

### **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, contrary to the Aichi Targets, developed in 2010, and the goals and targets of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, agreed in 2022;

ALARMED that older individuals in animal and plant populations of conservation concern are often disproportionately targeted for lethal commercial or recreational purposes;

REGRETTING 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 populations are known to be repositories of culture and knowledge that can be key to population stability, genetic diversity, social cohesion and long-term success, and that their loss can lead to potential ecosystem disruption due to changes in interactions between predators, prey and other ecosystem elements, with the overall costs of their loss likely to be disproportionately high;

ALSO AWARE of the increasing number of species whose natural functions are known to contribute to carbon sequestration, and who 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:

a. [encourage IUCN member countries to collect data on the impacts of older individuals' protection on the status and trend of animal populations], enhance the collection and analysis of data to document the status and trends within and between animal populations where older individuals are protected, for comparison with those where such individuals have been reduced or extirpated; and

b. evaluate the economic and ecological costs associated with wildlife-based lethal economic or recreational activities that disproportionately target older individuals, by engaging local communities, governments and the private sector in this effort;

2. CALLS ON Commissions, Taxon Specialist Groups and wider Members to take action to halt current loss of older individuals by:

a. providing guidance on the ecosystem and biodiversity value of longevity and how to conserve these individuals 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 older individuals (herewith termed ‘Longevity Conservation’);

b. develop Longevity Conservation initiatives that can readily be incorporated into 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.