

039 Mobilising the role of wild animals in ecosystems as a climate solution

RECOGNISING the essential role of biodiversity in maintaining ecosystem integrity and the critical contribution that retaining and restoring ecological integrity makes to climate mitigation and adaptation;

NOTING recent scientific research demonstrating that wild animals, through their functional roles in ecosystems, can have substantial impacts on carbon cycles, whereby thriving populations of key animal species can lead to significantly enhanced carbon removal and larger and more stable carbon stocks;

OBSERVING, however, that the contribution of wild animals to climate mitigation is often overlooked in carbon models and climate policy frameworks;

EMPHASISING that conserving and restoring wild animal populations enhances biodiversity, ecosystem integrity and natural carbon capture and storage, increasing the effectiveness of ecosystem-based mitigation;

RECALLING IUCN Resolution 7.114 *Integrated solutions to the climate change and biodiversity crises*, Resolution 7.034 *Ecological integrity in the post-2020 global biodiversity framework*, and Resolution 7.085 *Rewilding* (all adopted in Marseille, 2020);

RECALLING ALSO Article 5, paragraph 1 of the Paris Agreement, calling on Parties to conserve and enhance sinks and reservoirs of greenhouse gases, including biomass, forests and oceans as well as other terrestrial, coastal and marine ecosystems;

FURTHER RECALLING Target 11 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF) to restore, maintain and enhance nature's contributions to people, including ecosystem functions and services;

WELCOMING decisions by international agreements recognising the role of wild animals in climate mitigation, including Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) decision 16/22 *Biodiversity and climate change*, Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) resolution 12.21 (Rev.COP14) *Climate change and migratory species*, and International Whaling Commission (IWC) resolutions 2018-2 and 2016-3 on cetaceans and ecosystem functioning; and

FURTHER ACKNOWLEDGING the need to work with Indigenous peoples in support of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples;

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

1. CALLS ON the Director General to:

a. advocate for recognition of the role of wild animals in climate mitigation and adaptation in relevant international agreements and frameworks, including the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, CBD, CMS and IWC, and to highlight relevant science to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services; and

b. ensure this role is reflected in relevant IUCN knowledge products and tools, such as those relating to Nature-based Solutions, the Global Species Action Plan and re-wilding guidelines;

2. REQUESTS the IUCN Climate Crisis Commission, in collaboration with other Commissions and experts, to consolidate the evidence for the contribution of wild animals to climate mitigation and recommend how to incorporate this into relevant policy frameworks; and

3. URGES IUCN Government Agency Members to:

- a. urgently scale up efforts to limit global warming, including Nature-based Solutions that maintain and support biodiversity, alongside significant and rapid reductions in greenhouse gas emissions;
- b. prioritise protecting, conserving and restoring wild animal populations to enhance Nature-based Solutions;
- c. ensure coherence between national biodiversity and climate policies by recognising the climate mitigation benefits of conserving and restoring wild animal populations in their Nationally Determined Contributions under the Paris Agreement, and National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans; and
- d. contribute to policy coherence between the Rio and biodiversity conventions by integrating the role of wild animals in climate mitigation into relevant decisions.