



## Introducing the Abidjan Aquatic Wildlife Partnership

The Abidjan Aquatic Wildlife Partnership (hereafter referred to as *The Partnership*) is focused on increasing the awareness and action of governments, the private sector and local communities in West and Central Africa, to slow and reverse the over-harvesting of aquatic mammals, birds and reptiles for human consumption, wildlife trade, fishing bait or other uses, many of which are illegal or unregulated.

The Partnership was established following the 12th Conference of the Parties to the Abidjan Convention in March 2017. During the convention a decision<sup>1</sup> was taken to invite relevant parties to form a non-binding, multi-stakeholder partnership, led by the Abidjan Convention Secretariat, to develop an action plan to combat trade, direct consumption, illegal logging, and other uses of endangered, threatened or protected coastal and marine species.

The Partnership is also guided by recent, relevant decisions taken by international fora, such as within the International Whaling Commission (IWC), the United Nations Environmental Assembly (UNEA-2) and the development of the African Union's *African Common Strategy on Combatting Illegal Trade in Wild Fauna and Flora*. The Partnership also looks towards the current Resolution on Aquatic Wild Meat (UNEP/CMS/COP12/Doc/24.2.3) presented before the 12<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS CoP12) concerning the proposed formation of a CMS Aquatic Wild Meat Working Group.

The Partnership will work to address and achieve a significant reduction in the trade, capture, consumption and other uses of coastal and marine species, including Aquatic Endangered, Threatened or Protected (A-ETP) species across the region; and in doing so will directly support the implementation of the African Common Strategy on Combatting Illegal Exploitation and Illegal Trade in Wild Flora and Fauna.

The specific aims of The Partnership are to work across the West and Central African region to:

- Safeguard healthy populations of A-ETP species
- Identify and address the root causes driving the trade, capture and consumption of A-ETP species
- Install sustainable ocean stewardship principles and practices in coastal communities
- Empower local stakeholders and communities with the tools, information and capacity
- Bridge the gap between CMS, CITES, CBD, IWC and other relevant inter-governmental fora and coordinate complimentary action
- Catalyze and guide effective action on the aquatic wild meat issue globally<sup>2</sup>

The Partnership seeks to achieve these aims via four key strategic approaches:

1. Empower local stakeholders with knowledge
2. Address key driving factors
3. Build local capacity
4. define and advocate for policy

OceanCare, the West Africa Biodiversity and Climate Change (WA-BiCC) Program, Wild Migration and the World Bank have supported the Abidjan Convention Secretariat in forming the non-binding partnership. For information on how to join the Partnership or contribute towards the development and implementation of its Action Plan, please contact [jtoole@oceancare.org](mailto:jtoole@oceancare.org) or the Abidjan Convention Secretariat directly.



<sup>1</sup> Decision CP 12/14 at the Twelfth Conference of the Parties to the Abidjan Convention (ABD CoP12) in March 2017

<sup>2</sup> The utilization of successful project models in the Central and West African region that can be used as case studies to provide learnings which may be applicable for similar issues in different countries and regions