

114 Appeal for global prevention of propeller-inflicted deaths on endangered species

RECOGNISING the increasing threats to endangered migratory species caused by marine vessel propeller blades, which have been linked to the injury and death of numerous marine species, including whales, dolphins, sea turtles, dugongs and sharks;

ACKNOWLEDGING studies indicating that over 50% of whale sharks in Qatar waters have visible propeller scars, highlighting the severity and increasing prevalence of this issue;

FURTHER ACKNOWLEDGING the critical role of global collaboration in addressing marine ecological challenges and the necessity of robust, targeted actions to prevent further harm to marine life;

CONSIDERING the scientific evidence that reducing vessel speeds, while important, has limited effectiveness in preventing injuries and mortality to endangered migratory species from propeller strikes, and FURTHER CONSIDERING that improving propeller design, alongside limiting vessel speeds, would lead to better marine conservation outcomes; and

CONSIDERING that improving propeller design, alongside limiting vessel speeds, would further help reduce the risk of propeller-inflicted injuries and mortality to endangered migratory species and lead to better marine conservation outcomes;

EMPHASISING the urgent need for innovative and effective measures to protect vulnerable marine species in important sensitive areas such as seasonal feeding aggregation sites, breeding sites and other important sites from marine vessel-related injuries;

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 the development of international guidelines on protective measures, such as propeller guards, to mitigate the threat posed to migratory endangered species by open-bladed vessel propellers in sensitive marine areas, including feeding and nursery grounds, and marine protected areas;
- b. encourage cooperation with the International Maritime Organization, the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals, the Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ Agreement), and other relevant bodies to integrate environmentally friendly propeller propulsion systems into global maritime regulations; and
- c. urge IUCN State Members to adopt mitigation measures, to protect endangered species in important sensitive areas from harm by propeller blades; and

2. ENCOURAGES IUCN Commissions and Members to:

- a. raise awareness about the dangers of open-bladed propellers and the benefits of propeller protection devices, emphasising the urgent need for global action; and
- b. promote research into the impacts of ship propulsion systems on marine species and support the development of new technologies that minimise harm to marine life.