



Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals

Secretariat provided by the United Nations Environment Programme



Progress Report on Relevant Activities Undertaken within the Framework of CMS for the United Nations Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea

This document summarizes activities undertaken during the reporting period within the CMS framework which are of relevance to the second part of the report of the Secretary-General on oceans and the law of the sea, notably resolution 73/124.

Introduction

1. The Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (UNEP/CMS) aims to conserve terrestrial, aquatic and avian migratory species throughout their range. It is an Intergovernmental Treaty, concluded under the auspices of the United Nations Environment Programme (UN Environment). It is a Multilateral Environmental Agreement with 128 Parties and in force since 1983. CMS acts as a framework Convention that encourages Range States to develop regional or global daughter agreements covering single or groups of migratory species.
2. Under the framework of CMS, three legally binding agreements and seven Memoranda of Understanding have been agreed for marine species (cetaceans, turtles, seabirds, dugongs, seals and chondrichthyans).
3. Furthermore, CMS is working on cross-cutting topics, including bycatch, marine debris, climate change and sustainable marine wildlife tourism.

CMS activities for marine species within the reporting period (September 2018- May 2019)

Cetaceans

4. CMS collaborated with the International Whaling Commission (IWC) in producing a joint Online Whale Watching Handbook (accessible at <https://wwhandbook.iwc.int/en/>), which was launched in September 2018. This Handbook is designed to support managers, regulators, operators and anyone interested in whale watching. It is a flexible and evolving tool incorporating international best practice, educational resources and a summary of the latest, relevant scientific information. Content has been drafted and sourced in consultation with IWC and CMS affiliated scientists and managers from around the world (pursuant to A/Res/73/124, para. 281, sec. XI Marine Science - marine life protection against human-related threats).

Sharks and Rays

5. The Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of Migratory Sharks (Sharks MOU) a legally non-binding international instrument that aims to restore a favourable conservation status for endangered shark species on a global level, was concluded under the umbrella of CMS in Manila in 2010. It complements existing international wildlife conservation agreements, fisheries agreements and regional fisheries management organizations. 37 shark and ray species are covered by Annex 1 of the Memorandum of Understanding, including some of the most threatened species such as sawfish.

6. The Sharks MOU Conservation Plan which was adopted by the Signatories is based on five objectives:
- Increasing public awareness of threats to sharks;
 - Improving the understanding of migratory shark populations through research;
 - Ensuring that directed and non-directed fisheries for sharks are sustainable;
 - Protecting critical habitats and migratory corridors; and
 - Enhancing national, regional and international cooperation.
7. The outcomes of the 3rd Meeting of the Signatories (Sharks MOS3) which was held in December 2018 are as follows:
- Eight species of sharks and rays were agreed to be added to Annex 1 by the Signatories: Dusky Shark (*Carcharhinus obscurus*), Oceanic Whitetip Shark (*Carcharhinus longimanus*), Smooth Hammerhead Shark (*Sphyrna zygaena*), Angelshark (*Squatina squatina*), Bottlenose Wedgefish / Whitespotted Wedgefish (*Rhynchobatus australiae*), Whitespotted Wedgefish/Giant Guitarfish (*Rhynchobatus djiddensis*), Smoothnose Wedgefish (*Rhynchobatus laevis*), and Common Guitarfish (*Rhinobatos rhinobatos*).
 - The Meeting adopted a Programme of Work (POW) ([CMS/Sharks/Outcome 3.9](#)) for the triennium (2019-2021) which aims to guide Signatories, the AC, the Conservation Working Group (CWG), Cooperating Partners and the Secretariat.
 - The Meeting also adopted a Capacity-building Strategy ([CMS/Sharks/Outcome 3.6](#)) for the MOU that aimed to support Signatories with the implementation of the MOU and its Conservation Plan.
 - Signatories agreed activities to support the implementation of the following Concerted Action Plans, which had been previously adopted at CMS COP12:
 - Whale Shark (*Rhincodon typus*)
 - Mobulid Rays (*Mobulidae*)
 - Angelshark (*Squatina squatina*)