



Panthera Briefing for CMS COP14 Samarkand, UZBEKISTAN 12-17 February 2024

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About Panthera

Panthera, founded in 2006, is creating a world where wild cats thrive in healthy, natural and developed landscapes that sustain people and biodiversity. Through cutting-edge scientific research, strategic species recovery, habitat restoration and collaboration with communities and partners, we're protecting the world's 40 species of wild cats and helping ensure a future for us all.

Panthera at CMS COP14

Panthera works with CMS Parties around the world as partners in wild cat conservation. We combine science, technology, and on-the-ground conservation action to develop collaborative, evidence-based approaches that benefit wild cats and people, so that both can thrive.

Wild cats are wide-ranging species that routinely move across national jurisdictional boundaries in search of mates, prey, and suitable habitat for raising their young, placing them squarely in the CMS definition of “migratory.” Five of the seven big cat species are currently listed on CMS Appendices I and/or II and two small cat species—Eurasian lynx and Pallas’s Cat—have listing proposals before the COP. Intergovernmental cooperation is critical to the protection of CMS-listed cat species and their habitat. Panthera and our partners are working in transboundary landscapes in Africa, Asia, Mesoamerica, and South America that are models of cooperation, community empowerment and conservation impact for jaguars, lions, leopards, cheetahs, and snow leopards. We believe that such collaborations will become even more important for cats as human settlement, habitat loss and fragmentation, and climate change affect their movement patterns, and in the best-case scenario, as populations recover and their ranges expand.

We offer this commentary to assist with your consideration of the cat-specific and relevant cross-cutting documents before COP14 and are available for additional information and discussion.



Joint CITES-CMS African Carnivores Initiative

[COP14/Doc.29.1/Rev.1](#)

Recommendation: Adopt Draft Decisions

Panthera recognizes the potential for the Joint CITES-CMS African Carnivores Initiative to impact cheetah, leopard, lion, and African wild dog populations at scale and contribute to Range States' commitments under CBD and UNFCCC. We recommend that the COP adopt the draft decisions.

Important progress on the ACI programme of work has been made to date, as presented at the second meeting of ACI Range States (ACI2) in which Panthera was pleased to participate. In conjunction with our government partners, Panthera conducts rigorous population monitoring studies that help to inform the strategies, action plans and guidance for lions, leopards, and cheetahs that underpin the programme of work, including most recently, the West African Leopard Survey and the Spatially Explicit Conservation Action Plan for Northern Lions in Africa. We look forward to continuing the leopard survey work in West Africa as agreed by meeting participants. Panthera appreciates the inputs from some Range States at the ACI2 meeting seeking closer coordination between conservation science organizations and government authorities to clarify survey research objectives and data protocols in support of implementation of the ACI.

We further appreciate the role the ACI can play as a mechanism to foster and strengthen transboundary cooperation on African carnivores, such as the Carnivore Conservation Strategy implemented by a coalition of more than 80 organizations under the Kavango-Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area (KAZA TFCA) Treaty. The promulgation of innovative bilateral and multilateral agreements such as KAZA, W-Arli-Pendjari, and others is essential to successful implementation of the ACI.

The ACI programme of work is indeed comprehensive, with enormous implications for Africa's iconic species, people, biodiversity, and climate. It needs time, cooperation on a grand scale, and sustainable funding. We look forward to supporting Range States to deliver on its ambition.

Central Asian Mammals Initiative (CAMI)

[CMS/COP14/Doc.29.3/Rev.2](#)

Recommendation: Adopt Draft Decisions

Acknowledging the increasing threats to snow leopards, Persian leopards and Asiatic cheetahs from illegal killing and trade, habitat loss and fragmentation, conflict with dogs, livestock and



people, and climate change, Panthera recommends that the COP adopt the draft decisions to strengthen support for and implementation of the Central Asian Mammals Initiative.

Panthera supports the proposals for inclusion of Eurasian Lynx and Pallas's Cat to Appendix II and Balkan Lynx to Appendix I (see below). We concur with the proposals' conclusions that these species would benefit from being added to CAMI, and thus highlight the importance of Draft Decision 14.AA c) directing Parties to consider amendments to the CAMI programme of work as needed to reflect their addition. Accordingly, Panthera acknowledges the need to streamline implementation by focusing on issues and activities that benefit multiple species as noted in Item 18 of the Secretariat's report. Panthera pursues a multispecies approach in numerous geographies with specific expertise in designing interventions that impact all the cat species present in the landscape.

