

136 Addressing the direct exploitation 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 direct exploitation of wild species is 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;

WELCOMING 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 direct exploitation of wild species and the role it plays in fuelling the biodiversity crises and take urgent action;

WELCOMING Goal A of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework to halt human induced extinction and, by 2050, reduce the risk of extinction, along with targets to recover threatened species and eliminate unsustainable, illegal and high-risk harvest, use and trade in wild species;

CONCERNED that hundreds or thousands of species that are affected by unsustainable exploitation are not sufficiently protected under relevant agreements 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), and that significant time lags occur before appropriate actions are taken;

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

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;

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

1. DECLARES IUCN's commitment to ensuring that wild species are afforded the highest appropriate level of protection under the provisions of relevant multilateral agreements and under the domestic laws of States;
2. REQUESTS the Director General, Council, Species Survival Commission (SSC) and Specialist Groups to assess the role that IUCN plays in protecting species under relevant multilateral agreements, including the criteria for protection that IUCN uses when advising governments as to whether species qualify for protection and the role of Specialist Groups;
3. FURTHER REQUESTS the Director General and SSC to work with CITES, CMS and other relevant treaties to help establish a process to rapidly identify and promote the strongest possible protection under the provisions of applicable multilateral agreements for species that are threatened with extinction;

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 that all species are afforded the highest appropriate level of protection possible under the provisions of applicable international and domestic law; and

5. WELCOMES global coalitions of States focused on addressing the direct exploitation of wild species as a top driver of biodiversity loss.