

113 Strengthening planning for preserving biodiversity through the use of Longevity Conservation approaches to ensure naturally age-structured populations of species

NOTING that terrestrial and marine biodiversity declines are neither halting nor reducing, despite the Aichi Targets, developed in 2010, and the goals and targets of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, agreed in 2022;

NOTING ALSO that older individuals in animal and plant populations of conservation concern may be harvested proportionately more than other age classes;

AWARE that older individuals within some animal and plant populations are known to be repositories of traits, structural capacities, culture and knowledge that can be key to population stability, genetic diversity, social cohesion, long-term success and AWARE of certain roles that older individuals may play in their ecosystem, and that their loss can lead to potential ecosystem disruption, due to changes in ecological interactions, with the overall costs of their loss possibly being disproportionately high noting that IUCN has not yet developed guidance on this emerging field of work;

ALSO AWARE of the increasing number of species whose natural functions are known to contribute to carbon sequestration, and which therefore contribute significantly to nature-based solutions;

MINDFUL that, in many species, older individuals may remain reproductively active, and may carry advantageous phenotypic traits which have enabled them to survive, traits that may be vitally important for the success of future generations;

ACKNOWLEDGING the workstream on animal culture and social complexity under the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), which recognises that social transmission of knowledge between individuals may increase population viability, and promotes the importance of protecting and conserving individuals that act as “repositories” of social knowledge; and

RECOGNISING that strategies for protecting and conserving older individuals through specific longevity conservation initiatives may help to sustain biodiversity;

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

1. URGES the Director General, Commissions, Specialist Groups, Members and State Members to consider where appropriate, based on the best available science:

a.

i. to request the Species Survival Commission (SSC) and specialist groups to evaluate this motion in line with available data and to define the term ‘Longevity Conservation’;

ii. collecting data on the age composition of plant and animal populations, enhancing the collection and analysis of data to document the status and trends within and between plant and animal populations where older individuals are protected and conserved, for comparison with those where such individuals have been reduced or extirpated; and

b. evaluating the economic and ecological costs associated with wildlife-based lethal activities that harvest older or larger individuals proportionately more than other age classes, by engaging local communities, governments and the private sector in this effort;

2. CALLS ON Commissions, taxon-focused specialist groups and wider Members to consider the impacts of loss of older individuals to ensure naturally age-structured populations of many species, by:

a. providing guidance on the ecosystem and biodiversity value of longevity and how to conserve naturally age-structured populations in practice; and

b. initiating dialogue with end-users of larger, older individuals to conserve and protect them; and

3. CALLS ON IUCN constituents in partnership or collaboration with relevant experts to consider:

- a. developing norms and standards in population monitoring specific to larger and older individuals of certain taxa (herewith termed 'Longevity Conservation');
- b. developing Longevity Conservation initiatives based on data gathering and scientific evaluation that can, where appropriate, be incorporated into nature conservation ensuring there are no risks to wildlife management systems, and;
- c. initiating partnerships, including with regional and local NGOs and the Species Survival Commission Specialist Groups, to facilitate, where appropriate, the incorporation of Longevity Conservation in their work, ensuring that the benefits out-weigh the risks to wildlife populations.