Jaguar Conservation Measures

[CMS/COP14/Doc.29.6.1](#)

CMS Jaguar Initiative (*Panthera onca*)

[CMS/COP14/Doc.29.6.2/Rev.1](#)

Recommendation: Adopt Resolution and Draft Decisions

Present in roughly 50 percent of their historic range, and still genetically classified as a single species, jaguars embody resilience and the importance of corridors and connectivity. However, the latest science shows that jaguar range is continuing to contract at a high rate, with increasing threats to the species from deforestation, habitat transformation, and conflict with people.

The listing of the jaguar on Appendix I and II by COP13 in 2020 was a crowning achievement in a series of multilateral actions elevating jaguars on the global stage and raising awareness of their conservation needs and opportunities. Panthera appreciates the CMS Secretariat's efforts in response to Parties to engage additional Jaguar Range States, CITES, the Jaguar 2030 Roadmap Coordination Committee, and other key actors in jaguar conservation. We support adoption of the Draft Decisions in COP14/Doc.29.6.1 to bring effect to the listings and advance implementation.

Panthera welcomes the proposal supported by CMS Parties throughout jaguar range, including Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Honduras, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, and Uruguay to establish a CMS Jaguar Initiative and recommends that the COP adopt Draft Resolution 14.20 and Draft Decisions 14.AA-14.FF to foster coordination and cooperation among Range States and other key stakeholders. As collaborators on the Jaguar 2030 Roadmap and members of the Jaguar 2030 Roadmap Coordination Committee, Panthera appreciates the initiative's focus on alignment with the Roadmap, which is endorsed by 16



Jaguar Range States as a plan to secure at least 30 priority jaguar landscapes by 2030. The successful implementation of a range-wide initiative for jaguars must include CMS Parties and non-Parties working together to address all known and emerging threats, from habitat loss to illegal killing and trade. Therefore, we support the adoption of this initiative as a tool to unite existing and future efforts under a common framework, advance a joint CITES-CMS programme of work, and also to engage the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), as agreed by the Parties at the first Jaguar Range State meeting in Cuiabá, Brazil in September 2023.

Pastoralism and Migratory Species

[CMS/COP14/Doc.29.7](#)

Recommendation: Adopt Draft Decisions

Panthera recommends that the COP adopt the draft decisions on Pastoralism and Migratory Species. The proposed actions to increase understanding of the positive and negative impacts of pastoralism on migratory species, and the exchange of information on models and best practices, are badly needed in an environment of rapid expansion of global meat consumption and increasing threats to rangelands. We note the importance of monitoring the effects of pastoralism on prey species for wild cats, and the incidence of livestock depredation by large carnivores and resulting conflict with people. Panthera works with pastoralist communities in multiple regions, helping to improve husbandry and reduce livestock losses. We stand ready to contribute to a Working Group as part of a multi-stakeholder process to address these challenges under the African Carnivores Initiative, CAMI, and other relevant CMS instruments.

Cross-Cutting Issues

Priorities for Addressing Illegal and Unsustainable Taking of Migratory Species

[CMS/COP14/Doc.30.1.1/Rev.1](#)

Recommendation: Adopt Amendments to Resolution 11.31 and Decisions

Illegal and unsustainable taking of prey species poses an existential threat to big cats that is often underestimated relative to the more obvious threat of direct killing and illegal trade of cats themselves. Panthera appreciates the work of the Secretariat to elucidate CMS's mandate on illegal taking and unsustainable use of wildlife and to harmonize CMS's activities with those of CITES, UNODC and many others in a coordinated and global effort to end overexploitation of wildlife and the illegal wildlife trade as key drivers of biodiversity loss. Panthera supports the suggestions by IUCN, WCS and others to include all the amendments to Resolution 11.31 that were proposed by the Scientific Council at the 6th Meeting of the Sessional Committee to COP.



Ecological Connectivity

[CMS/COP14/Doc.30.2.1.1 Policy Aspects](#)

[CMS/COP14/Doc.30.2.1.2 Technical Aspects](#)

Recommendation: Adopt Consolidated Resolution (Annex 2); adopt draft Decisions (Annex 3) of COP14/Doc.30.2.1.1

Panthera commends CMS's efforts, past and present, as a champion of ecological connectivity and its importance to achieving global goals on biodiversity, climate, and sustainable development.

Jaguars are perhaps the ultimate terrestrial example of the importance of connectivity; they are still genetically classified as a single species throughout their 5,000-mile range. The Jaguar Initiative before the COP seeks to preserve those critical and vanishing links between core jaguar populations from Mexico to Argentina—as ambitious an experiment in connectivity as one could imagine. Its success will depend on implementation of the Resolution on Ecological Connectivity to mitigate threats to jaguars and the integrity of their habitat. This will require collaboration from local to regional scales, with local, national, and transboundary support from governments, conventions, NGOs, local communities, private partners, and many more stakeholders.

