

034 Promotion of collaborative marine spatial planning and sensitivity maps for sustainable offshore wind energy development

RECOGNISING that offshore wind energy is a key technology to accelerate the energy transition towards decarbonised economies, with significant potential to mitigate the impacts of climate change;

NOTING that seabirds might face risks due to interaction with offshore wind farms, such as collisions and the loss of habitats for breeding and feeding;

RECALLING IUCN Resolution such as 7.112 *Planning of maritime areas and biodiversity and geodiversity conservation* (Marseille, 2020) and Resolution 5.075 *Strengthening policies relating to the sea and oceans* (Jeju, 2012), which advocate for ecosystem-based marine spatial planning and biodiversity protection in maritime areas;

CONFIRMING the interest in the effective implementation of IUCN guidelines and technical documents and initiatives such as the Global Initiative for Nature, Grids and Renewables for the development of renewable energies that are respectful of biodiversity conservation;

INSPIRED by initiatives such as BirdLife International's sensitivity maps, which provide key information to guide the installation of wind farms away from areas of high ecological vulnerability and can serve as a foundation for national and regional marine spatial planning strategies; and

UNDERLINING that the development of scientifically-developed and rigorous data-based sensitivity maps requires detailed information on the distribution and use of marine areas by seabirds and other sensitive species (e.g. marine mammals), which must be collected and financed in collaboration with public and private sectors;

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

1. REQUESTS IUCN and its Members to work alongside relevant organisations to promote the creation of marine sensitivity maps, using tested methodologies that guide spatial planning and minimise risks to sensitive ecosystems;

2. REQUESTS governments to:

a. prioritise marine spatial planning frameworks within jurisdictional waters with respect to offshore wind energy, applying an ecosystem-based approach that identifies and protects highly sensitive areas and areas of importance for marine biodiversity; and

b. coordinate with other countries to create regional sensitivity maps, ensuring coherent and effective planning in international and transboundary waters, considering the migratory nature of many marine species;

3. CALLS ON public and private stakeholders to:

a. fund and collaborate on studies that improve and update knowledge on the distribution and patterns of marine use by seabirds and other species groups, using these datasets to inform projects and avoid the most vulnerable areas; and

b. apply sensitivity mapping methodologies based on scientific principles to minimise biodiversity risks before, during and after offshore wind projects; and

4. URGES international marine governance fora to promote cooperation among countries to develop regional sensitivity maps at sea-basin level, and ensure these maps guide the sustainable development of marine renewable energy.