

136 Addressing the overexploitation of wild species

MINDFUL of the dire warnings in the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) 2019 Global Assessment Report that about one million plant and animal species are threatened with extinction, many within decades, and more than ever before in human history, and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) 2024 Synthesis Report that we are exceeding tipping points where cascading damage could occur, along with other scientific papers highlighting the risk that the biodiversity crisis poses for humanity;

NOTING that the IPBES 2019 Summary for Policymakers refers to direct exploitation, in particular overexploitation of wild species as the second leading driver of the crisis terrestrially and the leading driver in the ocean, affecting food security, climate regulation, healthy fish stocks and fresh water, along with local livelihoods and sustainable development, and poses risks to human health, due to pathogen spillover;

ENCOURAGING global efforts to promote ambition and take action to address the top drivers of biodiversity loss, such as habitat loss, climate change and pollution;

ACKNOWLEDGING, however, the need to focus similar high-level attention on the overexploitation of wild species and the role it plays in fuelling the biodiversity crises, and to take urgent action;

ACKNOWLEDGING the findings of the Summary for Policymakers of the IPBES assessment report on the Sustainable Use of Wild Species is critical for people and nature and that ensuring the sustainability of the use of wild species, including promoting sustainable use and halting overexploitation, is critical to reverse the global trend in biodiversity decline;

ACKNOWLEDGING Article 2 of the IUCN Statutes: “to ensure that any use of natural resources is equitable and ecologically sustainable”;

WELCOMING Goal A of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework to halt human induced extinction and, by 2050, reduce the rate and risk of extinction tenfold, along with targets to 2030 to recover threatened species and ensure that the use, harvesting and trade of wild species is sustainable, safe and legal preventing overexploitation, minimising impacts on non-target species and ecosystems, and reducing the risk of pathogen spill-over, applying the ecosystem approach, while respecting and protecting customary sustainable use by Indigenous peoples and Local communities, ensuring inclusive participation of youth and children in the governance, monitoring and stewardship of wild species;

ACKNOWLEDGING the ongoing work under treaties such as the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), among others, to address the overexploitation of wild species;

CONCERNED that many species that are or may be affected by unsustainable exploitation may not be sufficiently protected under relevant agreements, and that significant time lags may occur before appropriate actions are taken to effectively protect such species, and that relevant agreements may not be sufficiently implemented and enforced for some species that are protected under such agreements;

CONSIDERING that the IPBES Report recommended the effective implementation of biodiversity-related agreements as a key step in the transformative change needed;

RECALLING IUCN Resolution 3.075 5 *Applying the Precautionary Principle in environmental decision-making and management* (Bangkok, 2004), and Resolutions 5.118 *A significant role for IUCN in the Intergovernmental science-policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES)* and 5.117 *Operationalization of the Intergovernmental science-policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES)* (both adopted in Jeju, 2012), and the role that IUCN plays in the implementation of agreements such as the Convention on Biological Diversity, CITES and CMS, and its formal mandate as an Advisory Body to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Heritage Committee, and others; and

FURTHER ACKNOWLEDGING the need to continue working with Indigenous peoples and Local communities in halting overexploitation of wild species;

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

1. DECLARES IUCN's commitment to assessing the extinction risk of wild species and ensuring the appropriate level of protection for those species, which can inform action under the provisions of relevant multilateral agreements and under the domestic laws of States;
2. REQUESTS the Director General, in consultation with the Species Survival Commission (SSC) and its Specialist Groups to review and communicate a consistent role that IUCN plays in providing science-based assessments of extinction risk for informing relevant multilateral agreements and any associated recommendations to Members;
3. FURTHER REQUESTS the Director General and SSC to work with relevant multilateral agreements, in accordance with their respective mandates, to contribute scientific expertise and advice in support of processes aimed at identifying, in a timely manner, species threatened with extinction due to overexploitation, and to promote, as appropriate, the consideration of appropriate protection measures and management systems under the provisions of applicable multilateral agreements;
4. URGES IUCN State Members in particular, along with other Members and partners, to assist IUCN in assessing the status of species nationally and globally pursuant to The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™, national Red Lists and relevant agreements, and to support efforts to ensure that species threatened with extinction are prioritised for conservation planning and action, and this is used to inform where species should be afforded the appropriate level of protection possible under the provisions of relevant multilateral agreements and under the domestic laws of States and to promote international cooperation and capacity-building to strengthen enforcement and monitoring, particularly along key trade and transit routes; and
5. ENCOURAGES States to focus on addressing the overexploitation of wild species as one of the drivers of biodiversity loss.