

005 Protection and restoration of diverse native grasslands

CONCERNED that the Earth's ancient temperate grasslands – North American prairies, South American pampas, South African grassveld, Central European and Eurasian steppes, Himalayan temperate and alpine grasslands, and Australia's lowland grasslands – have the lowest protection of Earth's 15 biomes, with less than half intact; and concerned that natural meadows linked to ancient cultural landscapes and traditional agriculture are also threatened;

NOTING that restoring and rewilding grasslands is a long and delicate undertaking;

RECALLING that natural grasslands have not undergone any chemical treatment or ploughing for several decades;

CONSIDERING that natural grasslands provide essential ecological functions, promote pollinator health and vitality and resilience for ecosystems;

ALARMED that the disappearance and degradation of grasslands as a result of human activities and environmental changes, especially climate change, leads to habitat degradation, desertification, and reduction of carbon sequestration;

CONCERNED ALSO about the decline of arthropods, soil fauna and fungi for which natural grasslands are crucial habitats;

RECOGNISING that traditional ecological knowledge of Indigenous peoples sustains temperate grasslands, and that Nature-based Solutions are crucial to sustain local agriculture and are linked to maintaining bocage networks;

VALUING the cultural heritage, spiritual, recreational and social contributions that grasslands provide as habitat for some of the world's greatest assemblages of close-to-native pre-agricultural communities and wildlife;

FURTHER CONCERNED about the lack of national regimes to protect grasslands, including confusion between natural wild grassland and permanent or even temporary grassland in the regulations; and

APPRECIATING the innovations in restoring, rewilding, and protecting grasslands by relevant stakeholders and organisations, such as American Prairie (United States of America), Rewilding Argentina, and the Altyn Dala Conservation Initiative (Kazakhstan), through multijurisdictional, multistakeholder, and landscape-scale conservation;

The IUCN World Conservation Congress 2025, at its session in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates:

1. ENCOURAGES Commissions, in particular the Commission on Ecosystem Management, through the IUCN Global Ecosystem Typology, to identify and map natural grasslands to improve knowledge on the distribution, age, and degree of naturalness and conservation;
2. URGES IUCN constituents to expand international cooperation to conserve mostly intact temperate grasslands to secure protection of 30% of this endangered biome by 2030, including through development of new transboundary and regional protected areas;
3. URGES States and international organisations to facilitate capacity building and knowledge exchange for wildlife restoration on private conservation lands, to encourage landscape-scale restoration and the sustainable, collaborative management of temperate grasslands;
4. URGES the provision of financial support for indigenous and local communities, non-governmental organisations, and State agencies engaged in temperate grassland restoration and conservation efforts, and
5. CALLS UPON States and grassland managers to:

- a. establish conservation categories that protect natural grasslands near agricultural and human activity;
- b. preserve these designated grasslands from intensive agricultural practices and from agricultural abandonment; and
- c. develop appropriate farming management systems, allowing the maintenance of an original, varied and abundant biodiversity, and to restore the diversity and abundance in degraded grasslands by relying on reservoirs of reference natural grassland species.