



# Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals

Secretariat provided by the United Nations Environment Programme



Notification 2015/014

29 May 2015

## NOTIFICATION TO THE PARTIES

### REQUEST FOR INFORMATION ON STEPS TAKEN TO MITIGATE UNDERWATER NOISE

In 2011, CMS Parties adopted Resolution 10.24 on [Further Steps to Abate Underwater Noise Pollution for the Protection of Cetaceans and Other Biota](#).

This Resolution calls for the development of practical guidance for minimizing significant adverse impacts of underwater noise on marine and coastal biodiversity, which requires that knowledge be improved and shared between Parties. All CMS Parties are hereby requested to provide information on the implementation of this Resolution, in particular on use of Best Available Techniques relating to efforts to reduce or mitigate marine noise pollution, use of Best Environmental Practice relating to efforts to reduce or mitigate marine noise pollution, related stakeholder exchange processes, integration of anthropogenic noise into the management plans of marine protected areas, and legal requirements or guidelines for Environmental Impact Assessments for activities generating marine noise.

Annex 1 contains further background information on the issue. Annex 2 contains a simple form which should be completed and returned to the Secretariat by 31 July 2015.

Attention is drawn to notification No. SCBD/SAM/DC/JL/JA/JMQ/84623 issued by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), which requests information on measures to avoid, minimize and mitigate the potential significant adverse impacts of anthropogenic underwater noise on marine and coastal biodiversity. For ease of reporting, information submitted to CBD may also be used by CMS, as appropriate. Parties are encouraged to liaise internally in order to ensure the information needs of both Conventions are met.

The CMS Secretariat will collate this information and provide it to the Scientific Council and the Joint CMS/ASCOBANS/ACCOBAMS Noise Working Group for consideration. It will be especially important as background for the development of the guidance on appropriate standards for noise pollution required in response to CMS Resolutions 9.19 ([Adverse Anthropogenic Marine/Ocean Noise Impacts on Cetaceans and other Biota](#)) and 10.24.

<http://www.cms.int/en/news/notifications>

## Annex 1: **Background Information:**

During the 10<sup>th</sup> CMS Conference of the Parties two key resolutions were passed relating to marine noise.

Resolution 10.24: *Further steps to abate underwater noise pollution for the protection of cetaceans and other migratory species,*

*Urges* Parties to ensure that Environmental Impact Assessments take full account of the effects of activities on cetaceans and to consider potential impacts on marine biota and their migration routes and consider a more holistic ecological approach already at a strategic planning stage;

*Recommends* that Parties apply Best Available Techniques (BAT) and Best Environmental Practice (BEP) including, where appropriate, clean technology, in their efforts to reduce or mitigate marine noise pollution; and *further recommends* that Parties use, as appropriate, noise reduction techniques for offshore activities such as: air-filled coffer dams, bubble curtains or hydro-sound dampers, or different foundation types (such as floating platforms, gravity foundations or pile driving instead of pile driving);

*Encourages* Parties to integrate the issue of anthropogenic noise into the management plans of marine protected areas (MPAs) where appropriate, in accordance with international law, including UNCLOS;

*Invites* the private sector to assist in developing mitigation measures and/or alternative techniques and technologies for coastal, offshore and maritime activities in order to minimize noise pollution of the marine environment to the highest extent possible.

Resolution 10.15 articulated a *Global Programme of Work for Cetaceans* and specific areas for detailed consideration between 2012 and 2017. In part this requires the CMS Secretariat and Scientific Council (with a focus through the Aquatic Mammals Working Group) to work with the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and specific regional organizations including ASCOBANS, ACCOBAMS, Western African Aquatic Mammals MOU, SPAW, WHMSI and CAFF to develop appropriate standards for noise pollution to inform Best Environmental Practice (BEP).

In the past two years there have been some important developments and discussions relating to technologies that may potentially reduce sound levels during seismic surveys, as well as discussions about best practice for environmental impact guidelines. These include the decision during the CBD COP11 to collaborate with Parties, other Governments and competent organizations, including CMS, to convene an expert workshop on this subject, resulting in a draft decision being forwarded to CBD COP12.

CBD Decision XII/23 on *Marine and coastal biodiversity: Impacts on marine and coastal biodiversity of anthropogenic underwater noise and ocean acidification, priority actions to achieve Aichi Biodiversity Target 10 for coral reefs and closely associated ecosystems, and marine spatial planning and training initiatives* includes a call for taking “appropriate

measures ... to avoid, minimize and mitigate the potential significant adverse impacts of anthropogenic underwater noise on marine and coastal biodiversity”, such as

- developing and transferring quieter technologies, and applying the best available practice in all relevant activities,
- conducting impact assessments for activities that may have significant adverse impacts on noise-sensitive species, and carrying out monitoring, and
- including noise considerations in the establishment and development of management plans for marine protected areas.

In addition, the IMO has decided to develop guidelines to reduce the levels of underwater noise created by new and existing commercial ships (IMO - DE 57/25-Report to the Maritime Safety Committee and the Marine Environment Protection Committee, 5 April 2013) (IMO - DE 57/25/Add1-Report to the Maritime Safety Committee and the Marine Environment Protection Committee, 5 April 2013) and a conference was held on *Quieting Technologies for Reducing Noise During Seismic Surveying and Pile Driving* (Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, 4 February 2013).