Panthera was pleased to participate in the first meeting of the Scientific Council's working group on Ecological Connectivity. We recommend that COP14 adopt the consolidated Resolution and draft Decisions (and review the reports in Annexes 1-4 of the Technical Aspects document) to ensure that the science, tools, and funding are available to implement critical action at the national, regional, and international levels going forward.

Community Participation and Livelihoods

[CMS/COP14/Doc.30.2.3](#)

Recommendation: Adopt Resolution and Draft Decisions

Panthera appreciates the work of the Secretariat and the Joint Nature Conservation Committee to compile the case studies of community involvement in conservation of migratory species and develop Key Guiding Principles. These add to an evolving body of work that recognizes indigenous people and local communities as strategic partners in conservation and strengthens CMS's contributions to this imperative in complementarity with CITES and CBD. We recommend that the COP adopt the draft Resolution with an amendment to Paragraph 5 as follows, "Recalling Targets 4, 5, and 9, 22 and 23 of the Kunming-Montreal Biodiversity Framework...". We also recommend that COP14 also adopt the draft Decisions in Annex 2.



Proposals for Amendment of CMS Appendices

Proposal for the Inclusion of Eurasian Lynx (*Lynx lynx*) in Appendix II and Balkan Lynx (*Lynx lynx balcanicus*) in Appendix I of CMS

[CMS/COP14/Doc.31.4.1/Rev.1](#)

Recommendation: Adopt Proposal

Panthera recommends that the COP adopt the proposal to include Eurasian Lynx in Appendix II and the Balkan Lynx in Appendix I. We concur with the proponents that Eurasian Lynx would benefit in numerous respects from addition to Appendix II, particularly with regard to fostering cooperation among Range States as populations are typically transboundary. Like many of the small cats, Eurasian Lynx are largely understudied, except in Europe. The CMS listing would bring global attention to the species' conservation needs and opportunities and provide the framework for conservation activities including research and monitoring.

Proposal for the Inclusion of the Pallas's Cat (*Felis manul*) in Appendix II of the Convention

[CMS/COP14/Doc.31.4.2/Rev.1](#)

Recommendation: Adopt Proposal

Panthera recommends that the COP adopt the proposal to include Pallas's Cat in Appendix II. The CMS listing would raise the profile of the species among conservation practitioners and policy makers in its Range States, and significantly increase the body of data on the species, which is lacking, as it is with most of the small cats.

Because nearly the entire range for Pallas's Cat falls within the region covered by the Central Asian Mammals Initiative (CAMI), and the species occurs in all CAMI countries, an Appendix II listing would efficiently provide additional protection for the species under an existing mechanism. We note the challenges discussed in the Secretariat's CAMI report to complete key activities due to time and funding constraints and the proposal to focus on cross-cutting issues that benefit multiple species. We acknowledge the need to reconcile this concern with the addition of new CAMI species and implementation of species-specific conservation action plans within the CAMI programme of work.

Proposals for Concerted Actions

Proposal for a Concerted Action for the Pallas's Cat (*Felis manul*)

[CMS/COP14/Doc.32.3.3](#)

Recommendation: Adopt proposed Concerted Action



Panthera appreciates the Concerted Action proposed by the IUCN Cat Specialist Group, the Manul Working Group and Pallas's Cat International Conservation Alliance in support of the Appendix II listing. We find that the proposed objectives address the urgent conservation needs for the species and recommend that the COP adopt the proposed Concerted Action.

Proposal for a Concerted Action for the Eurasian Lynx (*Lynx lynx*)
[CMS/COP14/Doc.32.3.4](#)

Recommendation: Adopt proposed Concerted Action

Panthera appreciates the proposal for a concerted action for the Eurasian Lynx prepared by the IUCN Cat Specialist Group and the Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention. We agree that the proposed activities, outcomes, and indicators for the Eurasian lynx largely address the needs of the species, including urgent action for improved conservation of the critically endangered Balkan lynx. The Concerted Action proposes to develop, in cooperation with Range States, explicit conservation plans for the Balkan lynx and Carpathian lynx and baseline surveys for the Asian subspecies *L.l. isabellinus* and *L.l. dinniki*.

Given that the lynx sub-species populations have dwindled due to direct killing, prey reduction, and habitat degradation, we stress the need to involve local communities, in addition to government and NGO partners, in the design and implementation of activities to mitigate these threats. Such activities could involve education about the importance of Eurasian lynx conservation, collaboration with hunters to develop sustainable practices for hunting prey, including monitoring of prey species, and land use planning to mitigate habitat loss and fragmentation from agriculture, infrastructure development, and more.

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