the fact that threats in one Range State can have a negative impact on a migratory species throughout its entire range.

The Objectives of CMS

Amongst the multilateral instruments which share the aim of protecting wildlife, CMS has a unique role in conserving threatened migratory species. CMS aims to have a direct impact on human populations and promote their access to the benefits from the use of natural resources.

CMS promotes co-operative research and conservation projects on migratory animals worldwide. The spectrum of activities is broad, ranging from population counts to the evaluation of the quality of habitats and threats, as well as the use of satellite telemetry to identify migration routes. Other projects focus on studies of breeding habits, fencing of nesting areas, site identification and mapping, or the genetic analysis of tissue samples.

Some of the longest migration routes of CMS species

