

113 Strengthening planning for preserving biodiversity through the use of Longevity Conservation approaches

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 disproportionately targeted for lethal commercial or recreational purposes;

ACKNOWLEDGING that the economic incentives for harvesting larger, older individuals may appear to outweigh costs of the loss of these individuals;

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;

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 climate solutions;

MINDFUL that, in many populations, 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 groundbreaking 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 individuals that act as “repositories” of social knowledge; and

RECOGNISING that strategies for protecting older individuals through specific longevity conservation initiatives would 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:

a. 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, 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 economic or recreational activities that disproportionately target older or larger individuals, 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 government agencies and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to:

a. develop norms and standards in population monitoring specific to larger and older individuals of certain taxa (herewith termed 'Longevity Conservation');

b. develop Longevity Conservation initiatives that can readily be incorporated into nature conservation and wildlife management planning; and

c. initiate partnerships with regional and local NGOs and the Species Survival Commission Specialist Groups to encourage and facilitate the incorporation of Longevity Conservation into species action plans.