

058 Addressing wildlife trafficking and the seizure of live wild animals through care, awareness-raising, and training

CONCERNED that, despite the establishment of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) in 1973, wildlife trafficking remains one of the main causes of species extinction today;

CONCERNED ALSO that wildlife trafficking, which includes timber and fished products, is the fourth most lucrative transnational organised crime activity in the world, and that revenues from environmental crime are increasing;

NOTING that a critical component in countering wildlife trafficking is the seizure of live wild animals by government officials;

NOTING also the IUCN *Guidelines for the management of confiscated, live organisms* and the *CITES guidelines for the disposal of confiscated live animals* [Annex 1 of CITES Resolution Conf. 17.8 (Rev. CoP19)], as well as the One Health approach;

EMPHASISING that the return of seized wild animals or their healthy offspring to their natural environment is the optimal solution for the conservation of species; and

UNDERSTANDING, however, that approaches in the care of seized animals are often dictated by: a lack of information on the site of origin; or concerns regarding the risks of genetic pollution of wild populations, the introduction of invasive species, or the release of pathogens and viruses; or because the physical and psychological state of individuals may require experienced care to achieve their rehabilitation;

UNDERSTANDING ALSO that approaches in the seizure of live wild animals, including their systematic killing, may have serious implications for species integrity, biodiversity, animal welfare and human health;

FURTHER UNDERSTANDING that effectively addressing trafficking and seizure requires combining international, national, and subnational competencies, as well as education and awareness-raising of stakeholders.

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

1. REQUESTS the Director General and Commissions to:

a. promote the IUCN *Guidelines for the management of confiscated, live organisms* with governments; and

b. promote the creation of a network of national and subnational focal points to work with authorities on strengthening how States address wildlife trafficking and seizure, including the identification and monitoring of seized specimens and the appropriate approach for placement and care; and

2. ENCOURAGES States to:

a. enhance the capacity of relevant authorities through the provision of resources, information and training focused on investigating wildlife trafficking, as well as the identification and humane handling of seized specimens, with particular attention to promoting animal welfare and supporting front-line officers in effectively managing seizures;

b. work with prosecutors and judges to publish and disseminate findings from investigations and decisions regarding trafficking and seizure;

c. review national and international legal frameworks against best practices in animal welfare and repatriation of seized live animals to identify opportunities for legal reform and improved protection, with a view to developing clear Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and guidelines for the

repatriation of seized wildlife, ensuring that this option is viable and prioritized where appropriate, to support ethical, welfare-based outcomes and uphold international commitments to species conservation and disease management;

d. ensure that sufficient care centres exist within the country to be able to receive all live animals confiscated, to allow for law enforcement against illegal wildlife trade to be maximally effective

e. ensure that decisions on the management of seized animals consider their welfare and the quality of housing, care, facility expertise and the in situ or ex situ conservation of the species;

f. ensure that all such care centres meet the requirements for animal welfare and health safety, including through the establishment of and collaboration with relevant regional and global networks;

g. establish databases gathering data on imports, seizures or placements of specimens, as well as information on offenders, instigators and identification tools and training materials;

h. include consideration of wildlife trafficking and seizure in nature conservation strategies and educational curricula, and through appropriate media; and

i. define quantified indicators to evaluate the effectiveness of the implemented actions and produce an annual public report.